Notes on Terminology

We use “continuing education” throughout this proposal as an umbrella term encompassing all non-credit course offerings. It covers a variety of related learning terminology, including professional education, lifelong learning, community education, executive education, professional development, workforce training, career training, personal enrichment programs, and extended academic programs. These types of courses often fulfill requirements for continuing education units (CEU), continuing education credit (CEC), professional development units (PDU), continuing legal education (CLE), continuing medical education (CME) and/or professional learning units (PLU).

Project Description

Assess the continuing education environment at Saint Louis University and develop a strategic plan for campus-wide continuing education.

Project Summary

The discovery of multiple continuing education submissions to GrowingSLU has made it evident that there is a need for a centralized and standardized infrastructure for the development, marketing, delivery, and administration of continuing education courses and activities at Saint Louis University (SLU). In 2008, SLU’s Office of Institutional Research conducted a survey that showed there were 27 different continuing education programs being offered at SLU. We seek to develop a University-wide master plan through the use of continuing education consultants. These consultants will assess the current SLU continuing education environment and develop a recommended master plan to University leadership. This master plan will demonstrate a vision for an interdisciplinary, University-wide project that aims to increase revenue, reduce costs, and vault SLU into the burgeoning continuing education market.

Expected Timeline for Implementation

We estimate between six and eight weeks, dependent upon both internal and external resource availability.

Positive Financial Impact on SLU

If it is assumed the master plan, developed by the consultants, involves some level of centralization of continuing education programs, a positive financial impact will be reasonable to expect based on existing SLU programs.

Summer at SLU

Summer at SLU streamlined operations by centralizing their registration and marketing functions, which produced a notable increase in program awareness and attendance:
• Since 2012, Pre-K through 12 summer attendance has increased by 106 percent and the number of camps and academies has increased from 23 to more than 50.
• In 2015, Summer at SLU engaged more than 10,500 participants through K through 12 programming, college-credit courses, conferences and events, and international immersion opportunities.
• International immersion programs continue to grow as universities from around the globe look to SLU to increase their knowledge of American culture and studies.
• According to BluePrint4SummerSTL, Summer at SLU was ranked as one of the top 20 (No. 2) most popular summer programs searched by families in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

Center for Environmental Education and Training (CEET)
The Center for Environmental Education and Training is a training program devoted to environmental and occupational safety and health. CEET provides professional development opportunities for environmental health and safety professionals, as well as resources to help employers meet their training and compliance needs. CEET director, Chris King, estimates that the Center issues between 2,000-2,500 professional certificates a year and their numbers are growing. Following is the department’s training volume for academic years 2013 and 2014 as reported to the Council on Education for Public Health. These numbers do not include roughly 800 people per year in grant-funded training who also go through CEET:

• Academic year 2012-2013: 414 (OSHA) + 717 (CEET) = 1,131 participants
• Academic year 2013-2014: 475 (OSHA) + 875 (CEET) = 1,350 participants

Continuing Education as a Feeder Program
Continuing education programs could potentially serve as “feeders” for traditional undergraduate and graduate academic programs. For example, the School for Professional Studies (SPS) is currently developing a complimentary, massively open online course (MOOC) for their Security and Strategic Intelligence (SSI) program. It will be offered online to the continuing education market with the intention of introducing SSI concepts and generating awareness of the full degree program offered through SPS. After completing the MOOC, if the participant decides to enroll in the Bachelor of Science in Security and Strategic Intelligence, he/she will be able to apply the introductory level continuing education course as credit toward the degree. It’s a mutually beneficial arrangement. Students get to sample the degree and save money if they choose to pursue it. SLU gains exposure and enrollment revenue. The same scenario could apply for all CE courses, regardless of whether they are offered as free “samples” or if they carry a fee.

