



The Value of Certificate Programs

The Chronicle of Higher Education featured an article written by Jennifer Gonzalez called, "Certificate Programs Could Play a Key Role in Meeting the Nation's Educational Goals".

Drawing upon a report commissioned by Complete College America, "Certificates Count: An Analysis of Sub-Baccalaureate Certificates," the researchers demonstrate the effectiveness of certificate programs in empowering colleges to get more students to finish a postsecondary credential and build skilled workers to solve complex problems.

Earning a certificate has "real economic value," according to Stan Jones, president of Complete College America "In some cases, they have more value than associate degrees and even some bachelor's degrees."

Based on these findings, the report deems long-term certificate programs as an "underutilized strategy" in meeting President Obama's college-attainment goals, and "calls attention to the significant value of certificate programs – practical and often underutilized credentials that can provide graduates with an appealing combination of rapid postsecondary achievement and portable skills and knowledge." Reiterating that Certificates enable graduates to find immediate work and position them for future academic success, the report "advocates for a national goal to double the number of long-term certificates produced within the next five years, and then double that number again over the subsequent five years."

Other studies also demonstrate the value of certificate programs. According to the Center of Education and the Workforce at Georgetown



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University,” a post-secondary certificate adds almost \$117,000 in lifetime earnings (measured in 2004 dollars) over a high school diploma or those with no other degrees.”

Certificate programs have become more popular in recent years because they offer a way to advance skills and careers without spending the time and money to obtain a degree. While a bachelor’s degree typically takes at least four years to earn, and an associate’s degree at least two, certificate programs can often be completed in a year or less. The cost is lower too.

A certificate, of course, is not equivalent to a degree, and employers may still prefer an associate’s, bachelors, or graduate degree. But certificate programs are excellent options for people with jobs and families who want to take a first step toward a degree or learn specific skills to further their careers.

Our certificate courses are taught by adjunct faculty, who are current practitioners in the public and private sectors. This breadth of experience and diverse set of perspectives brings expertise and current hands-on approaches to the classroom. Through the Certificate Program, professionals from all sectors gain the knowledge and tools to manage projects successfully and make sound decisions about the challenges facing businesses in this global economy.