

## Strategic Plan At-A-Glance

Strategic Plan Update: The Reinert Center's current strategic plan originally was developed for the period 2013-2015. However, because the University's new strategic plan was in development in 2014-2015, we decided to revise and update the current plan to reflect our continuing work in key areas and holding off on another formal strategic planning process until the University's strategic plan implementation is well underway. This decision allows us to better align our efforts with the University's strategic educational priorities. The current plan will continue to evolve and to guide our work until 2017, when a new strategic plan will be implemented to coincide with the celebration of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### Context

In 2012, the Paul C. Reinert, S.J. Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning, formerly the Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence, celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> year as a formal teaching center serving both faculty and graduate students at Saint Louis University. Established in 1997 through a faculty initiative, the Center grew out of the successful Teaching Resource Room (created for graduate students in 1992). Since then, the Center has enjoyed increasing success and support from faculty and administrators alike, and it has begun to move from a period of formation into a period of transformation.

In recent years, the Reinert Center has enjoyed a period of tremendous growth: demand for services and programs is on the rise (at both the individual and unit-level), and the regional and national reputation of the Center and its staff are growing. In 2011, the University invested new resources in the Center, doubling the size of the staff and creating the [Learning Studio](#) and the [Innovative Teaching Fellowship](#) that sustains teaching there. In 2012, the Center officially changed its name to better represent the importance of transformational teaching and our strong commitment to innovative, reflective pedagogical practice. The new name also better represents a larger vision for the Center and its role at the University, and the degree to which it has become ingrained in the larger University community.

As the Center continues to deepen its work, both on and off campus, the University is experiencing rapid changes in the instructional needs of SLU educators and in the University's broader educational initiatives – all of them consistent with broader shifts in higher education generally and in the profession of educational development more particularly. All of these shifts continue to mean new challenges and opportunities for SLU faculty and graduate students, and the Center commits not only to respond to but also to anticipate these challenges and opportunities.

The state of the Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning is strong, but we have much work to do as we increase our reach across the University, improve the quality of our services and programs, and enhance our reputation both internally and externally. We are confident that, with continued support from faculty and administrators, we are achieving the goals laid out in this strategic plan and that we continue to add value to the University and its reputation. Even as we continue to experience a time of transformation, we commit to honoring the values and traditions that have shaped our work since the Center was founded, to find innovative ways to live out our mission, and to do all of this work in ways that align with the [ethical guidelines for the field of educational development](#). And we commit ourselves fully to doing so in ways that express the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm.

## Guiding Vision

The Reinert Center's guiding vision is **Transforming Teaching and Learning at SLU**. Since its founding, the Center largely has been committed to the formation and transformation of individual teachers, helping them to create transformational learning experiences for SLU students for almost 20 years. In light of the recent growth of the Center and its staff, we strive to expand our impact, both on campus and off, in ways that we believe have the potential to transform the broader teaching and learning culture of the University and to foster even more transformational educational practices. Alongside our continued commitment to individual instructors, this service to the larger educational community of the University helps to both deepen and broaden the Center's influence.

There are many ways the Center honors its commitment to transformative teaching. We can enhance programs focused on transformational and high-impact pedagogical practices; adopt more innovative methods of program delivery for our audiences; offer more programs for academic units (thereby having a greater impact on curriculum design and implementation); begin to share our expertise with other educational units across the campus; create more (and more evidence-based) resources for educators; and increase our reach and reputation, both on and off campus. To accomplish these things, we must bring together the traditions and values of Jesuit education and Ignatian pedagogy with the innovations and challenges of teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. And we must transform our own ways of thinking about the work we do in the Center.

Ultimately, transformational teaching is *Ignatian* teaching: it attends to the whole learner; seeks to **engage** students in dynamic, real-world learning experiences rather than merely to **inform** them of content area knowledge; focuses on discovery-based, learner-centered teaching methods; combines the traditions of Jesuit educational excellence with innovative and evidence-based pedagogical practices; and prepares students to serve, lead, and solve global problems in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Transformational teaching is teaching that **transforms** learners by insisting on **reflective**, intentional, creative approaches to engaging the world, while also applying existing knowledge in innovative ways to promote the collaborative creation of new knowledge. And a transformative education demands transformed learning environments (in dynamic, engaging online courses and in collaborative, experimental technology-rich physical classrooms), where students *enact learning*, rather than merely *receive information*.

With these things in mind, then, the Center will focus even more energy on the formation and transformation of educators and on expanding awareness of the teaching strategies that are known to have a significant impact on student learning and development. We will continue to be reflective and innovative in our own practices and to ground our work firmly within SLU's Jesuit mission and the framework of Ignatian pedagogy: always situating our work with instructors in their particular *contexts*, considering their previous *experiences*, *reflecting* on how best to serve their needs, *acting* in ways that are consistent with our values and our capacity, and *evaluating* our actions regularly so that we can be sure we are meeting the needs of our diverse audiences. We will remain committed to *cura personalis* for those whom we serve and to contributing our expertise to broader conversations about curriculum design and implementation, assessment of student learning, and the purposeful integration of learning technologies.

## Strategic Directions

We continue to focus on enhancing programs, services, practices, and resources in four key areas:



1. **Diversity & Inclusion:** Develop programs that prepare educators to engage all learners and to meet the complex demands of increasingly diverse educational environments.
2. **Community-Building:** Strengthen the Center's role as a collaborative and community-building resource, both on and off campus.
3. **Reflective Innovation:** Develop programs to promote the shift from informational to transformational teaching and learning.
4. **Quality & Impact:** Increase the Center's impact on the culture of teaching and learning at SLU and on the development of reflective, innovative educators, both on and off campus.