The 1818 Advanced College Credit Program is another example of a “feeder” scenario. For nearly sixty years, the University has offered high school students an opportunity to get a head start on college by earning credits that apply toward a SLU degree. Since 1988, SLU has awarded over 9,500 degrees (e.g. bachelors, masters, JDs and PhDs) to 7,700 students who started out in the 1818 program. A similar model that allows professional learners to “sample” programs at a reduced rate may generate interest and ultimately increase enrollment in traditional degree programs, especially if the student can apply the continuing education credit toward a full degree. Additionally, the centralized infrastructure could benefit the 1818 program by automating and streamlining core functions, such as marketing and registration.
Conclusion
Given the current insular nature of continuing education at SLU, there is no easy way to aggregate and report estimated revenue and growth rates from disparate programs. This is why it is crucial to engage a consultant to conduct a needs analysis and develop a continuing education master plan. Summer SLU, CEET and the 1818 program all display the fact that centralizing certain functions and providing cross-marketing opportunities have the potential to generate revenue for Saint Louis University.

Positive Non-Financial Impact on SLU
As noted in the project summary, there are at least ten different programs offering continuing education at SLU today, and probably more based on data from the last survey in 2008. Each of these has the potential to make a “first impression” on a potential customer, yet there is no SLU brand consistency across the programs today. Engaging a consultant to assess the current continuing education environment at SLU and develop a master plan will allow for consideration of improved branding, consistency, and a sophisticated user experience that will create a positive impression of SLU’s offerings and capabilities as a provider of continuing education.

In addition to positively impacting revenue, offering a wide variety of high quality, well-marketed programs will earn SLU recognition in the community as a competitive provider of educational opportunities for the professional learner. Continuing education may also drive attention to other SLU programs. For example, parents who have a positive experience with continuing education may wish to send their children to SLU for undergraduate or graduate studies. Organizations whose employees receive quality training may be more inclined to partner with SLU by offering internship opportunities for students or increasing their philanthropic engagement. Another ancillary benefit might be increased referrals to SLUCare from participants in continuing medical education throughout the bi-state region. In general, continuing education offers an opportunity for SLU to broaden its reach, expand its reputation, and strengthen its ties with the community.

Alignment with Jesuit Mission and Strategic Plan of the University
The Jesuit mission espouses educating the whole person—mind, body, and spirit—which does not end once a student graduates from college. A strong continuing education program will enable SLU to keep educating the whole person throughout his or her entire life and across a diverse array of professional pursuits. We will shape leaders and equip them with skill sets and competencies needed to make a positive impact on the world.

Initiative Four: Being an Innovator and Entrepreneur in All That We Do
Goal 2 under this initiative specifies that the University will “adopt and promote new models of educational design, program delivery, and market development, especially insofar as these paradigms address current challenges to the traditional higher-education business model...” Objective 2.1 under this goal specifically states that SLU will offer opportunities to “adult and executive learners and promote lifelong learning as integral components of our education model.” Objective 2.6 further challenges the University to “...expand our educational reach by becoming a learning partner for organizations with differentiated employee development needs.” Utilizing a consultant to assess the
continuing education environment at SLU and to develop a master plan, will directly addresses these points.

Initiative Five: Fostering a Culture of Excellence, Effectiveness, and Efficiency Deeply Rooted in Our Institutional Mission and Catholic, Jesuit Values
Goal 4 under this initiative calls for establishing and maintaining systems across the University that are characterized by “transparency effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness in revenue generation, allocation, cost containment, and accountability.” Under this goal, Objective 4.3 further specifies that we “recognize effective interdisciplinary, interdepartmental, and intercollegiate efforts by establishing a system of meaningful incentives for such work.” Utilizing consulting services to develop a continuing education master plan, will foster such interdisciplinary collaboration by creating an integrated framework for shared resources.

Goal 6 under initiative five challenges us to “strengthen our internal and external communications capabilities and effectiveness.” Objective 6.1 under this goal specifically challenges the University to “support interdisciplinary and inter-campus cohesiveness...by improving our internal communications capacity to celebrate and promote collaboration across the University.” Beyond increasing revenue, developing a continuing education master plan will create a more efficient interdisciplinary, interdepartmental means of conducting continuing education at SLU. This will strengthen our internal and external communication related to developing, marketing, delivering, and supporting continuing education programs and content.

Required Resources
This proposal is requesting $45,000 to hire a consulting firm based on an estimate of 200 hours at $225 per hour.

Potential Obstacles
We do not envision any obstacles for this proposal since it is the first step toward a campus-wide continuing education master plan.