



Activities & Impact

C-BEN YEAR TWO REPORT

MARCH 2015-MARCH 2016



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Education Network

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A Welcome from the Chair of the C-BEN Board of Directors



As we reflect on what the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN) has accomplished during its second year, it is important to look back at our founding and first year to remind ourselves where we have come from and our original purpose. From its earliest days, C-BEN has been anchored by two core ideas and guided by three key questions:

These core ideas are:

- The work of C-BEN must flow from and respond to needs expressed by the field.
- Progress on common challenges is best achieved through collaboration among institutions facing similar challenges in different settings.

Our guiding questions are:

- What constitutes high-quality CBE program design?
- What are the features of valid and reliable assessment of student learning in CBE programs?
- What are the business processes and “back office” systems needed to support scalable CBE programs?

C-BEN has grown to represent 82 campuses—30 individual institutions and four public systems. Together, our member have adopted the vision of collaborating to help competency-based learning become a strong and legitimate pathway to high-quality degrees and credentials that is based in evidence and outcomes and that is widely understood.

While we are immensely proud of the work our members have done, we know that our job has only begun. Looking ahead, we must focus on sharing our work more widely as awareness and interest continues to grow in this field. We must also plan for a sustainable future for the network and to that end, I’m pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Charla Long as C-BEN’s first executive director. Bringing warmth, vision and a commitment to collaboration befitting this unique and transformative network of colleges and universities, Charla is poised to lead us through this next phase of design and development.

Over the past year, C-BEN has hosted three in-person working meetings for members and three four-month collaborative work cycles. During the last work cycle, we sharpened our focus to 12 topic areas we believe are most important to building scalable, quality CBE programs. You’ll learn more about these topic areas in this report.

While we are immensely proud of the work our members have done, we know that our job has only begun. Looking ahead, we must focus on sharing our work more widely as interest continues to grow in this field. We must also plan for C-BEN’s future. As you read about the last year of our journey in the pages that follow, keep in mind that although the road facing innovating institutions is long and sometimes arduous, at the same time it is invigorating and hopeful. We believe the work of C-BEN institutions is truly making a positive difference in the higher-education field today. We invite you to learn with us at www.cbenetwork.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie G. Dodge".

Laurie Dodge
Chair of C-BEN Board of Directors

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A Year of Advancement

Few issues enjoy the same widespread bipartisan agreement that higher education does. Regardless of party affiliation or ideological orientation, a vast majority of leaders in this country agree that we need a more educated population and significantly more people with high-quality postsecondary credentials.

At present, however, far too few learners achieve their goals and too many leave school with too much debt. Employers continue to bemoan the gap between what they need and what higher education provides in terms of work readiness. Doubts about the value of college continue to grow in the minds of prospective and current students, and colleges and universities continue to face unprecedented financial challenges.

Most colleges and universities are facing increasing competition and shrinking resources while simultaneously attempting to serve ever-increasing numbers of learners with unprecedentedly diverse needs. The “traditional” student who arrives at college academically prepared and with full financial support from parents or family is no longer the norm. The “new traditional” student is most often working full-time, has complicated family obligations, is an unconfident learner or a returning adult... or all of the above. Racial, ethnic and socioeconomic inequities continue to grow in higher education. And across the country, more than 31 million adults have some college experience, but no degree or certificate.

Increasingly, educators and policymakers are recognizing the challenge of improving completion rates for postsecondary credentials and reducing student debt while improving graduates’ competency alignment to the needs of employers, communities



and our national goals. There is growing consensus across ideological and partisan lines that high-quality, scalable new models and options must emerge if we are to solve this puzzle.

Out of this need comes competency-based education (CBE) and the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN). Though CBE—flexibly paced programs of learning in which progress toward a degree is determined by what students demonstrate they learn and are able to do, regardless of time spent in a classroom—is not a new idea, the interest in scaling it up for millions of students is. Advances in technology, cognitive science, predictive analytics, and instructional design create new opportunities for modern innovators. C-BEN is a group of colleges and universities working together to define the best practices in this emerging field of higher education. These institutions have agreed to assume responsibility for collectively leading the development of a healthy field of practice and for working together to help each institution meet its goals of building high-quality, sustainable models of CBE by sharing information.

In its second year, the Network has grown to 30 individual colleges and universities and four public systems with 82 campuses. These institutions either offer full degree sequences that are competency-based or are on their way to creating them. Together, C-BEN's members are working to address shared challenges to designing, developing, and scaling competency-based degree programs. Questions around the characteristics of good program design, of valid and reliable assessment, and of strong program infrastructure animate and guide the work of C-BEN members.

