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**Online Registry Will Drive More Informed Higher Education Decisions**  
*By Teresa Lubbers, Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education*

Would you plan a trip, buy a car or move to a new house without first comparing all your options? Probably not. Yet Indiana students making one of the most important decisions in life – where to continue their education after high school – may be surprised to learn there is no single source of information to compare all the higher education paths in Indiana or the nation.

As Indiana's colleges and universities have adapted to meet the changing needs of students and the state's economy, the traditional starting points of two-year or four-year degrees have expanded into an array of credential options – from badges, apprenticeships, certificates and licenses to degrees. Yet, information about these thousands of diverse programs continues to be isolated within college systems. For students seeking the right fit for education after high school, comparing options in this closed information environment is often time-consuming and overwhelming.

What Hoosier students need is a clear, consistent way to compare credentials based on cost, location, course content and time commitment. Credential Engine – a new national nonprofit – aims to do just that, and Indiana is leading the charge.

Once fully implemented, Credential Engine's tools will offer students a powerfully informative environment by showing how credentials are valued by employers and accreditors. The foundation of Credential Engine's services is an online registry where students can search up-to-date credential information maintained by universities and educational organizations.

Credentials in the registry are described in consistent terms that align higher education with the workplace so students can compare the training at different programs with real-world skills. Employers will use Credential Engine to better understand the competencies potential employees acquire through degree programs, as well as the preparation needed for licensure and certification.

Reflecting on Indiana's partnership with Credential Engine during the recent statewide launch, Credential Engine Executive Director Scott Cheney said "Indiana has taken the rudimentary idea of a credential registry and built it into something very practical and valuable that will help industries, students, veterans, institutions and policy makers."

Indiana is the first state to add a significant amount of credential information to the registry. The registry now details every healthcare credential offered at Indiana's public universities. Hoosiers can also find certificates qualifying for Workforce Ready Grants, which provide free training in high-demand industries. Indiana is committed to populating the registry with every credential offered in the state.

Through Credential Engine, Hoosier students will finally have a single location to find clear, relevant information as they search for the right school or credential provider. Indiana’s partnership with Credential Engine has the potential to redefine how credentials are created, awarded and evaluated – helping higher education better respond to the needs of students, employers and our state’s economy.

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