

NORTH AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION WEBINAR SERIES

Educational Innovation and Transformation

Advancing Academic Mobility and Recognition of Studies



LesLee Eicher
Seattle University



Luis Alberto López Monreal
Tecnológico de Monterrey



Jan Smith
British Columbia Institute of
Technology



Annetta Stroud
AACRAO



AGENDA

Part 1 — National Responses to Educational Innovation

How are the three countries responding to the demand for more flexible, modular learning?

- United States
- Mexico
- Canada

Part 2 — Academic Mobility – What Works and What Doesn't

How credit transfer and equivalency actually function today

Recognition of prior learning – gaps and inconsistencies

Emerging best practices for smoother mobility

Part 1

National Responses to Educational Innovation

How are the three countries responding to the demand for more flexible, modular learning?

- United States
- Mexico
- Canada

PART 1 · NATIONAL RESPONSES TO EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

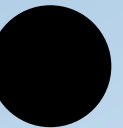
United States

Innovation in Flexible & Modular Learning

- Curriculum flexibility and competency-based models
- Microcredential growth and stackability
- Hybrid and lifelong learning trends
- Policy and accreditation forces driving change



Seattle University has met demand for flexible, modular learning mainly through stackable certificates that count toward master's degrees, online and hybrid degrees built for working professionals, and a move to semesters (beginning in Summer 2027), which are more flexible for professionals.



Increasing Flexibility

- Stackable certificates and curriculum flexibility
- Online and hybrid models
- Policy and structural drivers





Seattle University has stood behind its international students with legal consultations, SEVIS monitoring, flexible start dates and STEM programs that protect their career options. The next step is using our online and stackable programs to keep students connected when travel bans or visa delays keep them from arriving.



Specifically for International Students



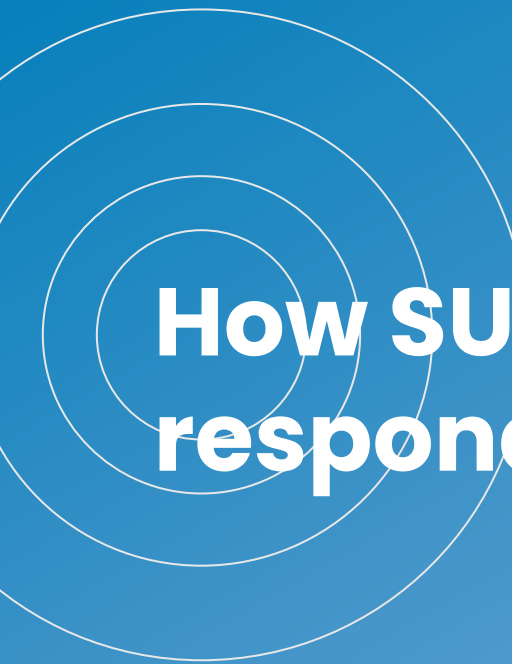
Outlook

Federal Landscape (as of September 2026)

- Travel ban (since Jan. 1, 2026)
- Revoked visa status (spring 2025)
- Pending rules
- H-1B

In a spring 2026 IIE survey, 63% of US institutions expect international enrollment to fall and 65% report fewer graduate applications. Visa barriers are the top cause.





How SU is responding

1

Leadership and legal support

2

Flexible entry

3

Lowering barriers to admission

4

Partnerships



PART 1 • NATIONAL RESPONSES TO EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

Mexico

Innovation in Flexible & Modular Learning

- Modular and flexible education reforms
- Microcredentialing efforts and emerging frameworks
- Access and equity considerations

