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## **Competency-Based Education Network Seeking Partners for Expansion**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Amid growing interest in competency-based education, the [Competency-Based Education Network](#) (C-BEN) has issued a call for new membership applications. The application period opens today, with applications due by January 15, 2015.

C-BEN launched a year ago with an initial cohort of 18 institutions and two public systems serving 42 campuses. The network, structured around a research-and-development strategy, allows members to work together and share challenges to designing and developing competency-based degree programs and related business models. Ultimately, the network hopes to provide an evidence-based approach to advancing high-quality competency-based education models capable of serving more students of all backgrounds.

Competency-based education is a flexible way for students to get credit for what they know, build on their knowledge and skills by learning more at their own pace, and earn high quality diplomas, degrees, certificates and other credentials that help them in their lives and careers.

“Competency-based programs can provide tremendous opportunity for students who face barriers to traditional higher education including family responsibilities, cost and time to completion,” said C-BEN Co-Chair Jim Selbe system director for distance learning initiatives at the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. “C-BEN is a group of institutions committed to working together and learning from each other in order to provide high quality programs for all students.”

The movement toward competency-based academic delivery comes at a time when more education options are needed to meet the social and economic demands of students. Advocates believe academic programs that clearly define what students must know and be able to do to earn degrees creates significant potential to affordably help students from all backgrounds prepare for further education and employment.

The network was established to support institutions with an interest in accelerating progress on their learning models and contributing lessons to the field through structured collaboration involving rapid-cycle testing of practices, processes, and concepts. All interested applicants must either offer degree programs with well-defined learning outcomes and rigorous assessment or are on their way to creating them.

The steering committee, comprising higher education innovators from C-BEN member institutions, will review all applications. New C-BEN members will be announced in the spring.

"We are happy with the progress and work done by the network to date, and we look forward to welcoming new institutions," said Co-Chair Laurie Dodge vice provost and vice chancellor of institutional assessment and planning at Brandman University, a Hispanic-Serving Institution with campuses in California and Washington State. "We believe that expanding the network of institutions will make our work even stronger and continue to inform the field."

**About Competency-Based Education Network:**

The Competency-Based Education Network is a group of colleges and universities working together with support from Lumina Foundation to address shared challenges to designing, developing and scaling competency-based degree programs. Learn more at: [www.cbenetwork.org](http://www.cbenetwork.org)

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