

## The Growing Role of Micro-Credentials in GME

### Panelists:

- **Jeff Bieganeck (Moderator)**, Executive Director, MBA Roundtable
- **Brian Jennings**, Associate Dean, Grad Programs & Exec Ed, Georgia State University
- **Jon Masciana**, Senior Director, MBA Admissions, UC Irvine
- **Manuel Nunez**, Associate Dean, Grad Programs, Villanova University



# Panelists

---



**Jeff Bieganek (Moderator)**  
Executive Director  
MBA Roundtable



**Brian Jennings**  
Associate Dean,  
Grad Programs & Exec Ed  
Robinson College of Business  
Georgia State University



**Jon Masciana**  
Senior Director,  
MBA Admissions  
The Paul Merage School of Business  
UC Irvine



**Manuel Nunez**  
Associate Dean,  
Graduate Programs  
Villanova School of Business  
Villanova University

# Learning Outcomes for This Session:

---

1. Deepen understanding of certificate demand from prospective students and employers
2. Learn how to navigate internal and campus approval processes
3. Identify successful implementation strategies



# Terminology

---

- **Micro-credential:** Short, competency-based recognition that allows earner to demonstrate mastery in an area. May be verified by associations/corporations.
- **Stackable Credential:** Sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build earner's qualifications along career path, potentially toward degree.
- **Certificate:** Credential issued by institution in recognition of completion of curriculum, representing smaller domain of knowledge than degree.
- **Alternative Credential:** Umbrella term that can include micro-credentials, stackable credentials and certificates. Assessment-based, non-degree activities, that align to timely learner needs in the workforce.
- **Badge:** Digital credential that represents learner's achievement of learning or competencies. Learners often display badges to demonstrate gaining skills (e.g. Credly)





# Why Invest in Micro-Credentials?

---

- **Recruitment Tool:** Build brand awareness and showcase expertise. Learners may have incentive to pursue a degree program if degree-credit is offered.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Help change the relationship with your alumni from transactional to a lifelong partnership.
- **Market Satisfaction:** A response to demand from business and learners for more flexible, skills-based courses. They can be embedded into existing degree programs. Co-create high-quality learning experiences for a wide variety of learners.
- Micro-credentials should:
  - Meet the demands of employers; be flexible; Address in-demand skills; offer ability to roll credits into degree program

*This all sounds great, but will they cannibalize my part-time and executive programs?*







**THEN**



**NOW**

## Georgia State University

- 53,000 students
- \$2.6B annual economic impact to Metro Atlanta
- 11 colleges and schools
- Key rankings among all US universities:
  - #2 Most Innovative University *US News & WR (Sep. 2021)*
  - #2 Best Undergraduate Teaching *US News & WR (Sep. 2021)*
  - #11 Social Mobility *US News & WR (Sep. 2021)*

## Robinson College of Business

- Over 70,000 alumni
- Largest business school in South
- Over 1,700 graduate students across 17 programs
- Key rankings among public universities:
  - Top 25 Part-time MBA Program *US News & WR (Mar. 2021)*
  - #9 MS Analytics *US News & WR (Mar. 2021)*
  - #8 MS Marketing *TFE Times (Feb. 2022)*
  - #7 MS Information Systems *US News & WR (Mar. 2021)*
  - #7 Executive MBA *CEO Magazine (Feb. 2022)*
  - #5 MS Financial Engineering (QRAM) *TFE Times (Feb. 2022)*
  - #4 MS Real Estate *US News & WR (Mar. 2021)*
  - #2 MS Finance *TFE Times (Feb. 2022)*

