Ryerson University

Recommendations of the Provost's Task Force on Continuing Education

January 2016

Executive Summary

In the fall of 2014, Dr. Tom Traves, president emeritus, Dalhousie University, presented a report with recommendations to the provost based on his interviews and observations regarding the state of continuing education (CE) at Ryerson University. The consultations were extensive and involved faculty, staff and students from across the university. In the winter of 2015, a task force was struck, chaired by Dr. Steven Murphy, dean, Ted Rogers School of Management, to examine the contents of the report and focus on how to interpret, debate and implement (where appropriate) the recommendations and address other related issues that arose as a result of the report and ensuing discussions.

It should be noted from the outset, the important roles CE provides to Ryerson University. A strong continuing education unit is essential in any modern day university. Not only do such units return valuable capital to the university, they also serve as one of the most nimble forms of offering creative programming domestically and internationally, in person, through hybrid designs or purely online. At Ryerson, CE plays the additional role of providing flexibility to 'day students' in offering classes outside of normal university operating hours. This report's purpose is to set in motion the processes required for CE to be as effective in its mandate as possible.

This report uses the Traves Report as a starting point to create positive change relating to CE at Ryerson. At the heart of the task force's discussions were the basic assumptions and business model behind CE. Currently, CE provides flexible delivery alternatives to 'day school' (degree) programs while also offering CE certificates and courses in a competitive and quickly changing market (in both credit and not-for-credit courses). This current situation seems to have arisen more as a cultural artifact rather than a deliberate strategy, but there is also no reason, in theory, that a CE school could not perform both roles well if it had the resources to innovate and understand the presumably different business models, market segments and competition in each of these sectors. A major point in deliberations and realities is the impact and effect on Ryerson's bottom-line of shifting the balance between credit and non-credit programs (particularly in terms of BIUs, etc.).

As Ryerson has seen unprecedented undergraduate growth over the past decade, so too has CE experienced an influx in the number of day students into CE courses (starting with the double-cohort and aided by the integrated fees structure). In these degree credit offerings, it is not uncommon for mature students (already possessing one post-secondary degree or diploma) to be seated alongside Ryerson day students trying to complete their degrees with more flexible scheduling. The task force suspects that the more mature learners may bring different expectations and experiences to the classroom, and it is unclear how well the current model is serving either constituency.

If CE is to continue offering degree credit courses that emanate from Ryerson's six 'line' faculties, there needs to be some assessment of the optimal mix between degree credit and non-degree credit courses (approximately 80% of current CE offerings are credit courses). Within the context of providing important revenue to the university, which is redistributed to the faculties, finding the optimal mix between credit and non-credit courses is at the heart of defining CE's mission and core business.

Regardless of the mix that is strategically decided upon between credit and non-credit courses, what became clear in deliberations is that communication mechanisms differ widely between CE and the participating faculties, and that where communication was more consistent and transparent, greater mutual trust seemed to ensue. Clearly, the relationships between CE and the major participating faculties need to be systematically addressed. In so doing, the sustainability of the current collaborative model must be assessed. For whatever reasons, financial incentives and new financial models have not translated into greater cooperation with CE, so we must also address the assumptions, perceptions and biases that may exist in Ryerson's culture.

There seems to be a widespread perception that academic rigor in CE classrooms is lacking. This is somewhat perplexing given that all CE 'degree credit' offerings are (or should be) monitored by the 'home' department for quality. The task force suspects that CE offerings and debates need to be moved out of the shadows and into mainstream discussion and deliberation. Changing the perceptions of quality will take time but almost assuredly will involve bringing more academics into regular communication about CE offerings and creating mechanisms for ongoing dialogue between CE and the major participating faculties. The Faculty of Arts was mentioned as a good example of where a committee made up of CE representatives, program coordinators and members of departmental and decanal leadership teams can regularly be updated and make decisions about what is working, what is not, and how best to collectively pivot.