C-BEN is funded by Lumina Foundation to support policy and related convenings intended to create conditions likely to support the spread of CBE, especially as a means of educating underserved students. As C-BEN's work has advanced and the Network has grown and matured,

Lumina also has supported efforts by C-BEN to have its own separate and distinct voice in policy matters. Over the long term, Lumina Foundation is interested in what an independent future for C-BEN would look like. The Network is facilitated by Public Agenda and has its own board of directors, led by Laurie Dodge, vice chancellor of institutional assessment and planning and vice provost at Brandman University and co-chaired by Kris Clerkin, executive director of College for America at of Southern New Hampshire University.

In year two of collaboration, the Network advanced the CBE movement with several key pieces of work and events in which education innovators came together to learn from one another. C-BEN participated in research that led to the creation of a list of design elements all CBE programs should have. C-BEN became co-sponsor and lead content provider for CBExchange, a major conference supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation. Other project sponsors included the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), the American Council on Education (ACE), EDUCAUSE, and the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN). Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and Quality Matters (QM) served as thought partners. C-BEN research also informed the design and build of an interactive tool, the CBE Design Planner, to help institutions interested in CBE consider ways to design their own programs.

Going forward, C-BEN will continue to build out the CBE Design Planner interactive tool, and to elevate the profiles of institutions innovating on behalf of strong, high-quality, and scalable CBE programs that better meet the needs of learners of all backgrounds.

This report shares the highlights from C-BEN's second year. We invite you to learn more about us in the following pages and at www.cbenetwork.org.

“C-BEN is a group of colleges and universities working together to define the best practices in this emerging field of higher education.”

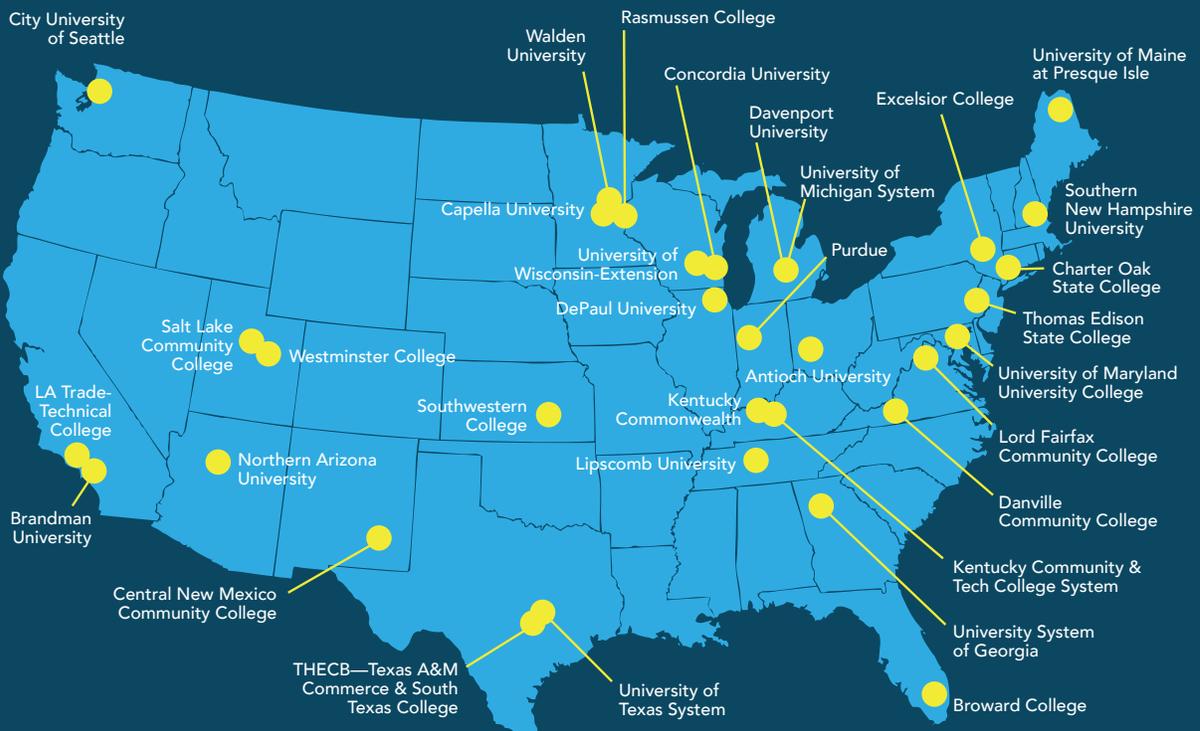
C-BEN Institutions

The network consists of 17 institutions and two public systems serving 42 campuses that offer or will offer CBE programs with well-defined learning outcomes and rigorous assessments. The membership works collaboratively to provide an evidence-based approach to advancing CBE across the country.