## VISION

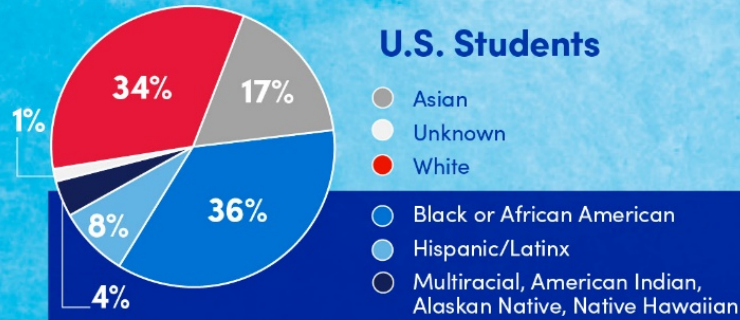
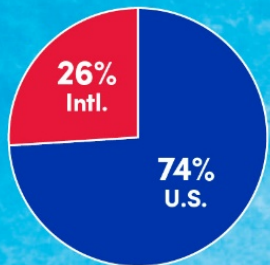
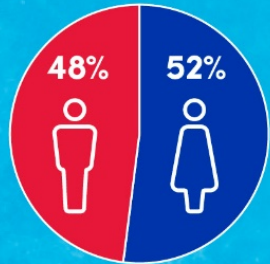
*Robinson is re-imagining innovation for all.*



# Robinson By The Numbers

Fall 2021 Graduate Student Community

  
**1,772**  
Students



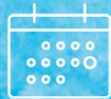
**48%**  
Historically Excluded Populations



**75**  
Countries



**30**  
States and D.C.



**30.8 years**  
Average Age



**4.6 years**  
Average Work Experience



**17**  
Graduate Programs

- Accountancy
- Actuarial Science
- Certificates in Innovation
- Commercial Real Estate
- Data Science & Analytics
- Executive Doctorate in Business Admin.
- Executive MBA
- Finance
- Global Hospitality Mgt.
- Health Administration
- Information Systems
- International Business
- Marketing
- MBA
- MBA/Health Administration
- Quantitative Risk Analysis
- Taxation