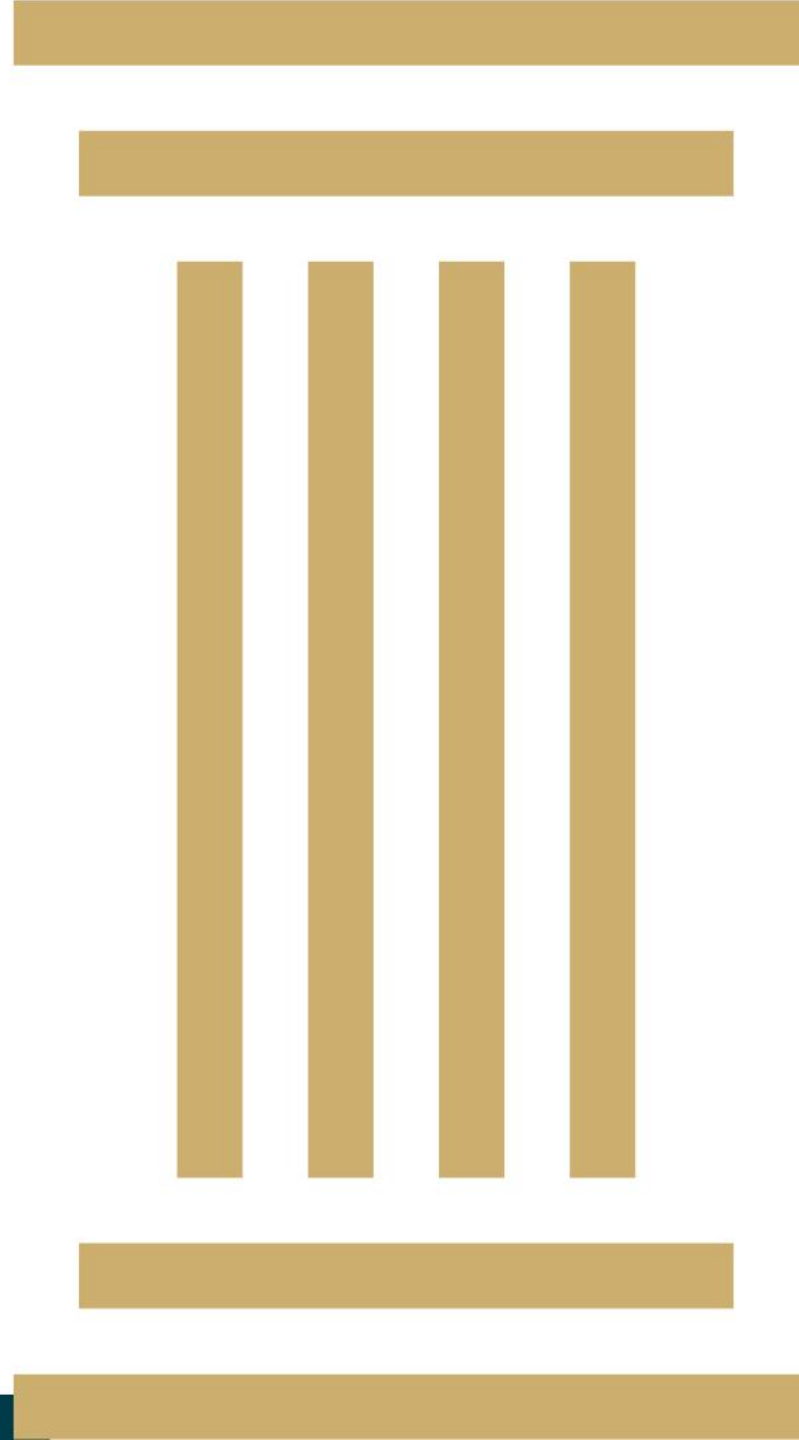
Advancing Academic Mobility and Recognition of Studies

The view from Mexico

Luis Alberto López Monreal

Director of Academic Regulations and Management, Tecnológico de Monterrey

Vice President, ARSEE



National Responses

How is Mexico responding to the demand for more flexible, modular learning?



Key message

Mexico already has much of the legal framework for flexibility. The challenge is operational: how we recognize, record and make that learning portable.