Antioch University
 Brandman University
 Broward College
 Capella University
 Central New Mexico Community College
 Charter Oak State College
 City University of Seattle
 Concordia University (WI)
 Danville Community College
 Davenport University
 DePaul University
 Excelsior College
 Kentucky Commonwealth
 Kentucky Community & Technical College System
 Lipscomb University
 Lord Fairfax Community College
 Los Angeles Trade-Technical College
 Northern Arizona University

Purdue University
 Rasmussen College (MN)
 Salt Lake Community College
 Southern New Hampshire University
 Southwestern College (KS)
 Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
 (South Texas College And Texas A&M
 University-Commerce)
 Thomas Edison State College
 University of Maine at Presque Isle
 University of Maryland University College
 University of Michigan
 University of Texas System
 University of Wisconsin-Extension
 University System of Georgia
 Walden University
 Westminster College

This map details where the C-BEN institutional members are located throughout the country.



C-BEN Board of Directors

The Board of Directors, led by Laurie Dodge of Brandman University, is comprised of CBE innovators from participating C-BEN institutions. The Board been influential in guiding the organization's direction and priorities, while promoting membership engagement and ensuring the success of the network.

Laurie Dodge	C-BEN Board of Directors Chair Brandman University, Vice Provost & Vice Chancellor
Kristine Clerkin	C-BEN Board of Directors Co-Chair College for American at Southern New Hampshire University, Executive Director
Myk Garn	University System of Georgia, Assistant Vice Chancellor for New Learning Models
Fred Hurst	Northern Arizona University, Senior Vice President for Extended Campuses
Ed Klonoski	Charter Oak State College, President
David Schejbal	University of Wisconsin - Extension, Dean, Continuing Education, Outreach and E-Learning
Linda Schott	University of Maine at Presque Isle, President
Marni Baker Stein	University of Texas System, Chief Innovation Officer



Current State of Affairs in Washington D.C.

By Amy Laitinen, Director for Higher Education, New America



This is certainly an interesting time to be in D.C. As you might imagine, all anyone can talk and think about are the twists and turns of the presidential primary election. And though competency-based education has not emerged as an issue on the campaign trail, the election does affect the federal CBE landscape.

On the Executive side, President Obama has less than a year to make final pushes on policy. On the Legislative side, Congress members do not have much will to pass big legislation unless it makes a political statement that they can leverage back home with voters. And the Inspector General just keeps plugging away, uninterested in and unaffected by the political winds.

In terms of executive actions, it's unlikely we'll see large new CBE-related initiatives from the Administration. The question is, how much attention will the Administration pay to implementation and evaluation of initiatives already underway? While the Program Participation Agreements (PPAs) for the first round of CBE-related experiments (hybrid, full CBE, and Prior Learning Assessment) are in universities' hands and the PPAs for the subscription-model experiment should be coming soon, the experiments don't seem to be off the ground. There are delays on both sides. The Department of Education says it is waiting for institutions to submit accreditation letters. Colleges and universities cite a number of reasons for their delays, including waiting for internal approvals, accreditor approvals, and/or guidance from the Department. Clearly we need to resolve these issues so that these experiments can start in earnest.

Another area of interest for the Department is the issue of “regular and substantive interaction” between faculty and students in CBE programs, which the Inspector General (IG) continues to raise. The danger is that the IG will find that some CBE programs will not meet the “regular and substantive interaction” requirement established by Congress, which is interpreted by both the Department of Education and the Inspector General. Were this to happen, programs like Western Governors University—which is currently being audited by the IG—could be considered “correspondence education” and therefore be eligible for far less federal aid. This would be a major blow to students in these types of CBE programs and a huge black eye to both the Administration and Congress, because they have held up CBE as an innovative model worth scaling.

Ted Mitchell, Under Secretary of Education, has said that addressing the “regular and substantive” issue is one of his top three priorities before the end of the Administration. While this is good to hear, it is unclear how much authority the Department has to fix this on its own. The Department did try to create a broader understanding of “regular and substantive interaction” in the guidance issued to schools participating in the CBE experimental sites, but was told by the Inspector General not to apply that interpretation to all CBE programs. The Department has set up an internal working group to try and identify solutions. Ultimately, however, a long-lasting fix can only come from Congress.