# Partnering with industry to identify unmet needs in the market.

---

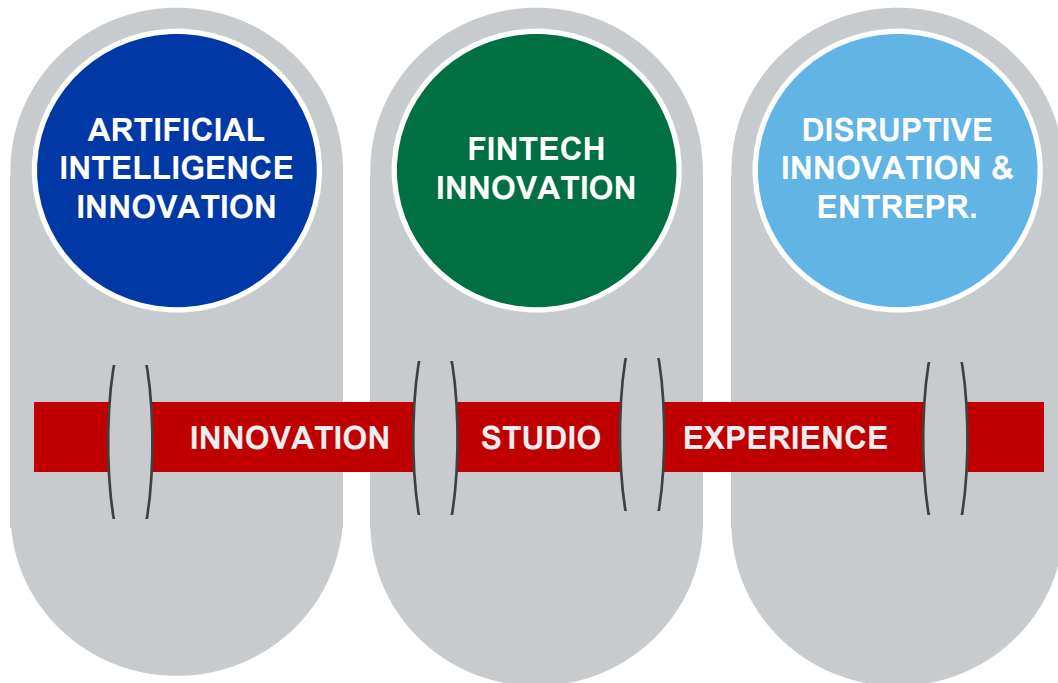


- Primary population: working professionals
- Academic credits pinpointed in targeted areas to address the future of work
- Key skills and capabilities:
  - “Digital fluency”
  - Innovation focus
  - Hands-on, experiential learning
- Flexible and accessible:
  - Speed-to-completion
  - Affordability
  - Face-to-face and/or “At distance” delivery



# Our response - Flexible graduate certificates in innovation.

---

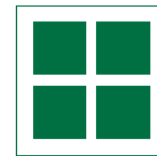


- 3 separate offerings
- 12 graduate credit hours
- Admission requirements same as GSU MBA program
- Time commitment:
  - 2 semester duration
  - 2 courses each semester
  - 2 nights / week of class
- Delivery - On-campus or “at distance”
- Tracks unified by Innovation Studio course
- Certificates can be taken on a stand-alone basis and also by current GSU graduate students

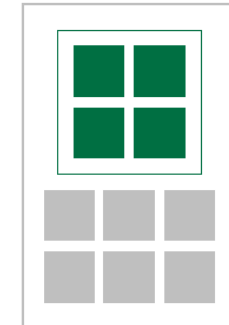
# What we have learned / the future.

---

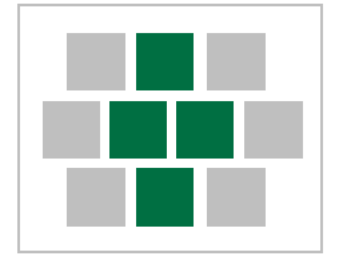
1. Understand your market segments
2. Flexibility is key
3. Match to market needs (outside-in approach)
4. Differentiate and tie to College strategy
5. B2B can work... but it's hard
6. Embrace the new student



Stand-Alone  
Certificate



Stackable  
into Degree



Embedded  
w/in Degree

A large digital display wall in a modern building hallway. The display features the Villanova 'V' logo at the top, followed by the text 'Developing Business Leaders For a Better World®'. To the right of the main display is a vertical screen showing a data visualization with a blue and green line graph.

Developing Business Leaders  
For a Better World®

## Undergraduate

7 majors

3 co-majors

1, 695 undergraduates

94% job placement rate

## Graduate

8 Programs

1, 026 Graduate Students

25% avg salary increase for

MBA grads

## VSB

6 Institutes & Centers of Excellence

31, 550 Alumni

#5

Best Online Degree Programs:  
Graduate Business in the Nation  
*U.S. News & World Report*

#9

Undergraduate  
Business School  
Ranking  
*Poets & Quants*

#16

Best Online MBA  
*U.S. News & World  
Report*

# THE VSB GRADUATE BUSINESS PORTFOLIO: A DEGREE FOR ANY POINT IN YOUR CAREER

## LAUNCH YOUR CAREER

### SPECIALIZED MASTERS

Recent graduates transitioning into the workforce or individuals seeking an industry-specific career change.

Obtain in-depth training in functional areas, enabling you to become a specialist within a specific discipline.

MASTER OF ACCOUNTING  
with  
DATA ANALYTICS

MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN FINANCE

MASTER OF SCIENCE  
IN BUSINESS  
ANALYTICS

MASTER OF  
BUSINESS TAXATION

MASTER OF  
SCIENCE IN  
CHURCH  
MANAGEMENT

## ADVANCE or PIVOT

### PROFESSIONAL PART-TIME MBA

Professionals with 4+ years of valuable work experience.

Broaden your business acumen, advance within your organization or change careers.

COHORT

CAMPUS/HYBRID

ONLINE

## LEAD THE WAY

### EXECUTIVE MBA






Seasoned professionals, typically with managerial responsibility.