Legal framework



Microcredentials



Digital records



Equity

Part 1 • Mexico

The law is not the main obstacle today



1. A legal framework that already speaks of flexibility

- General Law of Higher Education : flexible pathways; in-person, distance and blended modes; lifelong learning
- Duty to ease student transfer between institutions and subsystems
- SEP Agreement 17/11/17 (RVOE): credit and hour criteria that allow flexible program design
- Marco General de Qualificaciones



2. A diverse system: strength and challenge

- Public universities, technological institutes, teacher colleges and private institutions
- Diversity drives innovation...
- ...but each institution decides how it counts credits and what it recognizes
- For a mobile student, this diversity feels like friction

Part 1 • Mexico

Modular learning needs modular records



3. Microcredentials: growing, but outside the official system

- Growing through continuing education and partnerships with companies and platforms
- No national framework for quality or for stacking toward a degree
- CONOCER certifies work competencies, with little link to academic credit
- Constancia de Situación Profesional



4. Some Mexican Universities experience

- Academic model: competencies, challenge-based learning, industry partners
- Alternative credentials integrated and stackable with degree programs
- Verifiable digital diplomas and credentials
- Lesson: flexible teaching needs flexible regulations and records that can capture it

Part 1 • Mexico

Next step: a shared recognition infrastructure



5. Digital student records

- Electronic diplomas and certificates with e-signature and online validation
- Electronic professional license (cédula)
- A foundation for verifiable, portable credentials



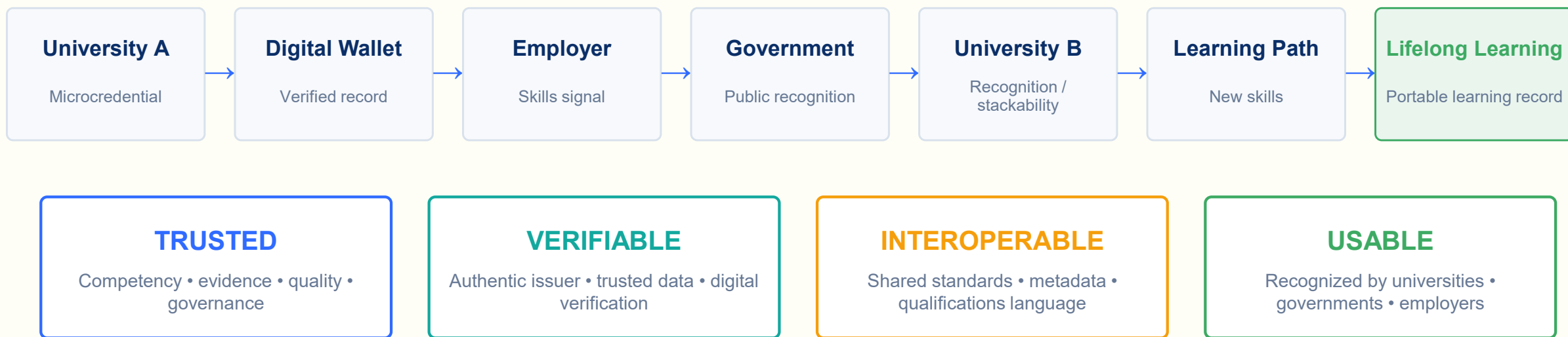
6. Flexibility means equity

- About 6 in 10 young people of college age are not enrolled
- Working, part-time, binational and returning migrant students
- Leaving and returning without losing credit is what lets them finish

Student services turn policy into a transcript, a certificate or a recognition decision.

The goal is not a digital credential...

...The goal is a lifelong learning ecosystem.



“The credential should belong to the learner – not to the platform.”

Digital standards allow trust to travel. Institutions, governments and employers must build the trust that travels.

Canada

Innovation in Flexible & Modular Learning

- Provincial and territorial variation in flexible learning models
- Credential innovation and stackable pathways
- Lifelong learning initiatives across the system



Jan Smith, Registrar
British Columbia Institute of Technology
2026.09.25



Photo by [Drahomír Hugo Posteby-Mach](#) on [Unsplash](#)

10 Provinces:

Under the Constitution Act of 1867, provincial governments hold exclusive responsibility for Education.