Supporting CBE is still one of the few areas that has bipartisan support on Capitol Hill. Representatives Matt Salmon (R-AZ) and Jarod Polis (D-CO) introduced a CBE demonstration program bill that passed unanimously in the House a few years ago, but was never taken up by the Senate. These two members of Congress haven’t given up. They are reportedly working on a new CBE bill, one that would go well beyond a demonstration program. Since this bill has yet to be introduced, we have no details to report—but keep your eyes and ears open. As we’ve seen, however, introducing a bill isn’t the same as passing one, and it’s hard to know if this will rise to the level of “must pass” in an election year. Finding a fix to the “regular and substantive interaction” problem that could deny aid to tens of thousands of students, however, might feel more urgent for Congress.

There are a lot of moving (and sometimes not moving) pieces to this federal policy landscape. Let’s hope that the CBE conversation is more productive and less political than the other conversations happening now in D.C.!

Note: C-BEN provides policy research and information about CBE and other areas of interest to its members. C-BEN does not undertake legislative lobbying activity on behalf of its members. This Washington update is intended solely for your informational purposes and is not intended to reflect a view of support or opposition to any specific legislative proposals.

CBE & C-BEN Highlights: Year Two

In its second year, C-BEN has emerged as a dominant and influencing force in the advancement of CBE. This increased influence has come from the work that C-BEN members are producing and disseminating about the best design practices for CBE programs, as well as the opportunities C-BEN offers for educational innovators to gather and share ideas and information.

One of C-BEN's biggest moves in year two was to expand. In response to the growing interest and demand from the field, the Network's Board of Directors expanded membership in early 2015 to now include 30 colleges and universities and four public systems with 82 campuses. This expansion allows C-BEN to ramp up progress on meeting common challenges to this new model of higher education. Growing the membership also increases C-BEN's ability to shape the national policy conversation around competency-based education.

Year two also brought a reorganization of our work to better meet the needs of our members and the CBE field at large. This was based on valuable feedback

Key CBE Happenings: March 2015–March 2016

This timeline shows the most important CBE happenings between March 2015 and March 2016, along with C-BEN's contributions to advancing the field and sustaining the movement.

MARCH 2015

- C-BEN holds its spring convening in Austin, TX, and 13 colleges and universities and two public higher-education systems join C-BEN.

JUNE 2015

- The Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), composed of seven regional accrediting agencies, **releases guidance**.
- The U.S. Department of Education releases guidance for institutions seeking to develop CBE programs.

JULY 2015

- C-BEN holds its summer convening in Cleveland, OH. The C-BEN Board of Directors begins discussions on the future of the Network after year three, when Lumina Foundation funding ends.
- C-BEN releases two communications documents to help its members explain competency-based education:

What Is Competency-Based Education? About C-BEN

<http://www.cbenetwork.org/about/about-the-network/>

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

<http://www.cbenetwork.org/about/c-ben-frequently-asked-questions/>

- The U.S. Senate Education Committee holds hearings to explore the opportunities and barriers within innovation. Much of the conversation centers on CBE.

from C-BEN members at the 2015 summer convening, as well as input from C-BEN's project leaders, its Board of Directors, and experts from Lumina Foundation and Public Agenda. Building on the strong work done by members in year one, C-BEN was able to restructure its work to sharpen its focus on the current needs of its members and the wider field. Those needs include:

- Convenings that provide opportunities to network and connect and include content on topics of key interest
- Work between convenings that is aligned with the goals of pushing more information and knowledge out to the field

Building a solid and deep field of knowledge about designing and running CBE programs is both wanted and needed. At the CBExchange conference last fall, C-BEN's leadership confirmed a great appetite for more knowledge in the wider field. C-BEN is uniquely equipped to provide that knowledge, because its members are leaders in competency-based education programs.

Feedback from the conference also revealed that not everyone in the field understands what C-BEN does. C-BEN must increase awareness of its

SEPTEMBER 2015

- The Office of the Inspector General (IG) issues critical audit on the review process the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) used when considering institutional CBE programs.
- The U.S. Department of Education releases its reference guide for CBE experimental site projects.
- Nearly 300 people attend CBExchange in Phoenix, AZ, the first major conference of colleges and universities with CBE programs. There, Public Agenda releases its guide to what's working in thriving CBE programs:

Shared Design Elements and Emerging Practices of Competency-Based Education Programs

http://www.cbenetwork.org/sites/457/uploaded/files/Shared_Design_Elements_Notebook.pdf

DECEMBER 2015

- C-BEN holds its winter convening in San Diego, CA. Strand leads and co-leads are recognized for their outstanding leadership.
- C-BEN releases a research publication about program design expectations of CBE institutions:

Faculty and Staff Roles and Responsibilities in the Design and Delivery of Competency-Based Programs: A C-BEN Snapshot

<http://online.flipbuilder.com/cvra/fhkz/>

accomplishments and accumulated work. It must also find the best ways to disseminate these learnings to the field. We believe this is of paramount importance going forward.

