Chapter # - will be assigned by editors

TITLE – BADGING MODELS IN FACULTY DEVELOPMENT
Subtitle – Building Faculty Connections and Empowering Growth

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Abstract: Badging can be used in higher education faculty development efforts to demonstrate accomplishments. Badges can also serve as a powerful motivator for some faculty seeking improvement and to demonstrate growth. This system can be connected to aspects important to the faculty role, including rank, tenure, merit raises, and demonstration of university and community service. Badging can also offer a powerful way to examine current faculty development endeavors, helping to determine effectiveness or return on investment.

Connecting badging with mentoring and peer review can be another way to incorporate badging into overarching faculty development. By tracking and displaying badges earned, mentors and mentees can make connections more easily, allowing for more specializing and “just-in-time” training. Teaching is a profession that thrives upon continual professional development; digital enterprises are getting into the game by developing micro-credentialing systems that offer the ability to organize, capture, credential, and share achievements of teachers across their careers (Digital Promise, n.d.).

The authors will explain how badging can be applied in academic and non-academic settings; however, the focus is on preparing a university to use a badging system that is linked to faculty development and mentoring. The authors will offer a review of four current badging platforms. Ultimately, the authors will highlight models in which badging can be designed and implemented for the purpose of empowering and motivating faculty.

Key words: faculty development, performance, evaluation, mentoring, implementation, mapping

1. INTRODUCTION

Definitions of badging related to faculty development

Digital badges can assist with promoting, tracking, and organizing pathways within faculty development models. At the most elementary level, badges serve to capture and communicate achievements (Mozilla Foundation, 2012), validate accomplishments (Jovanovic & Devedzic, 2015), and encapsulate micro-credentials (Shen, 2014). As such, badges assist employers in finding employees with essential job-related skills (Raths, 2013) and colleagues in finding each other on campus. Badges can be used toward recognition of completed tasks and learned skills and are a way to showcase talents (Wu et al., 2015) in efforts to connect a learning community (Ford, Izumi, Lottes, & Richardson, 2015).
Many faculty development models fail to promote enthusiasm, “ownership,” and cannot close the loop following completion of a training or development series, potentially limiting the effectiveness of that and future trainings (e.g., attendance, implementation, post-training). What’s more, traditional models of faculty development fail to meet the needs of faculty in the 21st century (Sullivan, Burns, Gradel, Shi, Tysick & Van Putten, 2013). Also a challenge, funding for faculty development is frequently the first thing to be cut in budget reductions, often because there may not be tangible evidence of usefulness or perceived return on investment (ROI). Recent research suggests that face-to-face (F-2-F) professional development is preferred over online learning (Hahn & Lester, 2012); however, hybrid versions of faculty development offerings include a mix of F-2-F and on-demand, self-paced delivery formats (Brooks, 2010). Badges can play a vital role in documenting both types of activities, F-2-F and online.

Badging serves a purpose in higher education faculty development by allowing faculty to earn peer and university leadership awareness of professional development activity. Badging can be used as evidence of accomplishments by providing a visual display of learned skills (Sullivan et al., 2013). Badges may serve as a primary motivator to faculty who seek to improve their skills and to demonstrate having done so. Badges can indicate such accomplishments as rank, tenure, merit raises, and university (e.g., mentoring, peer review) and community service (e.g., providing services based on badged qualifications), to name a few. Badging can also offer a powerful way to examine current faculty development endeavors, helping to determine effectiveness of events or interventions, and allow for revisions and subsequent offerings.

Connecting a badging system with a university mentoring program can be another powerful way to incorporate badging into the overarching faculty development schema. Through “publishing” faculty accomplishments and expertise via badges, mentors and mentees can make just-in-time or need-based connections more easily. One way to publish badges is through a leaderboard; Texas Wesleyan University provides an excellent example (http://www.txwescetl.com/leaderboard/).

In this chapter, the authors will explain how the models can be applied beyond academia through illustrative parallels. Section 5 will also offer suggestions of badging programs/platforms/packages through reviews of four existing systems that may be useful within and across job and university settings. Ultimately, the authors will highlight ways (models) in which badging can be designed and implemented for the purpose of empowering and motivating faculty, connecting university peers, and connecting the university to the community.
2. PURPOSE OF BADGES

There are many ways to track accomplishments in higher education. In most academic settings, tracking what a professor has accomplished is often required and related to tenure. Some academicians refer to the tenure process as “bean counting” or describe the process as “a rat race.” Considering both of these common analogies a bit further, the first implies getting as much done as possible (e.g., the biggest pile), while the latter refers to the unorganized, rampant overstuffing of folders in attempts to win in a peer comparison. Due to the overwhelming nature and length of the process, personal organization (including constant tracking of tenure/promotion-worthy activity), becomes essential. Badges may offer just that: an organized way to consistently, even automatically, track achievement/activity and show evidence of progress (to peers or tenure reviewers) in professional development.