These strategic directions will guide our operations and the strategic goals that derive from them. They emerge naturally from the data we collected and the reflection we undertook during the 2011-2012 academic year, as well as the data we have continued to collect in the years since. While each direction represents a key driver for our continued development, the directions also overlap, as do the specific goals that derive from them.

## Strategic Goals

Our strategic goals have been refined over time, but we find that they continue to help us to better serve the needs of individual SLU educators and to make a greater impact on the educational culture of the University more broadly, through our work with academic departments, programs, schools, and colleges.

Of course, along the way, we also have worked to build capacity (knowledge and skills, financial resources, personal resources, and the like) in a variety of areas, and we have continually measured our progress toward achieving our goals regularly, making adjustments as appropriate, as we achieve some goals and as shifts in the needs of our constituencies have changed.

The following table lays out our updated overarching strategic goals, which will inform the Center's work between now and 2017:

Strategic Directions	Strategic Goals
<p><b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b> In order to meet the needs of all SLU students, we will develop programs that <b>prepare educators to engage all learners and to meet the complex demands of increasingly diverse educational environments.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cultivate awareness of the cultural assumptions and values that inform educational practices in a global, and embed this awareness into existing Center programs. <a href="#">[revised]</a></li> <li>2. <i>Sufficiently met for now; will continue to value and monitor, increasing resources as needs arise.</i></li> <li>3. <i>Sufficiently met for now; will continue to value and monitor, increasing resources as needs arise.</i></li> </ol>
<p><b>Community-Building</b> In seeking to be more inclusive in our programming, we aim to <b>strengthen the Center’s role as a collaborative and community-building resource, both on and off campus.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Promote collaborative pedagogical innovation and research among SLU faculty. <a href="#">[revised]</a></li> <li>5. <i>On hold, pending other institution-level developments.</i></li> <li>6. Develop partnerships to advance the Center’s mission. <a href="#">[revised]</a></li> </ol>
<p><b>Reflective Innovation</b> For transformative learning to occur, teachers must go beyond content delivery to create meaningful, high-impact learning experiences, particularly for today’s learners, which means the Center must develop programs that <b>promote the shift from informational to transformational teaching and learning.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Develop online resources and offer workshops on engaging learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century more effectively (e.g., learner-centered pedagogies, discovery-based teaching methods, High-Impact Practices, generational learning).</li> <li>8. Cultivate understanding and application of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm. <a href="#">[revised]</a></li> <li>9. Assist instructors with assessing, researching, and documenting the effectiveness of teaching innovations and practices. <a href="#">[revised]</a></li> </ol>
<p><b>Quality &amp; Impact</b> In order to deliver quality programs, and to help the University achieve its goals of increasing educational quality and reputation, we must <b>increase the Center’s impact on the culture of teaching and learning at SLU and its reputation for developing reflective, innovative educators, both on and off campus.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Offer support and development opportunities to assist departments and programs in creating assessment protocols that are appropriate for their unit-specific needs and that align with institutional needs. <a href="#">[revised]</a></li> <li>11. <i>Completed; will continue to assess and refine going forward.</i></li> <li>12. Develop a long-term plan for ongoing assessment of Center services, programs, and website, and implement new assessment methods.</li> <li>13. Create opportunities to publicize and disseminate the work we do, both on and off campus.</li> </ol>

These goals are intentionally broad; they represent work already underway in the Center, as well as offer flexibility for emerging initiatives over time. In order to ensure achievement of these goals, we have broken down each into specific, measurable objectives (as presented in our full strategic plan). However, we are prepared to replace any number of these more specific objectives with other related work, if instructional and/or institutional needs shift. Both the Strategic Directions and Strategic Goals are broad enough to accommodate such flexibility.

## Strategic Planning Process

The process by which we have arrived at these priorities has been intentionally inclusive of a broad range of stakeholders (Reinert Center staff and Advisory Board members, other faculty, administrators, etc.), informed by deep reflection on the Center's current state and various factors related to our broader context, and updated over time as our context changes.

Throughout the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, the Reinert Center's Strategic Planning Committee worked to develop strategic directions, goals, and objectives that are consistent with the Center's mission and that can position the Center well to achieve its [vision](#). (The strategic planning committee was made up of three Reinert Center staff members and two faculty members who served on our faculty Advisory Board.) During the strategic planning period, we collected many kinds of data to better understand the Center's current state (including visioning sessions, SWOT activities, a Service Quality Survey, and benchmarking research). We also considered a number of environmental factors – including institution-level educational priorities for the University; trends in higher education and learning technologies; and trends in educational development more broadly – to ensure that we understood the complexities of both the local and (inter)national contexts for our work. Throughout, we took as our guide the framework of [Ignatian pedagogy](#); this reflective process enabled us to identify key elements of context, to better understand our previous experiences, and to consider appropriate actions for the Center's future.

Since the first implementation of this plan in 2013, we have regularly reviewed and reported on our progress (made public in our Annual Reports) and we have made adjustments each year. Consistent with the literature on effective strategic planning, we see our strategic plan as a living document that grows and changes in light of evidence and experience.

As we continue to move forward, undertaking new initiatives and enhancing existing programs and resources, we commit to acting in ways that are consistent with SLU's Jesuit mission and the framework of Ignatian pedagogy. We remain committed to *cura personalis* (care of the whole person) for those whom we serve and to contributing our expertise to broader conversations about curriculum design and implementation, assessment of student learning, and purposeful integration of learning technologies in order to demonstrate care of the whole *University*. Finally, as demands for services and programs increase, and as we find ourselves involved in numerous new initiatives, it will be more important than ever to ground all the work we do firmly in [our mission](#) and [our core values](#).