C-BEN's most significant work in year two was a trio of elements that build on one another and the past work of the Network. These elements are: the Shared Design Elements and Emerging Practices of Competency-Based Education Programs (a resource guide developed by Public Agenda to guide the program support processes); 12 Topic Areas of Work (a reorganization of C-BEN's previous work strands); and the CBE Design Planner (C-BEN's interactive design tool, populated by the information created in the 12 Topic Areas of Work).

This reorganization that occurred at the end of 2015 does not represent an abandonment of the prior work. Rather, the reorganized work builds directly on what has been accomplished.

Finally, year two brought upon an effort to explore the future of the Network. Under the leadership of the Board and its new Executive Director, C-BEN began a process, which will continue into year three and beyond, to design and test various models that integrate the pursuits of C-BEN's purpose with financial sustainability.

JANUARY 2016

- WGU reveals an ongoing audit by the OIG related to issues around "regular and substantive interaction."
- Competency-Based Education Ecosystem Framework, a detailed description of what competency-based education looks like from the perspectives of various stakeholders, is released. It gives common language for the development of high-quality programs.
- A research brief on the survey of the Shared Design Elements and Emerging Practices of Competency-Based Education Programs, which details the results from the largest field survey of CBE programs, is released.

MARCH 2016

- C-BEN releases a revised **definition of CBE**.
<http://www.cbenetwork.org/competency-based-education/>
- C-BEN releases three resource guides to help institutions with CBE implementation:
 - Questions Every Financial Aid Professional Should Ask About Competency-Based Education Programs: A Resource Guide**
http://www.cbenetwork.org/sites/457/uploaded/files/QuestionsFinancialAidProfessionalsShouldAskCBE_CBEN_2016.pdf
 - Understanding the Academic Calendar: A Resource Guide**
http://www.cbenetwork.org/sites/457/uploaded/files/UnderstandingTheAcademicCalendar_CBEN_2016.pdf
 - Questions Information Technology Professionals Should Ask About Competency-Based Education Programs: A Resource Guide**
http://www.cbenetwork.org/sites/457/uploaded/files/QuestionsInformationTechnologyProfessionalsShouldAskCBE_CBEN_2016.pdf

C-BEN Outputs

C-BEN produced a number of publicly available research papers and information documents in year two. They include:



What Is CBE & C-BEN?

This document helps explain CBE and C-BEN.



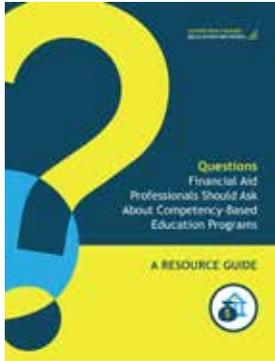
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

An FAQ document specific to C-BEN was developed to answer questions and general inquiries about competency-based education. It also includes answers to basic questions about the Network: what it is, how to apply for memberships, and who the C-BEN members are.



Faculty and Staff Roles and Responsibilities in the Design and Delivery of Competency-Based Programs: A C-BEN Snapshot

This report presents the initial results of a C-BEN survey focused on cataloging the roles and responsibilities of faculty and staff involved in designing and delivering CBE curricula at the 30 colleges and universities and four public university systems within C-BEN. These institutions include community colleges, colleges, universities, and state systems. Public, nonprofit, and for-profit schools are all represented. The research was conducted between June and July 2015 with the support of Public Agenda.



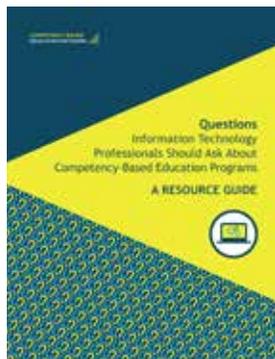
Questions Every Financial Aid Professional Should Ask About Competency-Based Education Programs: A Resource Guide

C-BEN created this resource for financial aid professionals so that they can support competency-based innovation on their campuses. It is important because institutional leaders have many questions about financial aid when they are designing and implementing a competency-based program.



Understanding the Academic Calendar: A Resource Guide

C-BEN created this resource to help higher-education professionals better understand definitions and terms related to the academic calendar.



Questions Information Technology Professionals Should Ask About Competency-Based Education Programs: A Resource Guide

C-BEN created this resource for information technology professionals so they can support competency-based innovation on their campuses. Raising these questions will ensure institutions have the technological systems needed to launch and scale sustainable competency-based education (CBE) programs on their campuses.