A secondary purpose of badging is to share accomplishments with a broader community (Raths, 2013; Wu, Whiteley & Sass, 2015). A badge has the potential to efficiently and accurately identify resources or people with skills in the campus community. This can be especially useful for new faculty or those learning new skills, be it in the classroom or in the research laboratory. Furthermore, sharing faculty expertise through badging aligns well with ePortfolios (Glover, 2013) and digital tenure file systems—in addition to serving as an artifact illustrating mastery of skill or experience, a badge may also operate as a clickable link to a description or summary (Buckingham, 2014).

There are many additional reasons to get into the badging game (e.g., student motivation, engagement, and enrichment, learning objectives and assessment, skills in Bloom’s affective domain); however, the main focus of this chapter is badging use in faculty development.

2.1 No lunch, no learn

In some cases, motivating faculty to attend faculty development sessions may be as simple as providing pastries from a local gourmet bake shop. However, many faculty are driven by more complex factors than those at the bottom of Maslow’s hierarchy (i.e., physiological needs). What is it, then, that motivates faculty to attend professional development sessions? Since getting faculty buy-in is essential to a successful professional development model, it is important to understand the concerns of faculty as they approach innovation and change, both of which are historically difficult in higher education. Often, all it takes to get faculty to engage is to offer support and to provide recognition of the work completed (Garrison & Vaughn, 2013).

Drawing from past experience as the director of a teaching and learning center at a large university in the West, I found that if the center tracked attendance for the faculty member, the number of faculty at events went up. Let me share a little more about this technique and connect it to how badging can assist further. Using an online sign-up system for faculty development events, the center collected names of those who actually attended the event and generated an archived digital list. At the end of the academic year, each attendee received a letter from the center, which served as an organized summary of all development sessions attended during that year. The subsequent year, event numbers increased significantly, and faculty began to request letters early. What might this example suggest? One possibility is that if the center is willing to do the bean counting for the faculty member (or attendee), that they will step forward to earn the badge. These badges can then be listed in a central location to enable faculty connection across department, colleges and schools. Faculty in higher education often find themselves working in a silo, not knowing the skills of the individual “next door;” badging stands to change this isolated atmosphere by advertising what skills and tasks individual faculty have accomplished so as to connect like-minded folks on bigger, better projects.

The roots of many badging platforms include the idea that individual skills or sets of skills could be highlighted and organized in such a way that potential employers could search and find individuals who hold those skills (Sullivan, 2013; Wu et al., 2015). Furthermore, contemporary literature describes
badges as a way to qualify or validate the recent college graduate in ways that a degree transcript cannot (Grant, 2014; Young, 2012). Skills, especially soft skills that cannot be properly documented by a grade in a college course or a degree certificate, are a perfect example of what to badge.

2.2 What about a badge?

Many educators appear interested in badging as a motivator of life-long learning; this is not a surprise when considering the common methods, such as stickers, stars, and stamps, that are used as motivational tools across educational systems (Buckingham, 2014).

In addition, the military has been using badges for hundreds of years, worn on the uniforms of soldiers to note achievement and experience level (NRC, 2012); there is an element of pride attached to displaying achievement. Drawing on personal experience in a higher education organization that utilized badging, badges served as a way to share accomplishment and to document progression across a timeline. Similarly, the Girl Scouts of America has used award badges since 1916 (Girl Scouts, n.d.) and continues to do so to mark achievement. Of special note, while troops (small, localized group) within the organization can focus on certain badges, the individual scout also gets to select the badges that she finds most interesting and useful (Sorensen, 2013). Autonomy in goal selection plays a role in motivation to seek the badge; this is evident in models that focus on learner capabilities (Lozano, 2012). Similarly, since 1908 the Boy Scouts of America have followed a model that culminates in the highest achievable honor, the Eagle Scout badge (NESA, n.d.). In a recent study on how boys receiving this top honor differed from those not enrolled in Boy Scouts, researchers found a significant difference across all goal-oriented behaviors including life-long learning and personal, professional, and spiritual goal achievement (Jang, Johnson & Kim, 2010).

The badge-unmotivated individuals (faculty) are often those who are critical of the model, at the root. Criticisms to badging models have surfaced; for example, faculty purporting that “We’re adults…we don’t need badges” (Hart, 2015). This criticism points to a need for framing badging in a useful way when discussing the effort with faculty (or group members). Highlighting badging as a way of sharing expertise, an avenue to make connections on campus with like-achieving folks, or even to seek out those doing what you’d like to, may increase faculty buy-in from the start.

An additional criticism stems from assessment of the skills needed to earn the badge and the authority of the agency awarding the badge (Grant, 2014). Assessment must be thorough and validate that the learning occurred; many university student badging models have been reported to use rubrics associated with student learning outcomes to validate the completion of the badge (Wu et al., 2015). Alongside this, employers are also faced with interpreting what the badge says about the holders’ skills (Jovanovic & Devedzic, 2015).

