



# Strengthen and Support Your LearningCounts Pathway

June 25, 2015



## Developing Your Prior Learning Assessment Policy

# Today's Presenter

## Dr. Chari Leader Kelley

### Senior Fellow

### Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)



Chari works to improve access to higher education for adults and historically under-served students. Chari uniquely understands the challenges adults face in juggling the responsibilities of work, family, and college through her personal experience, her research endeavors and in working at colleges that primarily serve adults – Bellevue University and Excelsior College, in senior leadership positions.

At CAEL, Chari devoted two years to building LearningCounts.org and working with various colleges, universities, systems, and states to improve PLA opportunities for their students. Now a Senior Fellow, Chari assists CAEL on various state initiatives that lead to changes in policy and practice.

# Today's Webinar



- Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Refresher
- Context for PLA
- PLA Policy Considerations
- Communication, **communication,**  
**communication!**
- Texas A&M System Approach
- Houston Community College Approach
- Lone Star College Approach
- Resources
- Q&A



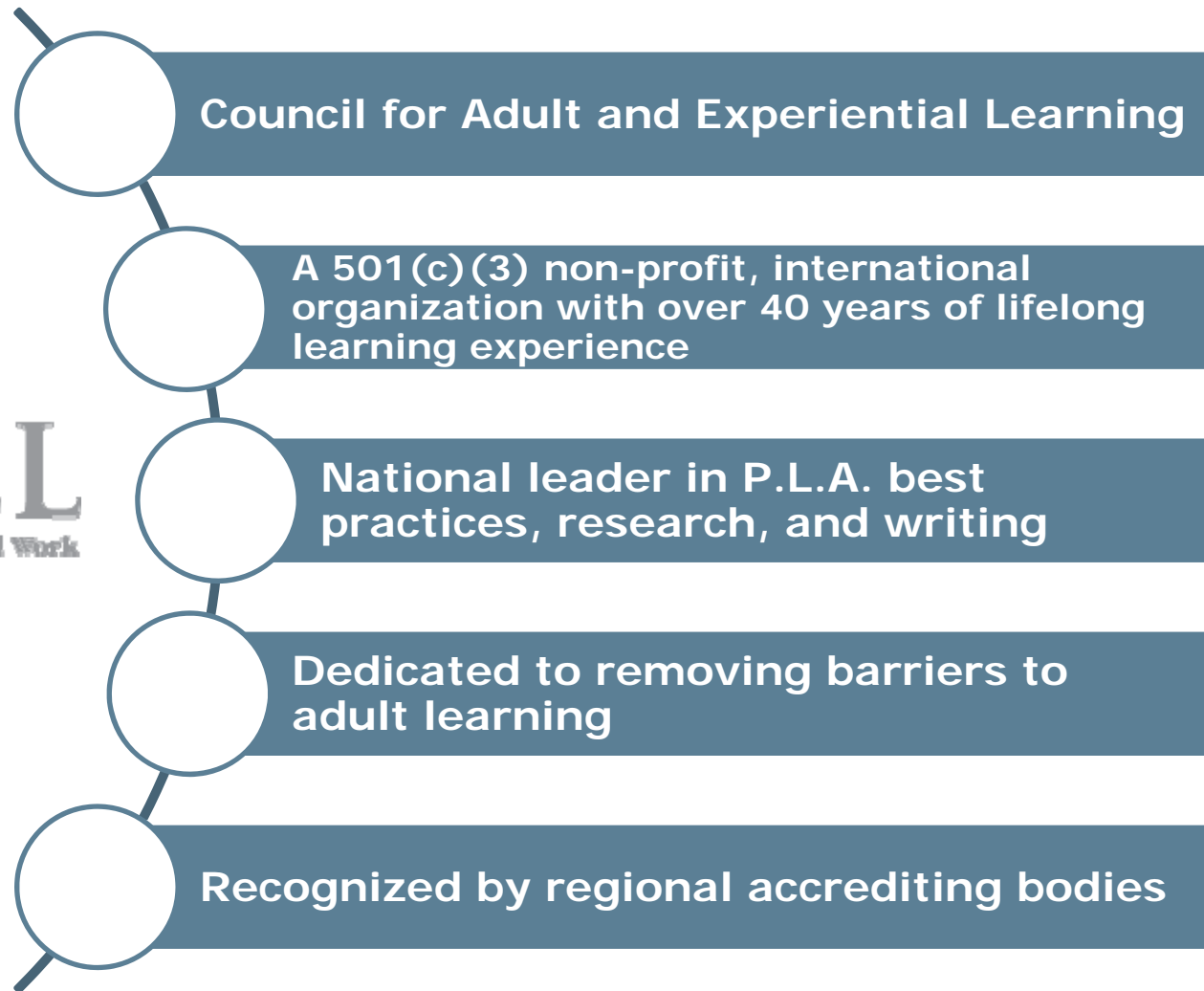
**Take my  
online poll.**



# Introduction to CAEL



**CAEL**  
Linking Learning and Work



# PLA Refresher



LearningCounts™

Prior learning assessment is the process for recognizing college-level learning acquired outside of the traditional college classroom.

*Students must demonstrate that they have achieved the same learning outcomes and/or competencies as a student who passes the course.*

# PLA Methods



LearningCounts™

Standardized Exams (like CLEP, DSST, UExcel)

Evaluated Non-College Training and U.S. Military Training by ACE, NCCRS, or your faculty

Faculty-Developed Challenge Exams

Industry-Recognized Certificates and Licenses

Student Portfolios & Performance Demonstrations

Assessed by LearningCounts or your local program

*Khan Academy, MOOCs, Self-Directed Learning, Significant Volunteerism, Saylor Foundation Free Courses, Open Courseware, Formal Professional Training, and lots more...*