C-BEN Definition of CBE

In March, C-BEN released a revised definition of CBE. The updated definition: Competency-based education combines an intentional and transparent approach to curricular design with an academic model in which the time it takes to demonstrate competencies varies and the expectations about learning are held constant. Students acquire and demonstrate their knowledge and skills by engaging in learning exercises, activities, and experiences that align with clearly defined programmatic outcomes. Students receive proactive guidance and support from faculty and staff. Learners earn credentials by demonstrating mastery through multiple forms of assessment, often at a personalized pace.

Year Two Highlight: C-BEN Leadership at CBExchange



Last fall, C-BEN co-sponsored and provided content leadership for a first-of-its-kind conference for colleges and universities interested in building CBE programs. Along with fellow co-sponsors Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), American Council on Education (ACE), and EDUCAUSE, and with the thought partnership of The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and Quality Matters (QM), C-BEN led nearly 300 people representing 150 institutions through three days of conversation and information sharing around successful competency-based education programs. CBExchange offered a chance for a wider array of colleges and universities interested in building CBE programs to learn from one another and experts about the conditions for quality programs that serve more students in new ways.

C-BEN, along with the other sponsors and partners, came to this work with a commitment to pool knowledge and expertise to both study the current field of practice and to support the healthy development of the field through listening, learning, and leading together.

CBExchange was the product of first-of-its-kind research and unprecedented collaboration among prominent national experts and experienced institutional practitioners. All the sessions at CBExchange were designed and delivered by C-BEN members in partnership with sponsors and thought partners. Through participation in CBExchange, C-BEN assumed its position as a field leader, alongside organizations with far longer histories and established reputations.

The overarching purpose of the conference was to help institutions think carefully and learn collaboratively about the most important decisions that must be made when building, refining, or scaling a high-quality CBE program. Quality was a major focus of every session, and information sharing was a key priority. CBExchange represented an unprecedented coming together of ideas and research, of theory and practice. C-BEN leadership in this setting was strong and visible.

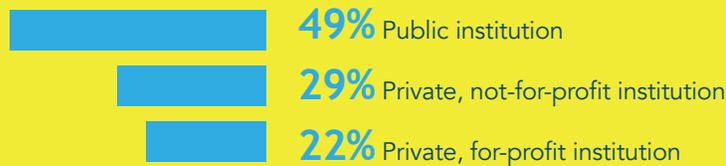
The variety of institutions represented spoke to the wide and rapidly expanding interest in CBE across the country. Attendees came from a mix of public institutions and private institutions, both not-for-profit and for-profit. They were from community colleges, liberal arts colleges, comprehensive and research universities, and special-focus institutions.

“Every single conversation I had at CBExchange was useful to me. I’ll apply this new knowledge in my daily work in learning design.”

The conference gave C-BEN a chance to showcase its work to a wider audience. Many of the attendees at CBExchange were newcomers involved in the planning process of a CBE program and interested in learning from experienced institutions about how to do it well. The material for the Design Planner and for the Shared Design Elements research paper derived from the hard work of C-BEN members during previous work cycles.

CBExchange was a success, creating a place for a large-scale exchange of ideas and sharing of knowledge, and C-BEN was key both to the convening and to the future of the work made possible by the collaboration among sponsors and partners. C-BEN has agreed to house all materials from the conference and ensure the development and continued provision of resources and knowledge to the field. C-BEN intends to host CBExchange annually, as the network continues to assist other institutions in building and scaling quality CBE programs.

Percentage of Attendees from Various Institutional Types



Percentage of Attendees by Institutional Class



Percentage of Attendees at Various Stages of CBE Program Development



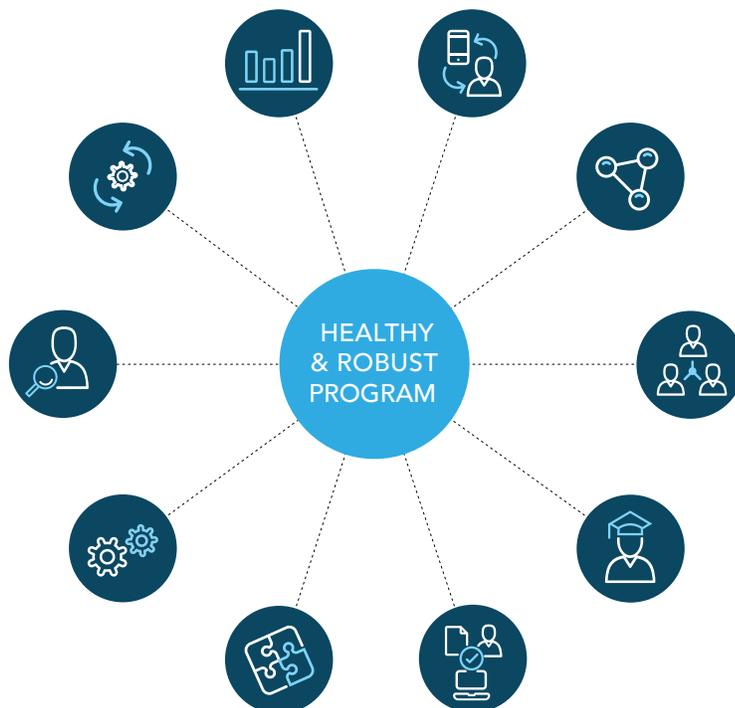
Year Two Highlight: C-BEN Drives the 10 Shared Design Elements and Emerging Practices of Competency-Based Education Programs