2.3 Show what you know

For those moving beyond their terminal degree achievement, badges may serve as a way to document life-long learning in a way that can be measured in the tenure process. Recent legislative talks concerning removing tenure from higher education due to the lack of productivity once tenured, highlight the potential use for badges as a way of tracking and showcasing achievements of both hard (e.g., awards, research, publications) and soft (e.g., personal growth and community service) skills post-tenure.

Ranking systems are also needed in higher education to establish leaders and identify service skills development through years of engagement in the university. Instructors and contributing faculty (adjunct faculty) also can achieve rank in the university setting, and this is a hotbed for any badging model to take shape. Most departments on a university campus utilize instructors and/or contributing faculty. When it comes time to assign a course, what establishes who gets the class? Years of service? Skills and qualifications? A criticism of the high utilization of contributing faculty in higher education is that they
are just not as plugged-in to their role, they are unavailable to students, and they have a negative impact on student learning outcomes (Jeager, 2008).

Consider a professional development program that offers a set of skills linked to badges that would provide the lacking aforementioned skills to contributing faculty and instructors. Examples of such badges are as follows: 1) video-conferencing, where contributing faculty would learn and master the technology that would enable them to connect with students; 2) open educational resources (OERs), where contributing faculty would be exposed to OERs and learn to locate additional resources to supplement their classroom or online teachings; 3) Blackboard, offering advanced training in the learning management system by which the contributing faculty member instructs and communicates with students. Though these are only a few examples of badgeable skills useful for contributing faculty, badges can be the system that documents who is the best equipped contributing faculty member to teach the upcoming fall class. This badging model may also provide the data needed for advancement in rank, merit raises, and access to full-time employment.

Consider the need to select a high-performing committee member from an available pool of assistant professors, all of whom need university service to advance in the tenure process. Badges could serve many purposes in this scenario. The selection committee could examine equally ranked applicants by comparing the badges that they have earned since joining the university (and potentially prior to that time based on the badging system). The skills needed to make an impact on the committee could be searched and the best candidate selected. This scenario expands beyond the assistant professor rank to that of full professor (e.g., Fullbright Scholar badge), to outside of academia.

Service, of any sort, is not well documented in the university community. Although service is a required aspect of achieving tenure at most academic institutions, it is usually the least weighted category. A recent published manuscript can be hung in the glass display case in the hallway; however, the service role and function of many faculty on campuses nationwide goes unnoticed. Some service roles require many hours of work, equivalent to that of writing a manuscript. Badges can support the group of faculty service achievers by documenting and publishing accomplishments in badge form such as University Chair, signifying the chair role on a university committee. The badge can serve a second role, beyond acknowledgement of service, by identifying the individual to which questions, forms, and documents must be submitted.

2.4 Mapping out what to badge

What do you do when you want to go somewhere but you don’t know how to get there? Get a map. For instance, Texas Wesleyan University provides a map to guide faculty members toward mastery of various categories of badgeable skills (http://www.txwescetl.com/pedagogy-map/). A visual interpretation of a development plan is highly useful for those who wish to see the pathway, or the direction that the development may take them, opening doors along the way to new opportunities. A map like the one used by Texas Wesleyan University is a great way to provide this direction and to offer a specified route to achieve a set goal. The map can also work in reverse, as a reflection tool and a way to visualize what has been accomplished as well as the distance traveled and ground covered.

Another way to visualize a badging model would be to use a timeline approach, from the point of being hired as a new faculty, to becoming tenured, to achieving post-tenure specializations. Badges could be grouped by skills needed at each of these time points in the career of an academician (see Figure 1). A pyramid visual, one like Maslow’s hierarchy, could also be utilized. With this, visual badges would be grouped on levels, moving up to the next echelon, after all, or “2 of 3” badges have been earned (see Figure 2). The favorite approach of the chapter authors is the map, because it divides skills into continents and creates explorative interests, rather than grouping by faculty status or length at the university, as both of these models have inherent assumption faults.
Figure 1. Badging Timeline Map
Figure 2. Badging Pyramid Map
3. APPLICATIONS OF BADGING FOR FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Digital badges, in an academic or training setting, are graphical representations of learning experiences and display learners’ skills and education. They often contain metadata about outcomes and competency levels (Gamrat, Toomey, Zimmerman, Dudek, & Peck, 2014).

While digital badging is rooted in non-academic areas—in the gaming industry, primarily, then morphing to micro-credentialing for training, businesses, etc.—badging is moving into the realm of academia (Gamrat et al., 2014). Over the past few years, the bulk of badging for education has focused on student use, more than for faculty (Gamrat et al., 2014; Grant, 2014). However, there lies great opportunity in uses of badging approaches for faculty development endeavors; in fact, several institutions are already using these types of approaches, such as Ashford University, Empire State College, Texas Wesleyan University, and Penn State.