College Credit, Retention, and Completion



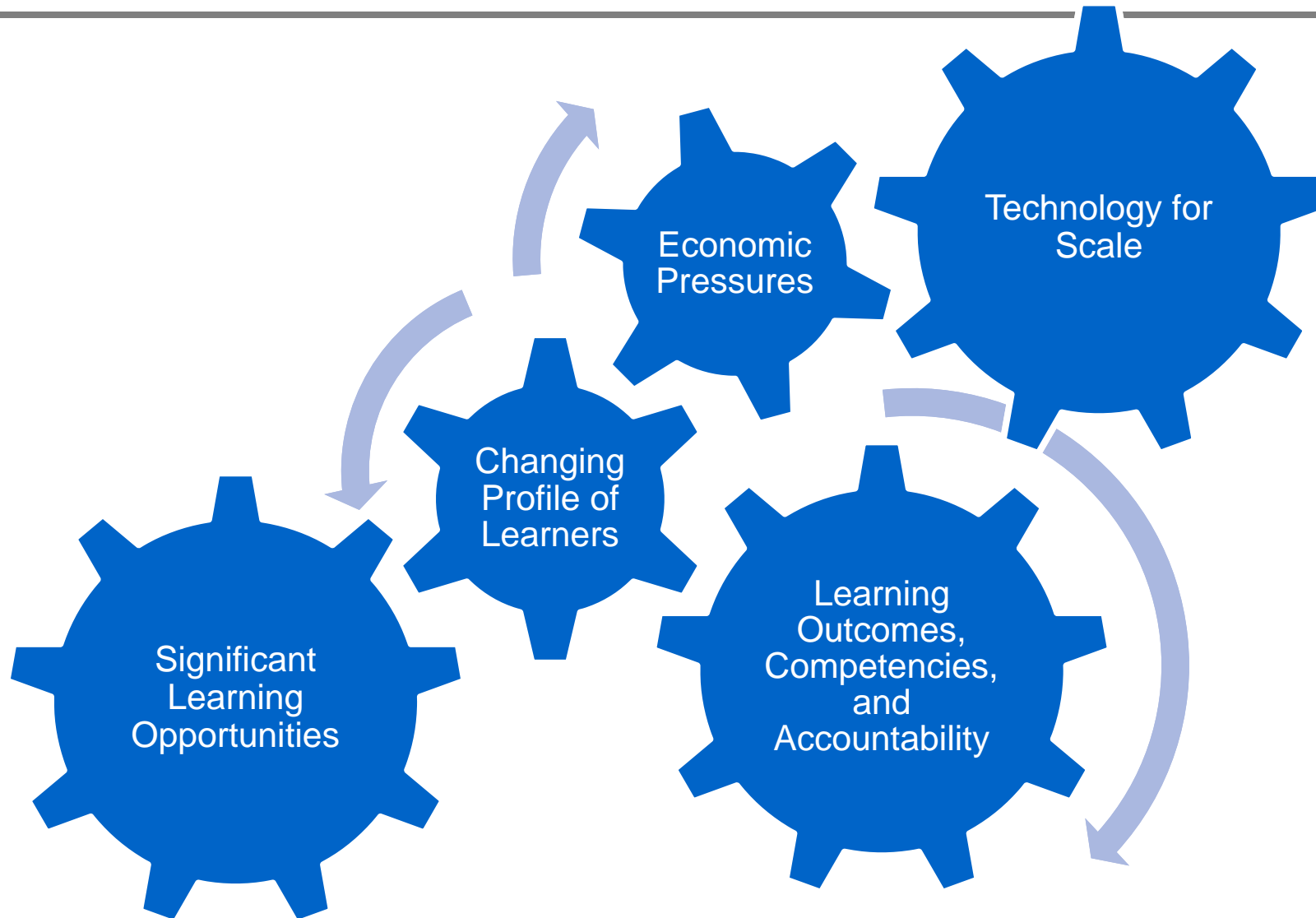
# Context for PLA



# Context for PLA



LearningCounts™



# Some College, No Degree



## 23% of Texans

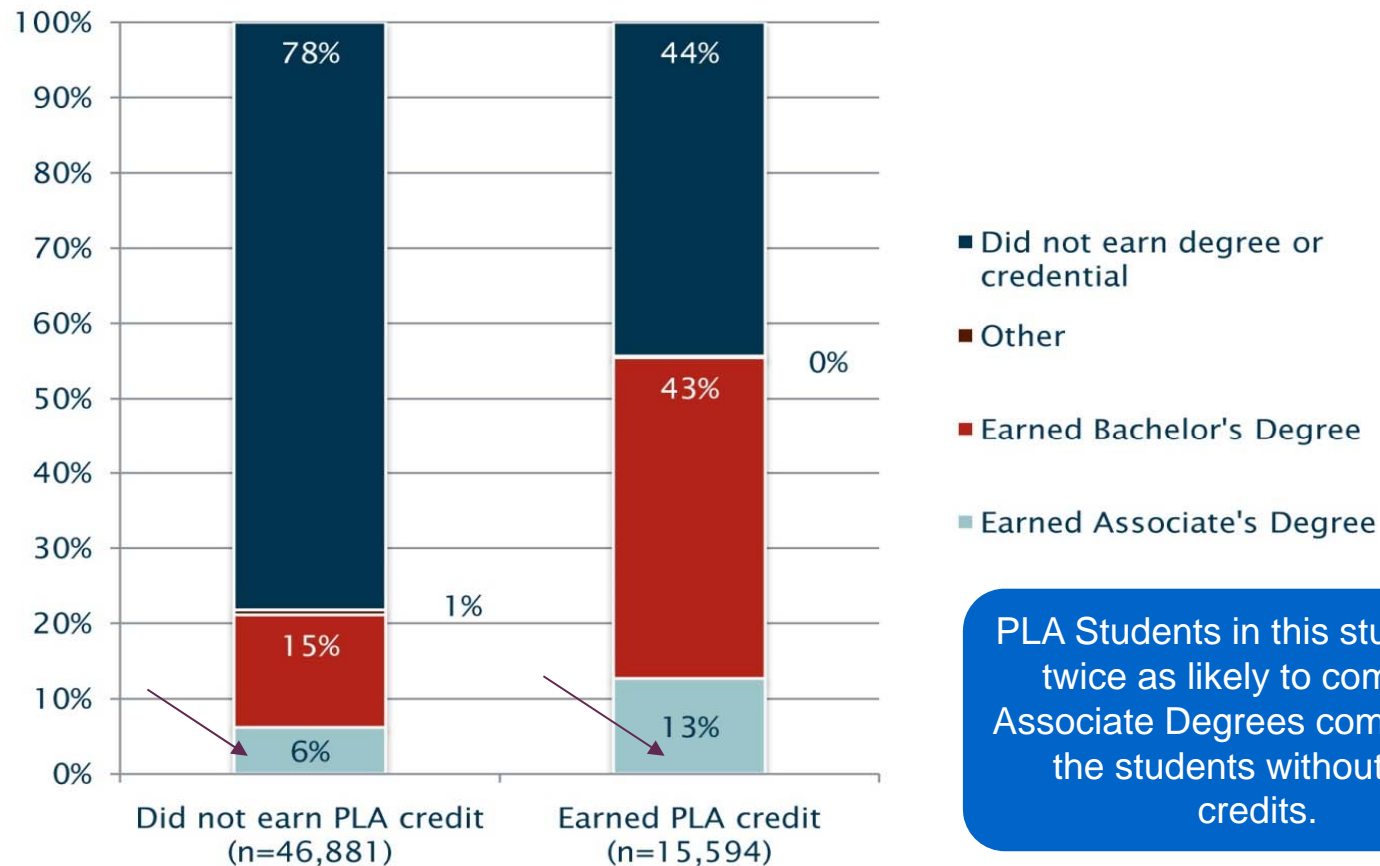
### 3,153,878\* Opportunities for PLA

- They are likely working adults.
- They aspire to earn more money.
- They know they need to upgrade their skills and education for a better future.
- They have significant learning.

### Your Current Students & PLA

- May not yet know what PLA is or how to access it.
- May not know that they could save time and money (reduce student loans) with PLA.
- May have friends or family who could benefit from PLA.
- May be perfect for some form of PLA.

# Degree Completion





# Policy Considerations

# Policy Considerations

- The Team
- SACS
- Alignment with existing academic policies
- Transcripts
- Data and institutional research
- Oversight and review

# The Team



LearningCounts™

- Academic Affairs Council or similar structure within academic programs
- Registrar representation
- Student services representation
- Faculty representation
- A liaison with the Bursar or Business Office and Financial Aid
- PLA program manager, coordinator or director

