

A Framework for Future-Ready Credentials

Report for ReImagine Grant Awarded to the Office of Academic Innovation

October 31, 2022

Grant Team:

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Deliverables:

The goals of the original ReImagine project were achieved, including the following deliverables which were completed during the grant phase:

Strategy and Framework

Significant research, collaboration, and discussion went into developing a digital strategy, identifying a [Glossary of Credentialing Terms](#), and creating a [Non-Credit Digital Credentials Framework](#) for PSU.

Governance

The grant team recommends establishing a cross-functional advisory committee to review new badges, guide the refinement and coordination of processes, and provide oversight for the award of badges. This standing committee will include representation from OAI, the Registrar's Office, faculty, and other relevant units. The advisory committee will support the evolution and sustainability of digital badges. Existing CEPE and OAI staff will administer and award digital badges under the oversight of the advisory committee.

Software System and Supports

The grant team consulted with CEPE on the system, functionality, and process for adopting the Credly platform to award digital badges to PSU students and faculty. The next phase will include refining the process for submitting eligible badge requests and coordinating with CEPE to award the badges on an ongoing basis. This process will be tested upon completion of the pilot badge programs.

Pilot Badge Programs

While the proposal committed to creating one pilot use case for implementing digital badges, two pilot programs were developed during the grant phase, the LevelUp program and Career Readiness modules. The final development and delivery of the pilot programs will be completed in the second phase of the project. The LevelUp student leadership program is currently being

redesigned in Canvas to improve the student experience and facilitate the tracking of badge attainment. The Career Readiness modules will be based on the NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) competencies and developed in partnership between Career Services and OAI once the new Career Services subject matter expert/developer has been onboarded.

Once completed, both of these pilots will enable students to advance their career readiness and articulate their competencies to prospective employers. Displaying their digital badge(s) on LinkedIn and other virtual platforms will further students' ability to communicate the value of their essential employability skills.

Additional Outcomes

An additional opportunity arose to collaborate with the "Integrating Career Readiness into UNST/Honors" ReImagine grant team, which was not anticipated when the grant was proposed. Through this collaboration, the Future Ready Credentials team identified a potential future opportunity to provide badged modules for faculty to integrate as class assignments, allowing students to learn and earn a digital badge at the same time.

While the original scope of the project focused on developing badges for non-credit student learning, the project team also evaluated awarding digital badges for select faculty professional development programs delivered by the Office of Academic Innovation. OAI's Teaching, Learning, and Assessment team will continue to develop the process and application of this use case for digital badges as new faculty education programs are developed.

The next phase of the project will include finalizing the development and launch of the pilot programs, forming a standing cross-functional advisory committee, refining processes, communication, and scaling modules eligible for digital badges for students and faculty.

Supporting the ReImagine Project Goals

The *Framework for Future-Ready Credentials* project laid the groundwork for additional ways for PSU students to develop and communicate their career readiness and better meet the evolving needs of the workforce. The strategy, framework and process for awarding digital badges developed with the ReImagine grant will enable PSU to provide short-term, flexible learning that can be readily documented across digital platforms. This project advances the timeliness, relevance, and readiness of PSU students seeking to begin or advance their careers post-pandemic.

Utilization of Funds

The proposed project timeline was October 1, 2021 - March 31, 2022. However, the grant funds were not awarded until December 11, 2021. The first phase of the project was more extensive than anticipated, and the collaboration and work process took more time than originally projected. The implementation of the pilot programs and badges will continue into Phase 2 of the project. No costs were incurred during the initial grant period, but the team requests the use of the grant funds for the second phase, which will include the following costs:

Resource	Cost	Number	Total	Notes
Student incentives	\$50	100	\$5,000	Participation in pilot badging programs
Instructional design and pilot coordination	\$40	125	\$5,000	LevelUp design in Canvas, pilot tracking & reporting
Digital Credential platform + administration	\$1	3999	\$3,999	Credly Acclaim platform license
Communication assets	\$20	25	\$500	Graphic design
			\$14,499	

The grant team realized some budget efficiencies by leveraging existing staff and developing bespoke modules rather than purchasing content from a third-party provider as originally proposed. Extended access to the grant funds will fund development, implementation, and student engagement in the pilots, ensuring the adoption of digital credentials and buy-in to scale.

Summary of Project Findings

The project team determined that the terms used when communicating about credentials must be clearly defined to ensure accurate communication of the application and value of a digital badge. It is essential to clearly define the scope and limitations of the application of digital badges at PSU so as not to confound these non-credit credentials with credit-based courses.

Further, the team established that aligning badged learning opportunities with existing student engagement and time commitment will make completing modules and earning badges more appealing and viable for students in the context of their busy lives and competing time commitments.

The project team decided that the establishment of a long-term, cross-functional work group will be essential to provide governance and ensure consistent process and application of digital badges at PSU. Further refinement and ongoing guidance from this working group will be needed to ensure ongoing refinement and consistency as the use of digital badges grows.

Further, there is considerable interest in implementing badging in a variety of ways at PSU. The grant team's work could provide a foundation for the expansion of badging applications in the future.