The University of St. Augustine, badging pilot for faculty development is already underway. The creators anticipate building a more holistic system whereby badging is linked to rank and promotion through the ability to engage in and track important activities, such as university and community service, mentoring and peer review, and internal university faculty development as well as external professional development. Another benefit of a badging system is that it grants faculty the ability to search for mentors based on their acquired skills and/or attributes, which allows for quick identification of mentoring opportunities and pairings of appropriate skillsets and expertise in various areas for professional development.

At the University of St. Augustine, the effectiveness measures for badging activities/development are based on the “Evidence of Learning” Framework, put forth by the Tyton Partners (Tyton Partners, 2015) in the white paper, Evidence of Learning: The Case for an Integrated Competency Management System for Students, Higher Education, and Employers. This framework allows evaluators to assess the elements of a program or system (such as badging). The framework has the following components:

[Experience:] “Process of learning, either formally or informally; any effort that may be captured as evidence or credentials” (p. 10).

[Validate:] “Act of assessing and recognizing experiences for academic credit or qualifications” (p. 11).

[Assemble:] “Process of capturing and curating evidence of learning; creating insights based on networks of experiences/evidence” (p. 12).

[Promote:] “Act of marketing assembled evidence and mechanisms for creating matches between candidates and opportunities” (p. 13).

[Align:] “Process of securing feedback to enhance and refine performance and capabilities; may lead to pursuit of new opportunities within the experience segment” (p. 14).

It may be worth noting that the direct language from this framework is not necessarily geared toward educators (“marketing,” for instance, may not resonate with faculty); however, the intent behind the framework can easily be translated to an academic setting. That is, if we subscribe to this framework, one that applies recognition of competencies through validating evidence of learning, then this approach to badging makes sense for faculty development, just as it would for student micro-credentialing. That is, a
successful badging program for faculty development would need to incorporate demonstration of each of the framework items to help ensure usefulness to individuals, across many departments, and perhaps across multiple institutions.

3.1 Tracking development and applying service

Most institutions of higher education require professional development of some kind for faculty. Additionally, many accreditors (professional, programmatic, regional and national) have faculty/professional development expectations (Gamrat et al., 2014; Saroyen & Trigwell, 2015). Motivation for faculty to continually update and upgrade their development often wavers, especially at institutions where it is largely left up to individual instructors to maintain. Tracking, then, is often incomplete. A systematic faculty development program, either university-wide or program-wide (depending on the size of the institution), can support intentional development opportunities; however, they may still leave faculty less than motivated to fully engage, let alone inspired to implement new strategies in their own classes. Motivation depends on many aspects, but helping to “publish” accomplishment and expertise has proven successful for some institutions (Glover, 2013; Hahn & Lester, 2012).

It is not only important to incentivize learning, but it is necessary to connect learning with validated activities and achievement of outcomes tied to activities (Gamrat et al., 2014). Additionally, customization is an important motivational factor, which ties to learner empowerment (Gamrat et al., 2014). Accountability is also a critical factor for motivation. In terms of a learning framework, accountability includes learning that is meaningful, has professional association, and denotes continual improvement (Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger, 2014).

Schenke, Tran, and Hickey (2013) noted that the following components should be built into a badging system in order to motivate learning:

**Provide privileges:** “if the privilege granted for earning a badge is not associated with something the learner values, he or she is unlikely to engage or persist in the activity associated with earning that badge” (Schenke, Tran, & Hickey, para. 5). In other words, badging should lead to something beyond the badge itself. For the University of St. Augustine, the intent is for badging to be connected with tracking toward evaluation of faculty toward rank and promotion.

**Recognize identities:** “badges can recognize a learner’s role within the badging system such as recognizing their specialization in journalism, engineering, or peer mentoring” (para. 6). For the University of St. Augustine, badges will tie not only to faculty development activities, but will be used to display expertise in various areas—such as mentoring.

**Promote (and recognize) engagement with communities:** “Engagement in the community can be seen to promote [learners’] motivation to continue on activities because learners are relating to others” (para. 7). **Service to the profession and service to the University** are important elements for faculty at the University of St. Augustine. The badging system will need to be able to not only track these activities but should also be able to promote engagement to the rest of the faculty community—and perhaps beyond.

**Display badges to the public:** “Public display can have a positive or negative effect, depending on the learner—sometimes public display can incite competition, and for some people, this is a good thing; for others, it may create a negative reaction” (Schenke, Tran, & Hickey, p. 45). For the University of St. Augustine, the intent is to share badges and accomplishments within the internal community only, and largely for the peer mentoring endeavors, so that faculty seeking mentorship can easily identify other faculty who are the best matches.
Recognize different outcomes:

The type of learning that a badge recognizes and the way that recognition is managed has profound implications for motivation….Some badges are awarded for meeting some criterion (performance-based), while other badges are awarded for engaging in some activity (“effort-based”)….It seems likely that recognition of social learning will operate very differently in effort-based versus performance-based contexts. (para. 14)

It is important to determine types of outcomes and how those achievements are displayed.