# SACS Accreditation



## 3.4.4

The institution publishes policies that include criteria for evaluating, awarding, and **accepting credit for transfer, experiential learning, credit by examination, Advanced Placement, and professional certificates** that are consistent with its mission and ensure that course work and learning outcomes are at the collegiate level and comparable to the institution's own degree programs. The institution assumes responsibility for the academic quality of any course work or credit recorded on the institution's transcript.

## 3.5.2

At least **25 percent** of the credit hours required for the degree are earned through instruction offered by the institution awarding the degree. (*academic residency requirement*)

From Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Accreditation Commission on Colleges Publication at [www.sacs.org](http://www.sacs.org).

# Policy Alignment

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- The Process and Procedures
- Integrating policy with Curriculum Reviews and/or Accreditation Cycles
- Appeals Process
- ***See Sample Policy***



# Transcripts



LearningCounts™

## How will PLA credits appear on the transcript?

- ✓ **Transfer Credit**
- ✓ **Credit Source**
  - Credit by Exams
  - ACE Military Credits
  - ACE or NCCRS Corporate/Training Credits
  - Portfolio Credits/LearningCounts
  - Challenge Exams Credits
- ✓ **P – Pass/Fail**

PROGRAM: BS Economics/Finance

Course	Title	CRD	GRD	GRDPT
<b>AWARDED CREDIT</b>				
FIN-345	Student Managed Invest Fund	3.00	CR	0.00
FIN-490	Finance Economics Internship	3.00	CR	0.00

CANYON COLLEGE

COM-212	Public Speaking	3.00	T	0.00
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FALL 1999

ACC-101	Intro Accounting I	3.00	A-	11.01
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Term Credits: 3.00 Term GPA: 3.670

GPA Credits: 3.00 Cum GPA: 3.670

Degree Credits: 12.00

## How will you track PLA credits?

- ✓ Choose and/or create codes in your system so that you can see how many PLA credits you are awarding
- ✓ Code so that you can run reports to see how PLA students are progressing toward their academic goals
- ✓ Determine what kind of reports are important to you for tracking institutional effectiveness, student progress, for providing data for your SACS Self-Study reports, and for monitoring your PLA program

# Oversight and Review



Plan for periodic reviews of your PLA program to make sure the policy is working the way you intended it to work for students.