Broaden your strategic leadership and overall business perspective without pausing your career.

EXECUTIVE MBA



# CURRENT BADGE PILOT TAXONOMY

		Pilot Badges			
Badge Type		Skill	Ability	Achievement	Certification
Type of Learning Activity		Learning event focused on specific competency in enumerated skill (training, workshop, etc.)	Formal course in University catalog, credit-bearing or non-credit bearing.	Successful completion of full learning program (multiple formal learning events, credit or non-credit). For instance, certificate program or specialization within a degree. "Ability" badges may stack to "Achievement."	Demonstrated competence in high-stakes environment.
Rigor of Assessment		Proficiency developed through training or experience. Measurable through assessment; observable; quantifiable.	Learning is measured and validated throughout experience.	Learning is measured and validated throughout each individual learning experience.	Successful demonstration of competence through formal assessment.
Criteria for Issuance			Formal passing grade at the conclusion using University grading scale(s).		
Associated Badge Label (Below ribbon)		Skill/Training	Course	Degree (MBA) Certificate	Certified
Example				 	

# Open Questions:

---

- **What should “progression” through a badging system look like?**
  - Certification and Achievement – which comes first?
- **What level of granularity is optimal (e.g. additional “levels” or “categories”)?**

# The Future:

---

- **Increase coordination with College of Professional Studies.**
- **Strengthen linkages between certificates and MBA specializations.**
- **Stackables**
- **Expand badging to include informal learning events.**
- **Increase alumni audience penetration.**



# UC Irvine's Merage School

- New Dean in 2021: Ian Williamson
- 2,000 students (~1,000 Undergraduate and ~1,000 Graduate students)
- Three MBA Programs and Four Specialty Master's Programs (Business Analytics, Accounting, Finance, Innovation)
- Brand theme: "Leadership for a Digitally Driven World"
- Test-piloting first "Graduate Management Certificate" (micro-credential) this year
- Degree Programs (MBA & Masters) separate from Exec Education Department



Graduate  
Management  
Admission  
Council™





# New Graduate Management Certificate

## Development

- UCI Grad Division now allows 20% of Graduate Degree Coursework to be fulfilled from Continuing Education (16 units)
- “Baby Step” Approach: All disciplines asked to contribute one course (9 courses offered)
- Certificate covers leadership, analytics, and organization & management courses
- Certificate courses count towards degree requirements for (only) part-time MBA

## Oversight & Marketing

- Joint oversight between Exec Ed and Part-Time MBA
- Not led by corporate demand
- B2C marketing approach through LinkedIn and inactive prospect lists



# What Have We Learned?

- Marketed new program both B2B and B2C
  - B2B: Corporate partners with strong relationships
  - B2C: Part-Time MBA inquiries who had not moved forward
- Pricing for each course similar to Part-Time MBA tuition, a hurdle for candidates paying out-of-pocket
- B2C approach was unsuccessful
  - We found that Part-Time MBA candidates are either “All-in” or pursuing a different option altogether
- B2B: Strong interest from corporate partners but low yield





# The Future.

## Respond to Internal and External Market Demand

- Convert MBA specializations to certificates to attract new MBA students and satisfy growing current student demand
- Create thematic micro-credentials designed for corporate partners (“Managing Virtual Workforce”)
- Add unique residential components (cornerstone for our MBA program experiences)
- Focus on some singular discipline and a few inter-disciplinary areas for credentials

# Questions?

---







©2021 Graduate Management Admission Council™ (GMAC™). All rights reserved.