Utilize different means of assessment:

The type of assessment has significant consequences for motivation. For example, having an expert versus a computer conducting the assessment communicates different expectations to the learner. Knowing that your peers are assessing you is very different than knowing a computer is assessing you. (para. 15)

Assessment approaches not only affect motivation, but they affect validity and the overall integrity of a badging system.

For the University of St. Augustine, a systematic badging system for faculty development not only tracks applicable service and development activities, but it also motivates faculty to engage in more activities and implement newly gained skills or strategies into classrooms, thereby working to drive continuous improvement of student learning outcomes.

An example of a badging approach, which can be built upon the “Evidence of Learning” framework (Tyton Partners, 2015), as well as the guidelines toward motivation, was developed specifically for faculty development by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) at Texas Wesleyan University. Their badging system is comprised of five phases, which include “challenge cards” (CETL, 2015). These challenge cards add activities and implementation suggestions based on the badge/activity awarded. Faculty are awarded badges after first attending a workshop or consultation with the CETL staff, then faculty are issued the challenge card and then awarded an upgraded badge based on completion of the challenge. After this, faculty are given another challenge/activity to complete, after which faculty are asked to share their knowledge with the university community—this leads to issuing the “phase five” badge (CETL, 2015).

As another example, Penn State developed a digital badging system, called Teacher Learning Journeys (TLJ). This is “an approach that allows for teachers to customize their PD [Professional Development] experience to their workplace and make decisions about what PD they need based on their expertise and interests. The digital badging provided and assessed experiences in online PD” (Gamrat et al., 2014, p. 1). The Penn State system also adds “stamps” to the badges that faculty could earn. These stamps represented a lower level of achievement than a badge, and a series of stamps could earn the faculty badges. To earn badges, faculty needed to demonstrate application of concepts to their roles (Gamrat, et al., 2014).

Faculty at Penn State had two choices regarding levels of assessment of their skills. Stamps represented a lower level of achievement, whereas badges required self-reflections tied to their jobs (Gamrat et al., 2014). Faculty also were asked to create goal statements, and PD activities were based on those individual statements (Gamrat et al.). At present, the University of St. Augustine is considering allowing faculty to create some badges of their own.

Successful professional development will meet individual faculty needs, which means catering to appropriate levels (undergraduate, graduate, etc.), and it should be “adaptive to various teaching
philosophies and pedagogies, and provide flexibility” (Gamrat et al., 2014, p. 2). A successful badging system related to faculty development should offer these components.

### 3.2 Mentoring and peer review

As discussed, badging allows for a system to gather information, track information, and disseminate the information to a larger academic community. Not only does badging allow for the tagging of competencies, but it allows the administrator of the system to display who has earned what badges, through a leaderboard scenario or “Faculty Directory.” A faculty directory can act as a repository of information for those seeking a mentor or a peer with like interests and can be very influential in aiding relationships across a university or organization.

At the University of St. Augustine, a mentor/peer review program is being developed at the same time as the badging endeavors. The two will have intentional connections. That is, training and development for mentorship and peer review will be one type of “badgeable” event, tracked on the directory. Faculty who wish to become mentors for other faculty will go through a series of training/development on mentorship skills, and each additional step will be eligible for a badge of varying levels (beginner to advanced-type leveling). Completion of a web-based training will earn the faculty member a badge, completing an assessment will earn him/her another, taking on mentees, another, and so on. These badges will be displayed on a directory so that faculty members who are searching for mentors and/or peer reviewers will be able to identify not only content-based skills (e.g., discipline-specific expertise, teaching, learning and assessment expertise) but mentoring and peer review “levels” will also be displayed. In addition, the badges can be tracked for purposes of faculty evaluation (especially as related to professional development) and, potentially, promotion.

Penn State’s badging system, addressed earlier, through its Teacher Learning Journeys (TLJ) efforts, also has a mentorship component: “TLJ supported teacher interaction with … mentors who both led the PD activities and assessed their activity logs to earn either a badge (high level of achievement) or stamp (low level of achievement)” (Gamrat et al., 2014, p. 11). Additionally, “One role of the expert mentor was providing access to resources and practices valued by the community of educator that these teachers belonged” (p. 11). One can earn badges through the very act of engaging in mentoring or peer review. In fact, Gamrat et al. (2014) noted that the interactivity between mentor and mentee was a critical component for making connections to these experts in their fields. For instance, it was found that mentors needed to supply guiding feedback for the mentee to continue toward their own goals.