The task force addressed all of the recommendations in the Traves Report with many discussions going well beyond the issues raised in the report. While detailed responses to each of Traves' recommendation can be found starting on **page four**, below is a summary of the task force's most critical recommendations – those actions that the task force believes are core to seeing positive change in CE at Ryerson University:

1. The first and most critical step toward change is clarifying the business model and creating a renewed vision for CE (Who makes up the core target market(s) and how are these groups similar or different? What strategies need to be developed to best understand and serve these markets?);

2. Clarify CE's central role in providing professional education for adult learners and academic laddering opportunities; while also providing additional support for an undergraduate population requiring flexible timetabling

3. Create faculty joint committees charged with CE program quality and delivery to foster buy-in and create better ongoing relations and communications with the faculties;

4. Become more market focused, grounded in research and nimble in execution;

5. In partnership with the Faculty of Arts, create a School of ESL within CE that serves the entire university;

6. Determine the optimal mix of degree credit and non-credit offerings to meet the needs of the adult learner while focusing energy only where courses and certificates are profitable or in limited scope meet significant societal need;

7. Digital and distance learning should be consolidated into a one-stop concierge service (partnering CE with valuable resources in CCS, DES, DMP, and LTO). A coordinated strategy/capacity that can serve all faculty members (pointing faculty to resources and expertise across our campus) will help to ensure Ryerson University isn't left behind in digital and distance education;

8. Align all CE activities with Ryerson's academic plan. This should include, but not be limited to, pragmatic ways to assess the viability and attractiveness of international CE opportunities;

9. Place more emphasis on cross-disciplinary courses and certificate programs. There is an opportunity for CE to capitalize on opportunities that are difficult to mirror in degree programs. CE should develop a culture of testing innovative ideas that may or may not develop into degree programs;

10. Provide the dean of CS the latitude to create the team best suited to the cultural change required to be more client focused and responsive to adult learner needs; and

11. An updated web presence including a robust registration and course management system must be implemented to ensure CE is on a level playing field with other continuing education operations.

Responses to the Traves Report

Note: Headings mirror those of the Traves Report

A: Innovation

1. *The Chang School (CS) should develop a formal innovation process that annually looks at labour market trends, enrolment data, activity at competitor institutions, student and alumni survey data and other relevant information to consider new programming initiatives ranging from short workshops to new certificates to revisions of existing programs. Participants in this process should include the senior CS leadership group, all Program Directors, research staff and other relevant university officials. This annual process should help set the CS agenda for change leadership inside the School and its relations with other university partners.*

The task force agrees that CE should create a more robust annual review process to assess their degree of innovation in the continuing education sector. While it was noted that some review processes do currently exist, it was agreed that these processes could be made more robust and include a much stronger focus on the competitive landscape. To this end, labour market trends, enrolment data, competitor activity, surveys by students and alumni, and other relevant information should all be captured with the aim of deciphering the trends in continuing education and where Ryerson is positioned to take strategic advantage of these trends.

In order to be aware of the strengths embedded in each faculty, the university must develop stronger, more robust communication mechanisms between the faculties and CE (more on this in other recommendations). Ryerson's strategic positioning vis-à-vis trends is crucial, as it was felt that CE needs to be given the flexibility and authority to assess new ideas more critically within the context of the market and Ryerson capabilities. Particularly, CE's analysis of the demand for certificates has to be sharpened. Currently, too many resources (human and financial) may be spent in trying to assess far too many new ideas. In order to be successful, CE needs to become more nimble and strategic, and this will require a more robust internal assessment function for new program or course offerings.

2. *In addition to surveys of existing students and graduates, the CS should conduct a regular survey of students in certificate programs who have dropped out after one or two courses to understand better student perceptions of course and program value, student expectations, competitive forces if students are now studying elsewhere and labour market needs (i.e. to determine if students' goals have already been met by*

their CS studies). This information should be fed into the annual CS's innovation discussions.