3 Territories:

Delegated Federal responsibility



BRITISH COLUMBIA
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



BC Transfer History/Foundation

- 2000: Associate Degrees & Full Block Transfer
- 2005: Student Transitions Project
- 2008: Added ABE & EAL into transfer system
- 2009: Alberta Institutions in BC Transfer System
- 2011: BC Transfer system multi-directional (senders & receivers)
- 2014: BCCAT signs a formal MOU with parallel councils in Alberta, Ontario and New Brunswick to facilitate inter and intra provincial credit transfer.
- 2017: 7 Provincial councils sign MOU (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Nova Scotia)



British Columbia Council
on Admissions & Transfer

Flexible/Micro-Credentials Lifelong Learning

BC Provincial Micro-Credential Framework (2021)

- Short, focused programs that teach skills needed for jobs or community. Employer and school recognized.

BCcampus Micro-Credential Toolkit (2023)

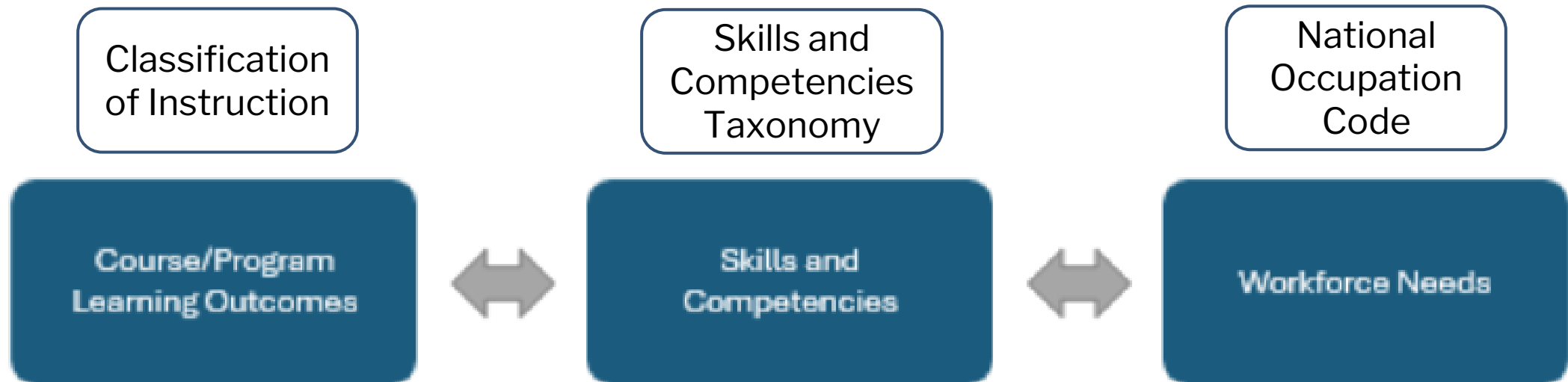
- Sharing of best practices
- Provincial coordination without provincial control

Since 2020:

200+ micro-credentials funded by the BC Ministry of Post Secondary Education & Future Skills

Credential Innovation

- The frontier: making non-credit count for credit
 - BC Open Learning Educational Credit Bank: Thompson Rivers University
 - CMVF3C: Canadian Military, Veteran and Family Connected Campus Consortium: Common Data Standards for Military Education
- Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR)



Portability and Mobility

- Owned and operated by ARUCC
- Canada's official digital wallet for academic and professional credentials
- Enables secure issuing, exchange, and verification of official digital documents, badges, microcredentials and diplomas from across Canada and around the world.



Part 2

Academic Mobility – What Works and What Doesn't

- How credit transfer and equivalency actually function today
- Recognition of prior learning – gaps and inconsistencies
- Emerging best practices for smoother mobility

CLOSING

Audience Q&A

10 minutes · Please drop questions in the chat

Thank you to our speakers from AACRAO, ARUCC, and ARSEE — and to everyone joining us today.

Academic Records and Student Services Management: Opportunities for Regional Collaboration

October 28, 2026
2:00-3:00pm Eastern