Having badges displayed on a directory site should allow for faculty at University of St. Augustine to foster learning communities. The directory could become a community site in and of itself!

### 3.3 Rank and promotion

The idea of connecting badging and professional development activities that can lead to earning badges with faculty evaluation—specifically, incorporating badging into the rank and promotion processes—has already been discussed. However, this is a critical factor toward promoting faculty and program director (those who manage faculty) buy-in at the University of St. Augustine.

The university is considered a “teaching institution” (versus a research institution); therefore, it does not have a tenure system. However, instructors are ranked, and there are clear expectations and outcomes that frame the promotion process. Certain criteria and activities are required in order to reach higher ranks. Currently, the tracking and rating of professional development, service to the community and to the university, and other key elements considered when faculty are “up” for review are rather hit or miss. That means that preparing for a faculty review often becomes a lengthy and tedious endeavor, both for the
faculty and their managers. One reason for a systematic badging system is to enable a more efficient, centralized process. Furthermore, recorded faculty activities will likely make accreditation visits and processes more efficient as well.

While efficiency is a key factor to consider for a badging system, the ability to measure the effectiveness of development activities is also a critical component.

3.4 Measure(s) of effectiveness

Return on investment (ROI) is a decidedly *un-*academic term; however, with ever-decreasing budgets, across almost all sectors/types of education, it is now, perhaps more than ever, crucially important that development activities are meeting the needs of not just the faculty, but of the institution overall. In fact, “In response to … misalignments, numerous companies, organizations, and initiatives have emerged to help individuals, institutions, and employers more effectively capture, present, and evaluate what individuals have learned” (Tyton Partners, 2015, p. 7).

Ultimately, for a training/professional development badging system to have a significant impact, the activities must yield a change in the overall organization, or “Results,” as designated in Kirkpatrick’s Model of Training Evaluation (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). Kirkpatrick offers one framework through which professional development can be evaluated. In this case, the badging system itself could also be evaluated using the model (with the target of achieving the “Results” level). As a reminder, the Kirkpatrick Model has four levels: Reaction, Learning, Behavior and Result (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick). For an institution of higher education, specifically for the University of St. Augustine, the desired *Results* would be to have an influence on improving student learning outcomes throughout all programs at the university.

Saroyan and Trigwell (2015) built upon Kirkpatrick’s model for academic use. They noted that four conditions should exist to yield effective results: learners need to acknowledge any gaps in knowledge and be compelled to gain new knowledge; learners should understand and value the connection between what will be gained through a new learning activity and the perceived worth of the investment of time, money, etc.; learners should know how to make changes in their own behaviors, skills, etc.; and there should be intrinsic or extrinsic (or both) motivators for learners to make changes.

A badging system needs to be accessible, sustainable, and, perhaps most important, meaningful to all stakeholders involved. This is why the intentional connections among various components and outcomes, and the associated badges, have been carefully considered by the University of St. Augustine in the creation of the badging system. While a system with broad connections may take longer to implement, the end result should be a system that allows those who implement to see results that have an influence at a deep organizational level. Saroyan and Trigwell (2015) noted that while one-time events may be more scalable, they are less likely to make much of a difference on a larger body of faculty/learners. On the other hand, they noted that initiatives spread out over time may have an impact on participants, but should be managed on a small-scale in order to be manageable, especially in terms of resources.

Organizational support is critical for training and development to have deep, lasting impact as well, and the university will need to assess student learning as an ultimate test of success of any initiatives (Saroyan & Trigwell, 2015).

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF BADGING MODELS

The first step in considering implementation is alignment with needs and goals of the university or program (NRC, 2012). Some university programs may wish to dictate a set of badges required to take on a certain role or level of duty (e.g., University Committee Chair), while other models would be more open selection, based on the learners’ interests and desires. The first model is a competency-based model (Ford
et al., 2015), while the second is more parallel to a capabilities approach (Lozano et al., 2012). When considering tenure and promotion as a need or goal, the competency-based model may be more appropriate. When documenting life-long learning as a sole goal, the capabilities theory may be best suited to model this approach.

4.1 Academia

When considering what is a suitable activity to badge, a university or center for teaching and learning may choose to look at its mission and consider values that it holds at its core. For example, if a mission statement reads “The mission of the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences is the development of professional health care practitioners through innovative, individualized, and quality classroom, clinical and distance education,” then badgeable activities could be categorized into Innovation, Student-centered, Quality, and possibly Online or Distance, all pertaining to educational methods and student outcomes. To develop it one step further, individual badges that fall under each category or element of the university’s mission should take shape and make intuitive sense.

Consider that a university wants to move a few academic majors to a completely online course delivery format. The following questions come to mind: How will “good” online faculty be identified? What training do they need? How will they be trained? How will this be tracked? First, the qualities of a good online instructor need to be gathered and categorized. From this, a blended professional development model (see Sullivan et al., 2013) could effectively deliver needed skills, and badges could track the completion of training and readiness to begin online course instruction.