While it was acknowledged that 'exit interviews' might be able to shed some insight into course and program value, the ability to gather these insights isn't always straightforward and there may be other opportunities (see above recommendation) to collect the data CE needs to be innovative and market-friendly. In addition, CE marketing already follows-up with students who drop out, and the task force recommends continuing this practice with added questions that might provide insight into the types of courses and delivery formats that would be attractive to the adult learner. CE students currently have the ability to provide detailed online feedback supplemented by an automatic call to ascertain why people dropped the course or program. It should be noted that in this recommendation the task force was concerned that the current data obtained by CE is a mix of day student and adult learner concerns, and drawing conclusions from this sample mix will continue to be precarious. Of course, this points to the larger, overarching issue of CE's central mission and what primary target market it is choosing to serve. This discussion will be captured in a later recommendation, but suffice it to say that how students are nurtured within certificates and courses and what supports students require may vary greatly depending upon the market segment.

3. *A substantial number of prospective students annually register for CS courses but fail to show up to pursue their studies. The CS should survey these students to understand better their decision-making considerations.*

This is a true statement for CE certificates and the task force recommends that there should be a deposit fee (even for day students) to ensure that resources are not mobilized and subsequently wasted due to an unclear picture of true student demand. CE is already surveying students, but this could be 'rolled-up' into an annual report to provide the CS dean with greater insights into why registrations are not always translating into concrete numbers. Again, this issue may be partially obfuscated by degree credit students finding an alternative section in the day school, so time should be spent understanding continuing education student motives. It is important to understand the percentage of CE students who are not showing up to classes versus the percentage of day students looking for programming flexibility. The reasons for failing to show up may be quite different between the groups and future surveys should have the capacity to tease these answers from the data.

4. *The CS should extend its recent discussions about academic certificate structures to consider the basic assumptions that underpin its current curriculum arrangements. At present, certificates clearly follow historic degree structures, which is to say a six to ten course major with each course being taught over a full academic term of approximately thirteen weeks for three hours per week. Arguably, there is no reason that conventional degree requirements should drive thinking and standards for the*

length of continuing education courses, the number of such courses required for certification or the academic character of certificates with regard to required and elective courses. The CS should receive strong support for its recent discussions about new models for courses of varied periods of time and intensity depending upon the subject matter or the targeted clientele that lead to a three-course Professional Development Award designation that can stand alone or ladder up to a four to six-course Professional Certificate or an eight to ten-course Advanced Professional Certificate. The CS should expand this approach beyond its current plans to restrict such reforms to new certificate programs only and carefully evaluate the merits of applying this approach to all or most of its existing certificates as well.

The task force applauds and fully supports this recommendation. There is nothing about the continuing education market in and of itself that would dictate courses follow the same 13-week format as degree courses. In fact, it is an industry norm that CE courses offer more flexibility in delivery. This would include online, hybrid and alternative programming formats (e.g., Friday, Saturday, Sunday delivery). It should be noted that these alternate delivery formats already exist in many of the CINT (interdisciplinary courses and certificates), and CE should continue to examine shorter, more flexible certificate courses right across its offerings (as seen at the University of Toronto). Flexibility is also needed in the 'bundling' of courses, as Senate-approved certificates may be too rigid a structure (in both programming structure and in time to market) in the competitive landscape of CE programming. The number of courses required for a certificate should likely have more to do with the learning objectives and less to do with any predefined structure. The task force recommends that Senate Policy 76 be amended to provide more flexibility in the structure of certificates and the courses contained therein.

5. *CS students should be offered the opportunity to build their own "customized" Professional Development Awards and Professional Certificates with the support of CS or faculty academic advisors. Whether these customized programs reflect idiosyncratic intellectual interests or a prescient perspective on emerging labour market opportunities, in the true spirit of life-long learning the CS should be flexible enough to facilitate such personal initiatives and should regularly analyze any emerging patterns such initiatives might point to for new program ideas. Possibly, such customized initiatives should receive a distinctive form of certification such as a "Career Development Award or Certificate". Across the continent, UCLA, Harvard, Rice University and McGill successfully offer this opportunity to continuing education students with good results.*

The task force agrees with initiatives designed to foster and reward life-long learning. This recommendation speaks to flexibility in program offerings, but also flexibility in following learners through different career stages and needs. There are obvious advantages in having organizations and managers think of Ryerson CE programs when they turn to the developmental needs of their employees. Currently, the practice of 'swirling' – gaining CE credits from more than one post-secondary institution is one

example of innovation that would allow learners flexibility and choice across the system. We should do whatever we can to provide programs that reflect what Ryerson "does best" but also allow for flexibility in taking courses that play to the strengths of other post-secondary institutions (and allowing those to count toward Ryerson certificates).