# Resources:

---

- [Carrington Crisp Report – Presented to EMBA Council](#)
- [AACSB Article on Rise of Micro-Credentials](#)
- [AACSB Free Report on Micro-Credentials \(Connecting Business Schools and Business with Lifelong Learning\)](#)
- [UPCEA White Paper on Micro-Credentials](#)
- [Poets & Quants Article on University of Illinois & Google](#)

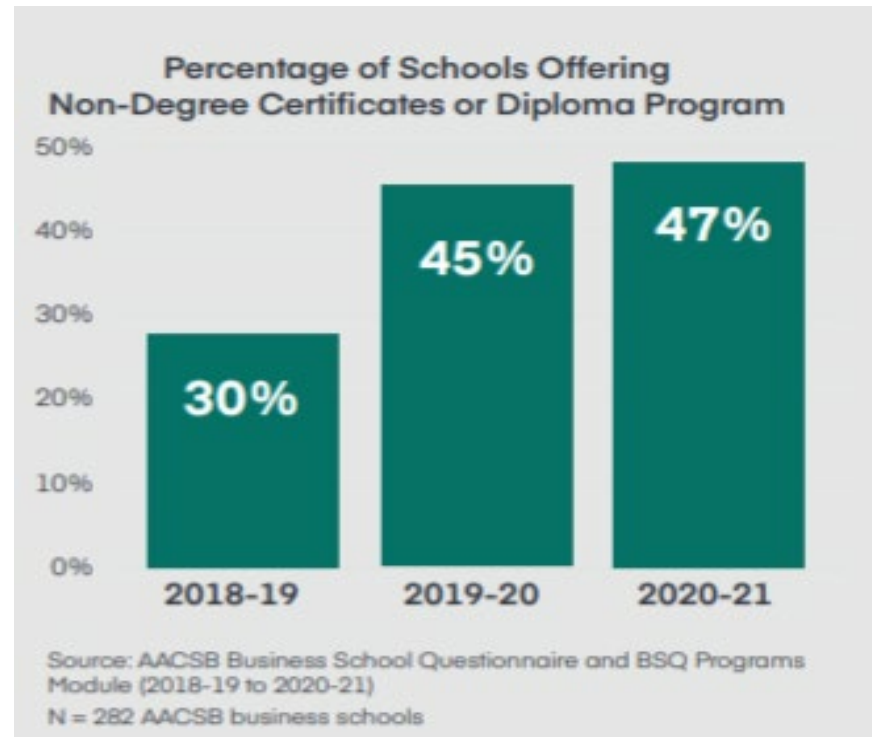
# Appendix

---



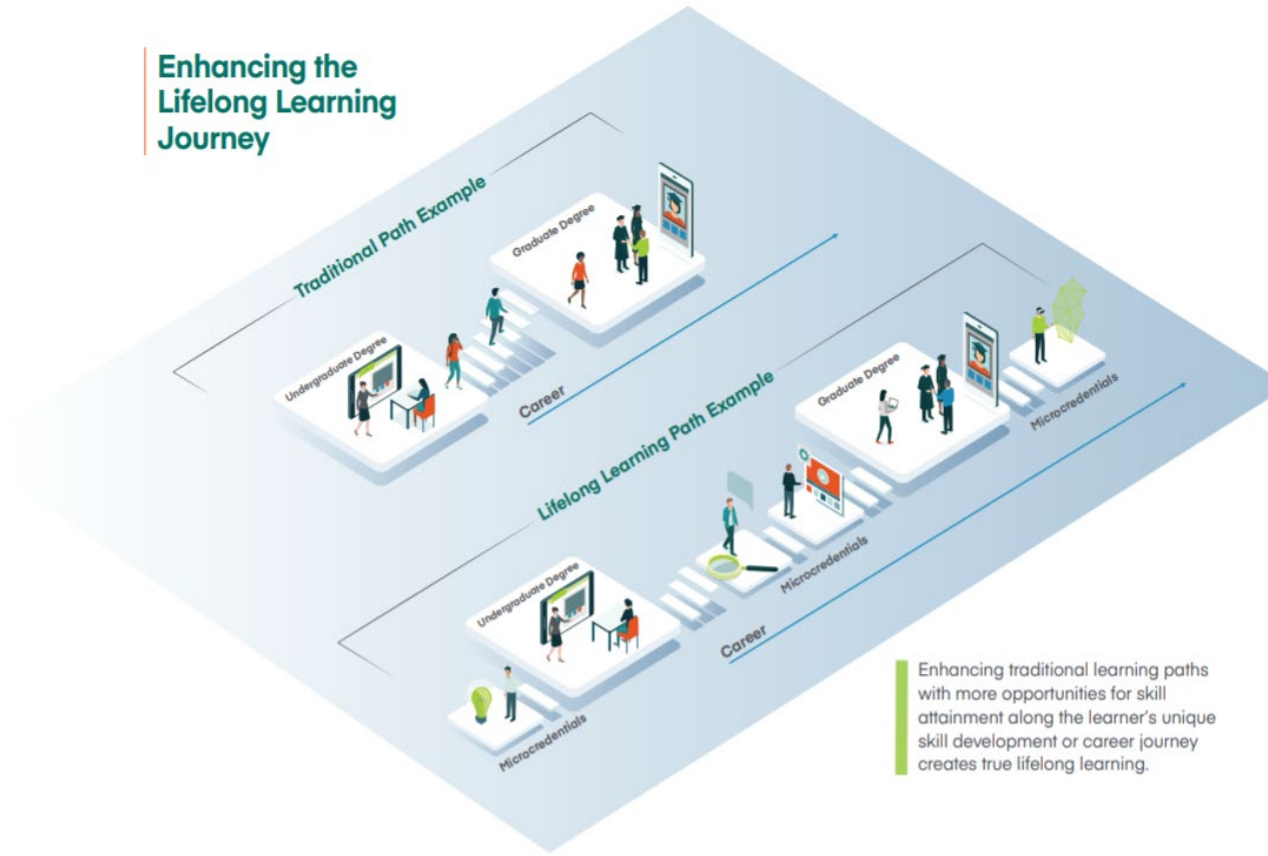
# AACSB Micro-Credential Study

---



# AACSB Micro-Credential Study

## Enhancing the Lifelong Learning Journey



Enhancing traditional learning paths with more opportunities for skill attainment along the learner's unique skill development or career journey creates true lifelong learning.



# AACSB: Corporate Demand for Micro-Credentials

---

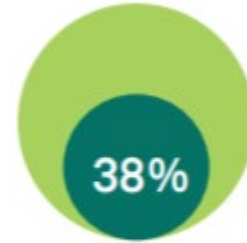
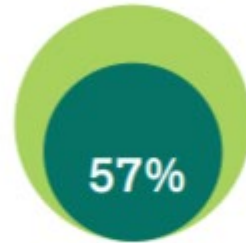
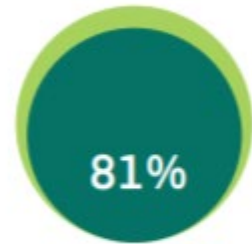
- Micro0credentials are ubiquitous among enterprise organizations.
  - 81% of organizations surveyed currently use micro-credentials.
  - Role for degree-based and micro-credential-based learning opportunities to coexist.
  - Degrees important but micro-credentials can provide flexible and in-time learning opportunities
- Tremendous opportunity for organizations to partner with business schools:
  - Top considerations for partnering with a micro-credential provider are:
    - Evidence of assurance of learning/high quality: 59%
    - Flexibility/customizability of offerings: 53%
    - Resources/associated costs for development and delivery: 47%
- Business schools well-positioned to partner with organizations and design micro-credentials that address organizational requirements of and career development opportunities for lifelong learners.
  - Business schools have experienced faculty, curriculum, assurance of learning, and infrastructure in place to support organizations in developing their own micro-credential programs.
  - Specific benefits of micro-credential learning compared to other forms of employee skill development include:
    - Flexibility: 48%
    - Customization options: 47%
    - Access to diverse expertise/subject matter expertise: 44%