Another approach to identifying the purpose of implementing a badging system would be to attach the badges to a new theme or movement at the university. For example, if the university is attempting to improve its mentoring program by connecting new and current faculty with the goal of improving faculty retention, classroom teaching effectiveness, or interdisciplinary collaborative research, badgeable activities can be designed in concert with that overreaching goal. A common theme of universities is to achieve tenure through research, teaching and service contributions. A badging themes map can outline those areas and direct faculty to activities that shape their progress toward tenure (Figure 3).

Consider that a university wants to start the mentoring initiative above. How does it identify suitable mentors? What are their individual skill sets? How are they trained? How is this displayed to prospective mentees? A suggested starting place to begin a program like this is to send out a call to the faculty for interested mentors. From responses, one could examine what qualities this group brings to the table and begin to categorize these micro-credentials into groups or themes. For example, three main themes that are likely to surface are research, teaching and service. A badge system can be created that offers granular skills in each of these areas and might look like Figure 3.

Faculty peer-mentors can begin the mentoring relationship one-on-one, or in small group settings, both leading to badgeable skills. A recent article in the Chronicle of Higher Education highlighted the function of the badge as a motivational tool for faculty to get involved in professional development programming; it is an easier way to communicate skills and achievements amongst a faculty community as compared to a paper certificate (Young, 2015).
4.2 Outside academia

The need and use for badges outside of academia is strongly related to the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) movement. MOOCs provide formal training that is, in most cases, not related to a college degree. An individual (student) can take one MOOC for the purpose of learning a new required skill, improving on a current skill, or to engage in learning as a life-long learner. Many of the first MOOCs were about content such as computer languages (e.g., JavaScript), skills needed to perform or acquire jobs. For instance, Udemy provides a free MOOC that teaches JavaScript (https://www.udemy.com/draft/146326/).

Changes in the community often drive the need for new/different job skills, thus influencing the need for education on those skills. At most times, picking up a new skill or set of skills required to qualify for a job doesn’t require a college degree, as in the case of certificate programs. Community education programs can provide skills like Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, and the like, and badges could be offered upon completion, signifying to the employer that the job applicant has met the criterion to achieve that badge (NRC, 2012). As mentioned earlier, the challenge becomes deciphering exactly what a badge tells an employer about the job applicant’s skills (Jovanovic & Devedzic, 2015).
5. BADGING PLATFORMS

As the University of St. Augustine pilots a badging system for faculty development, the selection of a badging platform is a crucial decision point. Readers may be most familiar with the Mozilla initiative (Mozilla.org), created by the company that really has a strong hold in the badging market, especially when it comes to badging for micro-credentials linked to education or training. However, there are several platforms that are gaining recognition; Credly came up most frequently in reference searches. The purpose of this section is to introduce four badging platforms for the purposes of using badging for faculty development. Various companies/platforms cater to differing audiences, the bulk of which seem to target student badging endeavors; this makes sense, as this area is where the majority of institutions and organization are focusing.

The following platforms are reviewed here: Jive, Fidelis, Credly, and Mozilla’s open badges. To be discussed herein, the platforms needed to have some basic functionality: the ability to create, customize, tag (meta-data), display, and search badges and/or people. Each platform reviewed is Mozilla Open Badge compliant.

5.1 Jive

Jivesoftware.com

We will begin with a platform not often referred to in literature reviewed or by colleagues with whom we have had discussions, except for one pretty large exception: Ashford University. Ashford devised an area called The Quad, wherein professional development was tracked via badges, supported by Jive. It was used for more than faculty development: It was a collaborative space for additional uses, but the badges connected to development activities were displayed as well.

Jive has a decidedly gaming feel, so it came as a surprise to the authors that such a large university chose this provider. However, based on conversations with an Ashford representative, it was a successful pilot. Yes, this was a pilot, and the representative also noted that Ashford was moving to Office 365 as their new collaborative network platform, and, at the time (February 2015), it was unknown if badges would continue to be a part of that network.

From an educator’s point of view, Jive likely would not be an obvious choice for a faculty development badging platform when considering the language used on their website, which caters more to the gamification market. However, a customized approach, using more standard terminology, could use the presentation and layout in a way that could appeal to educators.

5.2 Fidelis

Fideliseducation.com

Next in the potentially more obscure category is badging from Fidelis Education. Fidelis is branded as an education company, so at the onset, this may be more palatable to educators than Jive, as the language is what faculty and administration might be more comfortable with. We did not speak to or read about any institutions using Fidelis at the time of this writing, however.

Fidelis’ badges can be “leveled,” so that levels of proficiency can also be tagged to any given badge. The company offers seven levels:

1. Familiar
2. Deeply Familiar
3. Basically Qualified  
4. Qualified  
5. Highly Qualified  
6. Proficient  
7. Expert (Fidelis, n.d.).