Keep faculty informed about PLA and how students are performing.

# Policy Components

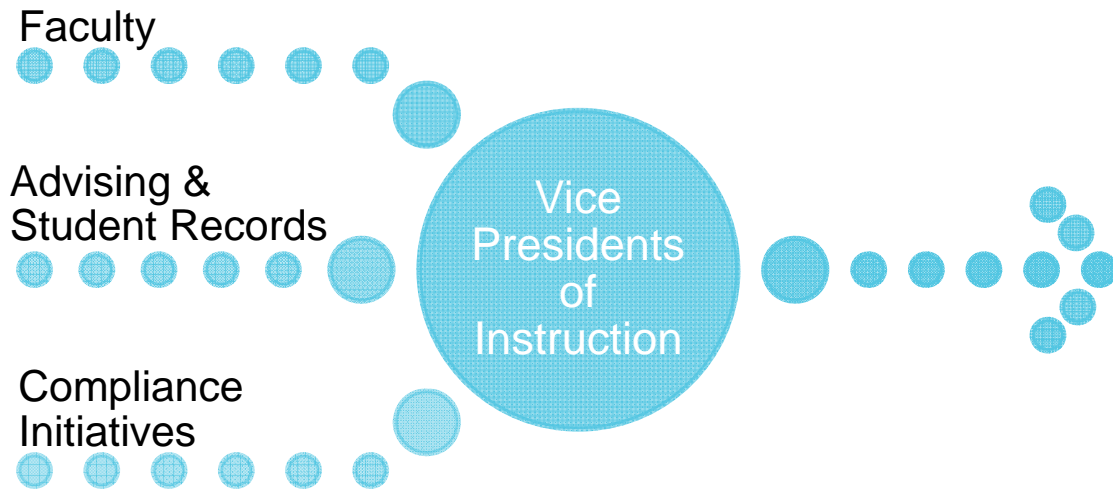


- Student eligibility
- Maximum credits that can be awarded
- Validation (alignment with curriculum, learning outcomes, and competencies)
- Approved Methods
- Application of Credits
- Locally reviewed and LearningCounts Portfolios
- Tracking, Review

# Texas A&M Guidelines

- Three colleges and System Office collaborated on PLA guidelines working document
- Some colleges are using it to revise their own policies
- Will be brought to all provosts for review and further edits
- Determining what should be a system level decision, and what should be local decision
- College Credit for Heroes is included in the guidelines

- Collaborative effort between Academic Affairs and Student Success Divisions
- Policy and procedural recommendations vetted by Curriculum Teams and PLA stakeholders
- Approved by Vice Presidents of Instruction through the LSC curriculum approval process



**Lakisha McDowell-Bates**  
Program Manager  
Compliance & Instructional Initiatives  
Lone Star College

- Task Force
- Developing Procedures
- Implementing Procedures – Training
- Challenges
- Marketing PLA Information to Students
- Training Sustainability After Grant

**Toby Ingersoll**  
Adult Degree Completion Program Director  
Houston Community College

# Implementation Tips



1. Bring the team together
2. Establish a **"GO"** date
3. Provide a few PowerPoint slides or Talking Points for every department to review with staff and faculty.
4. Update your catalog and website



# Communication, communication, communication



LearningCounts™

- Provide training for faculty and staff
- Provide Information/Fact Sheets
- Be transparent
- Be positive
- If you are using LearningCounts, work with the TACC Project team to take advantage of training and other resources

***Your students now have a new pathway to academic success with PLA.***

# Resources

- Assessing Learning Book
  - <http://www.kendallhunt.com/store-product.aspx?id=4333>
- DePaul PLA Certificate Program
  - [https://www.learning.depaul.edu/eCS/CourseGroup.aspx?group\\_number=139&group\\_version=1](https://www.learning.depaul.edu/eCS/CourseGroup.aspx?group_number=139&group_version=1)
- Sample College PLA Policy Document
  - Available for Download at Webinar





Let's make prior learning assessment a priority!

# Questions and Discussion