# AACSB: Corporate Demand for Micro-Credentials

---

## Microcredentials: Who, Why, and How



- For leadership roles, an MBA continues to be a preferred credential, followed by a combination of degrees and micro-credentials.
- Within the lower ranks of an organization, greater acceptance for alternate ways to show skill attainment.
- Micro-credentials are a preferred skill credential for both team managers and entry-level positions

# AACSB: Corporate Demand for Micro-Credentials

---

Figure 3: Business concepts and skill areas very/moderately well-suited to being developed through microcredentials

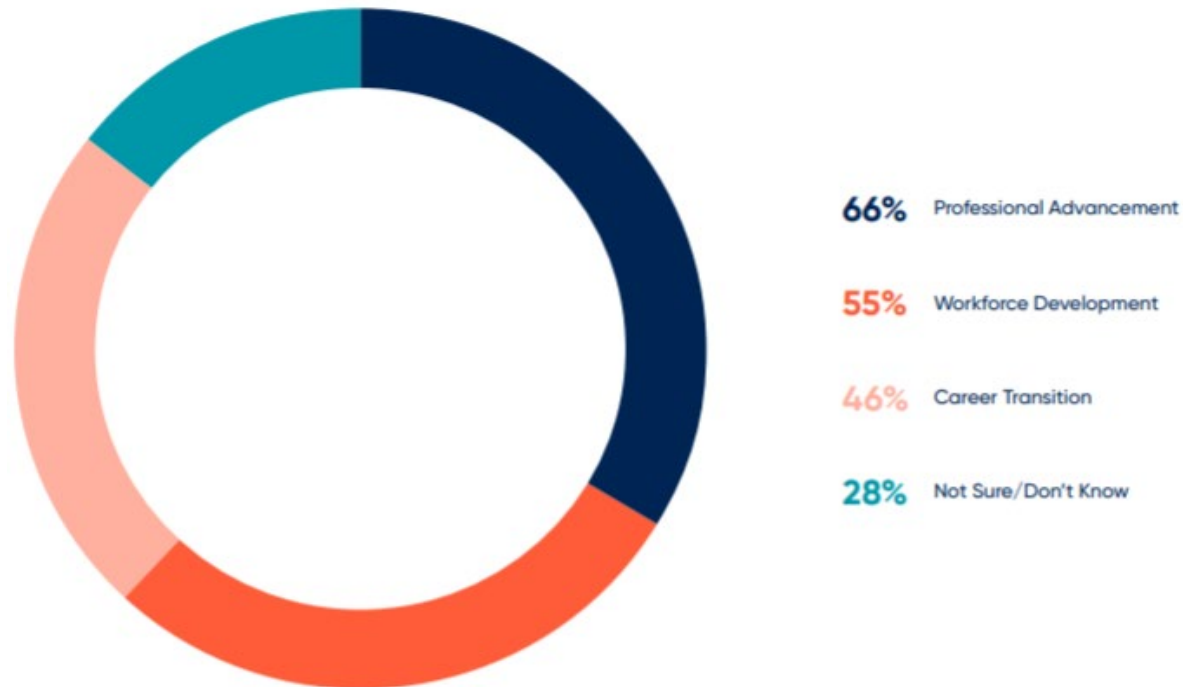


- Business schools should develop industry-specific micro-credentials focused on strategy or project management, in addition to soft skills
- Micro-credentials do not eliminate the need for a traditional degree or undermine their value
- Business schools will need to create new and/or stronger connections with business partners as well as seek collaborative opportunities with their business school peers and across the institution.
- An individual can obtain a degree and then pursue different micro-credentials throughout their professional career to continue upskilling