This is an attractive option for faculty development models, especially those geared toward a rubric-like assessment framework. For the University of St. Augustine, this will be a key component for a badging system.

5.3 Credly

(credly.com)

Credly is popping up more and more in the badging for education space. The CETL at Texas Wesleyan (discussed earlier) uses Credly for their faculty development badging efforts. The University of Sussex (U.K.) chose Credly for their badging system as well, noting the following:

Credly.com was chosen because it provided badge issuers with:

- Free, easy to use badge design, creation and issuing tools.
- The ability to add criteria and evidence as metadata

Badge earners could:

- Collect badges from multiple email addresses.
- Share and embed badges across a range of online spaces.
- Organise [sic], categorise [sic], hide or display badges within Credly.
- Transfer badges to a Mozilla Backpack. (Hole, 2014, pp. 3-4)

Credly has multiple partnerships for different purposes, including the New York Department of Education, EDUCAUSE, and the Smithsonian (Credly, 2015). The platform offers identity checks and “easy integration” (Credly, 2015) to other platforms. Credly’s badges can be pushed, or linked, to sites such as LinkedIn and Event Brite. The range of badges and ease of use, along with partnerships and growing options, makes Credly an attractive option for many institutions interested in badging and micro-credentialing.

5.4 Mozilla open badges

Openbadges.org

Mozilla was really the first company to bring badges to the forefront for micro-credentialing [need to cite]. Since it is a pioneer in this market, it certainly deserves a brief review for that very fact—it has
gained a substantial following, and it is still the main platform through which other badging platforms display badges, through the Mozilla “Backpack” (Mozilla Open Badges, n.d.)

According to Casilla et al. (2014)

Mozilla Open Badges…require “assertions” for earning a badge. Assertions are representations of an awarded badge used to share information including how it was earned, where it was earned, who earned it, if and when it expires, etc. When a badge is housed within the Mozilla infrastructure it carries all the information needed to understand it as it is transferred throughout the ecosystem (p. 6).

So, in many ways, Open Badges is a one-stop-shop for badging. It allows users to build and customize badges, tag them in many different ways, display, and publicize badges. Like Credly, Mozilla’s badges can be linked to multiple other sites for display and sharing. They offer their own standards—for alignment and meta-tagging—for validation and easy searching.

In 2013, the University of Southern California published a badging platform comparison that serves as a helpful starting point. The Center for Scholarly Technology compared 11 platforms (including Credly and Mozilla Open Badges). The Product Comparison table (pp. 4-5) presents some basic, but useful, information (https://learningdesign.usc.edu/files/2013/07/TechTeamBadgesfinal.pdf). Although it should be noted that “badge forge” now links to “little bird games,” which does still have a badging component. Another note from a different system: Achievery.com has this on their landing page: “Achievery is suspending new badge creation and awarding on the platform soon. We will continue to host all current badges and associated metadata, as we seek to create a reasonable way for all of our users to access and export their badges.” The authors spoke to one college that had been creating badges on a platform that no longer exists, leaving that college to take a hiatus from their badging efforts. It is important to consider the longevity of the platforms to the degree possible.

5.5 Choosing wisely

Aside from creating a badging system to meet multiple needs and to be a valid measure of skills for faculty development badging efforts, the badges and display system should resonate with faculty. That may seem obvious, but in pilot discussions at University of St. Augustine, even the notion of earning a badge, did not sit well with some faculty. Badge sounded too elementary, too game-y, to some. This creates a fundamental challenge: how to gather buy-in for a system? As discussed earlier, motivation is crucial; however, something as seemingly benign as a naming convention, has the potential to derail the project before the train has left the station, or even before the train is assembled! Therefore, the badging platform will need to be attractive to faculty—likely one that caters to educators.

6. CONCLUSION

This chapter explored how digital badging can be applied to higher education faculty development. Badging can be used as evidence of faculty accomplishments and serve as a motivator for some faculty seeking growth and demonstrating fulfilling outcomes of activities. The use of a badging system with faculty development can be connected to rank, tenure, merit raises, and university and community service. Further, connecting badging with a peer mentoring program can be another powerful way to incorporate badging into a faculty development framework, allowing for an easy way for faculty to connect with one another, viewing available mentors’ qualifications through a visual display of expertise, as identified by an institution’s criteria for earning badges. A badging system should provide at-a-glance insight into the earner’s experiences, and badges should validate, assemble, and promote
those experiences. The experiences should align with the institution’s and/or activity outcomes (Tyton Partners, 2015).

The authors also explored badging models that can be applied beyond academia and offered a review of four badging platforms that could be considered for faculty development badging. A badging system can be designed to empower and motivate faculty, through connecting university peers as well as connecting the university to the community, telling a powerful story of faculty development commitment.
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