In January 2015, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation and in partnership with C-BEN institutions, Public Agenda set out to identify and articulate program design elements shared among quality CBE programs. Drawing heavily on primary research conducted by C-BEN institutions during work cycles, 10 elements were identified. These elements were vetted in collaboration with project sponsors, partners, and CBE program leaders both within and outside of C-BEN. Then the elements were validated through a comprehensive field survey. Project sponsors include the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), the American Council on Education (ACE), EDUCAUSE, and the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN). Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and Quality Matters (QM) serve as thought partners.



The 10 Shared Design Elements represent the fullness of a CBE program from organizational viability to the learning experience. These elements are broad and dynamic. Among them: engaged faculty, embedded processes for continuous improvement, and a coherent, competency-driven program and curriculum design. They also include: meaningful assessments and new or adjusted financial models.

Because different programs can and do put these elements into practice in a variety of ways, Public Agenda created a companion list of “emerging practices” that capture the range of activity. Informed by C-BEN research, and in collaboration with sponsors and thought partners, the Shared Design Elements were designed to become permanent pillars of CBE, while the emerging practices are understood as changing over time, because the field is young and continually evolving.



C-BEN's 12 Topic Areas of Work

Members are now divided into the 12 Topic Areas of Work. These 12 areas build directly on the work already under way and align with the most important products of that work to date: the CBE Design Planner (C-BEN's interactive design tool) and the recently released [Shared Design Elements of CBE](#). (Both products were previewed at [CBExchange](#) in September.) Three key questions guide the work of C-BEN:

- What constitutes high-quality program design?
- What does valid and reliable assessment look like?
- What are the business processes and systems needed to support scalable programs?

These questions formed the point of departure for the field scan and original research that resulted in the 12 topic areas.

The 12 Topic Areas of Work that members are divided into are:



1. Competency Statement Creation

This group focuses on how an institution determines its competencies, creates competency statements, and establishes the level of proficiency/mastery needed for a particular degree.



2. Coherent Competency-Driven Program Curriculum Design

This group focuses on topics related to curriculum sequencing, multiple and varied opportunities to develop and demonstrate competencies, personalization and modification flexibility, and the alignment of national norms and standards.



3. Continuous Improvement Design

This group focuses on how institutions create articulated and transparent program goals, measures of program quality, evaluation in design and delivery, safe spaces for innovation at multiple levels, and processes in which an institution listens and learns from the learner.



4. Technology & Systems

This group focuses on how business and technology processes and systems communicate with each other to enable aspects of program design, align with program structure and needs, create design solutions that are automated and/or compatible with each other, and create plans that prioritize program alignment and support.



5. Faculty Roles & Engagement

This group focuses on topics such as aligning CBE program outcomes with field and workforce needs, promoting faculty and staff involvement in driving design and delivery, ensuring that roles and responsibilities maximize talent and time, and ensuring that learner interactions with faculty and staff are meaningful, substantive, and sustained.



6. Student Support Structures & Services

This group focuses on topics related to the learner's needs as the focal point of a CBE program, ensuring that an institution values learners, provides learners choice and control over their academic experience, offers personalized support, and makes clear to students the pathways that connect program competencies to students' future goals.



7. Employer & External Partner Engagement

This group focuses on involving external partners and staff, ensuring that employers, alumni, and community leaders are informed and involved in appropriate ways, such as creating real-life teaching, training, and assessment opportunities through external partnerships.



8. Student Educational Journey

This group focuses on the student's experience with CBE and includes topics such as ensuring that the learner's experience is the focal point of a CBE program from entry (e.g., admissions and application) to exit, creating socially and culturally responsive learning environments, establishing clear and credential-appropriate expectations, and having challenging and engaging learning opportunities (work- and project-based).