# UPCEA Survey Results (Online Institutions & Constituents)

---

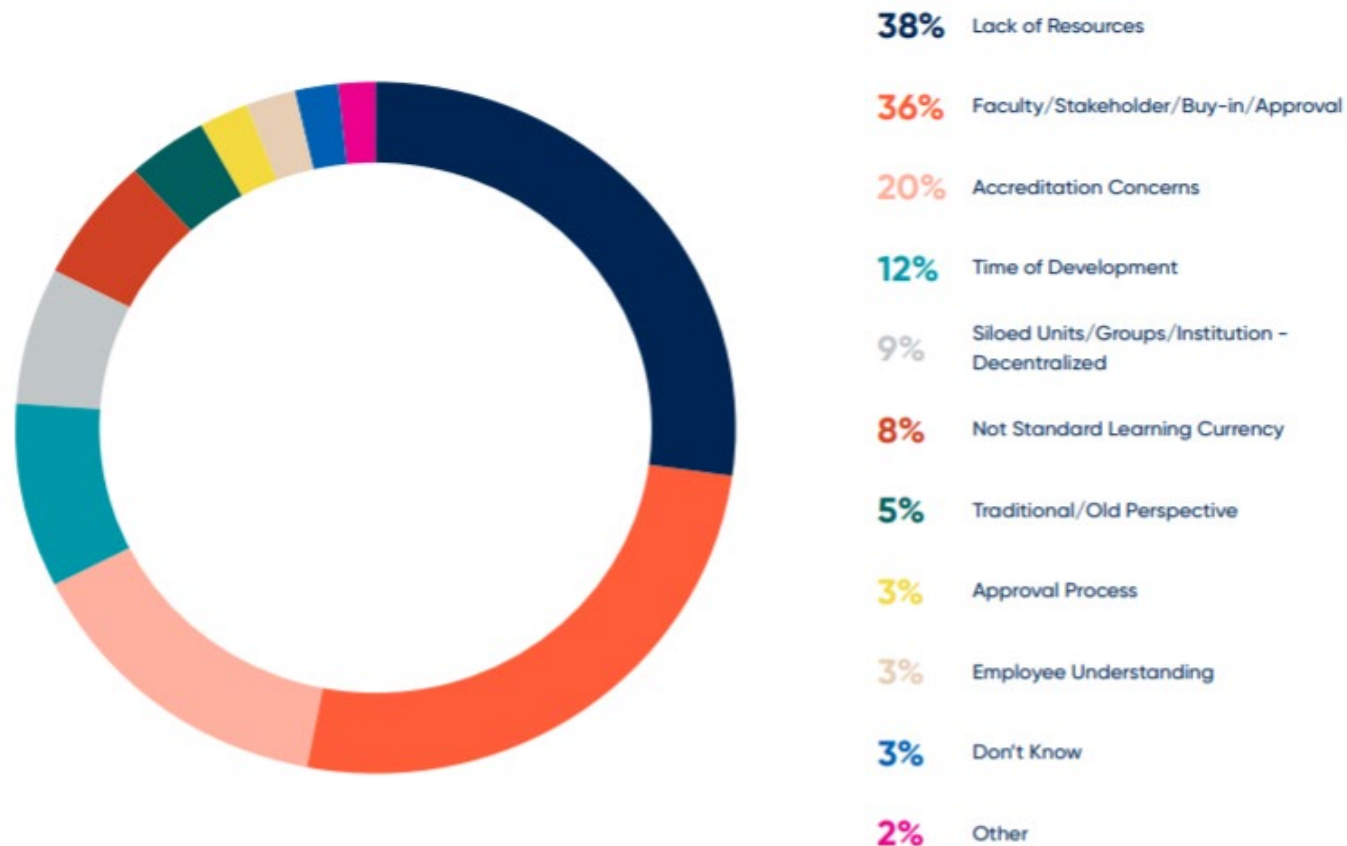
FIGURE 7: MICROCREDENTIAL TARGET AUDIENCE (N=589)





# UPCEA Survey Results (Online Institutions & Constituents)

FIGURE 25: CHALLENGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW CREDENTIALS (N=323)





©2021 Graduate Management Admission Council™ (GMAC™). All rights reserved.