



## D.C. Summit To Address Higher Education

By JULIA KAZAR

WASHINGTON — More than 30 million people in the United States have some college credits, but not a degree, according to Jeff Davidson, the director of strategic relationships for Saylor University.

Whether because of cost, time or other reasons, continuing education is a challenge for many adults, and he would like to change this.

On June 21 and 22, Saylor Academy will host the Saylor Higher Education Summit in Washington, D.C.

“Over the two days of the summit, participants will share their programs, initiatives and ideas on issues such as competency-based education, emerging credential models, and on how to quickly prepare and educate the emerging workforce,” a recent university news release stated.

Speakers at the summit include: Michael Saylor, microstrategy chairman and CEO and founder of Saylor Academy; Heather Hiles, deputy director of post-secondary success at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; and Dr. Vijay Kumar, associate dean of digital learning at MIT.

Jeremiah Shiflett, a database administrator at Lord Fairfax Community College, also plans to attend the summit and speak on a panel relating to alternative credentials. Many people earn alternative credentials as online classes or certificates, Davidson explained, but these don't necessarily add up to a full degree.

In 2014, LFCC was awarded a \$3.25 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor as part of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training

program. A portion of the funds from this grant were used to create highered.org, a web portal where users can access many features of the college's competency-based education program online, find information on career pathways, and create personalized learning plans tied to competencies. The website also provides alternative credentials.

Davidson said many employers provide some sort of assistance for their employees to return to school and earn a higher degree, but even with that assistance many can't afford traditional college classes or don't have the time. Davidson and Saylor University are working to change this, through alternative credits and other educational ideas.

“The panel is about how we can best leverage and stretch money farther for furthering education,” Davidson said, “and alternative credentials is one way many people are supportive.”

Some of the other topics that will be covered at the summit include designing education for working adult learners, improving accessibility in higher education, leveraging training to address the digital skills divide, and assessing and credentialing prior knowledge.

The summit is targeted for those who work in higher education, but Davidson said they wouldn't say no if a student was interested in attending.

To request an invitation to the summit, visit [summit.saylor.org/](http://summit.saylor.org/). Registration closes June 12.

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