9. Measurable & Meaningful Assessments

This group focuses on creating CBE program assessments designed to measure what matters, such as measuring students' mastery of competencies. Assessments should be frequent, both informal and formal, formative and summative, and rigorous, with clear and valid measures and real-time feedback to facilitate reflection and refinement.



10. Business & Financial Models

This group focuses on financial models that enable accessibility and affordability and ensure delivery of a quality program. This group also ensures that pricing models and cost structures align with program structures and schedules and prioritize access, equity, and compliance with any financial aid requirements. These models also offer flexible or alternative revenue sources.



11. Transcribing the Credentials

This group focuses on ensuring that progress to graduation is determined by the learner's development and demonstration of selected competencies. This group will also focus on topics such as how to ensure that credentials reflect the appropriate level of mastery of competencies; certifying that transcripts are credible, reliable reports that accurately reflect mastery; and following along with government and accreditation requirements.



12. Demand Analysis & Marketing

This group focuses on topics related to creating relevant structures and partnerships to assess field needs and learners' desires in the community to determine whether demand exists for CBE programs. This area also focuses on using transparent, understandable language and messaging about a program's design, cost, offerings, expectations, and benefits to the learner.

Plans for New Work

C-BEN's work has progressed to a place where its attention between convenings can now be placed on sharing its learning with the field. Before the spring 2016 convening, each of the 12 work groups will create a checklist of critical items for the specific topic area, as well as a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) document. Following the 2016 spring convening, the work will be extended to developing a case study and evidence base for each topic area. These case studies will go deeper into key issues and evidence related to issues of program quality and effectiveness.



Highlight: CBE Design Planner

Created by institutions for institutions, the new CBE Design Planner is an interactive tool that will help colleges and universities design, build, or scale a competency-based education program tailored to their specific situation and needs.

The planner, which was introduced as a prototype at CBExchange, is filled with resources to help institutions working with CBE. These resources come directly from the work of C-BEN members. The new 12 Topic Areas of Work that members are working on align with the elements of the planner.

You can check out the CBE Design Planner online:
<https://projects.invisionapp.com/share/P24CQ11A6#/screens>.

This tool represents the culmination of two years of experiments and work cycles of C-BEN members. Easy to use and loaded with information-rich resources that can be personalized to individual institutions and stages of program development, the CBE Design Planner is poised to be one of the most important and valuable things to come out of the Competency-Based Education Network. When colleges and universities use this tool, C-BEN will be fulfilling its goal of spreading its CBE knowledge widely in the field in order to help bring competency-based education to more students. It will also reinforce C-BEN's position as a leader in this field.

Going forward, the CBE Design Planner will include new resources that will be available at the April 2016 C-BEN convening. The planner will be fully built out by the end of 2016.

Moving Forward Together

The impact of C-BEN's commitment to the development and diffusion of high-quality CBE programs cannot be oversold. Together, the network has helped catalyze a movement that is poised to bring sweeping changes to multiple parts of the higher education landscape. From revolutionizing the student experience and the way that learning is assessed and valued, to demonstrating how CBE can meet educational goals, employer requirements and societal needs, C-BEN members have proven themselves to be a leading and thriving force in the formation and advancement of competency-based education.

In 2016, C-BEN will continue to provide a platform for engagement and ongoing program development and research that includes the build out of resources and tools for the benefit of the entire CBE community. The time is right, however, to also consider what comes next. How can C-BEN better serve institutions that will undoubtedly face even greater challenges as the higher education landscape adapts and evolves to this new delivery model? How best can it support innovation as more and more institutions continue to explore new ways of doing CBE? How can it sustain engagement over the long haul?



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CEBA 2017, WASH

September 26-27, 2017



About the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN)

The Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN) is a group of regionally accredited two- and four-year public and private colleges and universities working together to address shared challenges to designing, developing and scaling high-quality CBE programs. C-BEN institutions have developed or are developing affordable, high-quality CBE programs capable of serving many more students of all backgrounds. Additionally, member institutions are offering or will offer programs with well-defined learning outcomes and rigorous assessments. The C-BEN Board of Directors, comprising innovators from several participating institutions, guides the work to provide an evidence-based approach to advancing CBE across the country.

C-BEN can be found online at CBENetwork.org and on Twitter at [@CBENetwork](https://twitter.com/CBENetwork).

About Public Agenda

Public Agenda is a nonprofit organization that helps diverse leaders and citizens navigate divisive, complex issues. Through nonpartisan research and engagement, it provides people with the insights and support they need to arrive at workable solutions on critical issues, regardless of their differences. Since 1975, Public Agenda has helped foster progress on higher education affordability, achievement gaps, community college completion, use of technology and innovation, and other higher education issues.

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