The ADAPT programs were mentioned as an example of where colleges have shown that there is a market for life-long learning. Developing a competency-based approach to life-long learning would also help CE to position its courses and certificates in a manner that is consistent with organizational development plans. Current CE certificates may be too prescribed and restrictive in what courses students can select – the idea of providing the life-long learner with more choice is appealing, as is the notion of creating your own diploma (selecting 'x' number of courses and packaging them in a way that best suits the life-long learner's needs). While a good point was raised that we may need to be cautious of MTCU reporting requirements when considering flexibility in certificates, we also need to be deliberate in creating certificates that are not rigidly tied to academic programs.

6. *The CS should develop a modularized suite of brief, intensive educational opportunities aimed at recent graduates who feel they lack appropriate exposure to desirable competencies expected in the labour market such as information technology knowledge, financial literacy, leadership, entrepreneurial and communication skills. These mini-courses or workshops should be marketed to new and recent graduates, with an initial focus on senior Ryerson students immediately after graduation or during the academic year. These brief courses/workshops should not be scheduled exclusively in tandem with annual Ryerson term dates but should operate on a continuous basis, at least for an experimental period, to assess the merits and challenges of "continuous intake" models of marketing and registration.*

The task force agrees that modularized and targeted educational opportunities that speak to making people more marketable are an important niche for CE. The benefit of such programs is their nimbleness to offer packaged market-preparation courses in a way that degree program offerings cannot. For example, modules focused on the soft skill development of upper year undergraduates and recent graduates could garner much support, especially if marketed with the support and knowledge of faculty members in diverse disciplines across our campus. The task force also concurs that there needs to be more flexibility in scheduling such that these intensive modules are run over a series of weekends (for example) and on a continuous basis as per market demand.

7. *Insofar as RU participates in international agreements such as recent initiatives sponsored by the Brazilian government or longstanding partnerships among many universities with the Saudi Arabian government to facilitate undergraduate and graduate study opportunities for their nationals, RU has an excellent opportunity to offer English as a Second Language classes through the CS for students who require this support either prior to or during their programs.*

The task force agrees with this recommendation and points to the success of the Ryerson ESL Foundation Program currently offered by CE and the Faculty of Arts, which in partnership with Undergraduate Admissions guarantees admission to an undergraduate degree program upon successful completion. There may well be an opportunity to expand upon the success of this program. One plausible idea is to create a School of ESL within the Chang School, in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts' Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures, where ESL issues in Ryerson's faculties (and the community beyond) would be dealt with by experts housed in one central office. Shifts within RU could make this office stronger – such as moving language testing to this office. A School of ESL located in CE could also serve as a 'laddering' function for international students looking to enroll in full-time degree programs (including graduate degree offerings at Ryerson). This recommendation is especially important as it supports Ryerson's goal to increase the enrolment of visa-holding international students, speaks to Ryerson's mission as global city builders, and serves to embrace newcomers to Canada whose first language may not be English. The contributions of these immigrants to Canada is huge, and we believe it is a natural fit for Ryerson to be playing a more proactive role in building a world-class ESL School that would ease the transition of new Canadians and prepare them for the labour market.

8. *While part-time degree programs appear to offer additional academic flexibility for adult learners, I was advised that at present most RU courses and programs are heavily subscribed and very little excess capacity exists to accommodate additional degree students. To the extent that new part-time degree proposals rely on courses already under heavy demand from existing students, it does not appear practical at the moment to consider a substantial increase in new initiatives in this sphere. Moreover, part-time degree enrolments in Ontario have been relatively flat for more than a decade, so demand may not be great. However, in unique cases, where capacity problems do not exist, RU could consider new proposals. If so, RU and CS should examine carefully the possibility of students using their certificate credentials to "ladder" into such programs with advanced standing based on their Ryerson or other equivalent studies. The chance to mix credit and non-credit certificate courses into interesting new degree offerings may generate unique degree opportunities that RU has not sufficiently examined. All this said, it should be noted that current RU degree students can and do pursue their degrees on a part-time basis provided there are no limits imposed on time-to-completion by their degree programs.*

The task force felt it was important to isolate the two issues in this recommendation: part-time degrees; and laddering into part-time degrees. The task force concurs that the flat Ontario enrolments in part-time degree students makes any initiatives in this space a non-priority with limited resources. Laddering should be used to bridge CE students into full-time day students in the vast majority of instances. If a CE certificate acts as the gateway to higher education, we should encourage our CE students to

pursue their goals in RU's faculties. Any suggestions around CE and part-time degree offerings necessarily force us back into questions around CE's core mission. While flexibility in degree offerings is a laudable goal, it can be accomplished in a number of ways. By focusing CE on the adult learner's needs, it is hoped that if a degree aspiration is kindled by CE offerings, the CE student would be encouraged to pursue their academic dreams with the relevant faculty. It should be noted, however, that there may be a sizeable market that is not looking for undergraduate degrees (CE's own data suggests that most CE students already possess an undergraduate degree) and our CE offerings may need to change dramatically to serve this market segment. In addition, there are concerns around the capacity of faculties to provide the level of service involved in part-time programs. The successful collaborations between faculties and CE in delivering effective part-time programs (e.g. Nursing and Computer Science) could serve as a benchmark to assess the most viable manner to deliver part-time programs. Given the competitive landscape, with colleges in Ontario now offering more and more bachelor's degrees, the transferring of CE students could be an important part of dealing with issues of declining college transfers in a more sustainable fashion. Indeed, there are several models that might allow this to occur. It was noted that CE currently hosts a successful part-time degree program in Computer Science which is run in parallel to the home department's full-time program. The department of Computer Science is currently exploring a means of laddering these part-time students into their full-time program in the second year and beyond when capacity exists. Clearly there may be capacity in some degree programs to allow CE students to transfer into second, third or fourth year.

9. *The CS should be given greater autonomy to create new non-credit certificates that are independent of a faculty or departmental home. This will encourage more innovative and entrepreneurial initiatives within the CS and facilitate a more flexible and nimble response at RU to evolving student and labour market needs. To the extent that certificates rely heavily on departmental degree-credit courses, agreement to proceed under the existing collaborative model between the faculties and the CS clearly remains a reasonable expectation. But where the CS introduces new certificates that reflect a new approach to modularized courses and laddered programs based mostly on non-credit offerings, or where new certificates are novel or interdisciplinary and not easily housed in the existing RU academic departmental structure, other arrangements should be accommodated under RU regulations. In such circumstances, it may be necessary for an official in the Provost's Office to undertake regulatory oversight of CS activities in a manner similar to that provided currently by departmental Academic Coordinators.*

The task force agrees that more non-credit offerings would allow CE to respond more quickly to market demands. Creating more modular, flexible degree credit courses that build on the cross-faculty strengths of Ryerson, is also a growth area that requires mechanisms be set in place to help success rates. It is acknowledged that a lot of time and energy currently goes into finding an "academic home" for non-credit offerings and this slows down CE's ability to respond to the changing needs of the market. CE should

be able to administer programs, with some oversight. This recommendation speaks directly to the issue of better understanding what CE students are looking for in courses and certificates. Creative non-credit offerings may be a viable solution, but they will have to take into account the resulting lack of credit transferability and OSAP eligibility, as well as potentially "lost" BIU funding. We have to be more creative on the revenue side and allow for innovative programs to take root, even if that means foregoing government grant funding. The sustainability of CE over the long term needs to be the focus of change, not the incremental gains (or losses) from BIU funding from one academic year to the next.

10. *There will be an evolving market for career-focused, course-based professional master's degrees as the labour market changes and perceptions of the sufficiency of traditional undergraduate degrees diminish. With its historical origins as a polytechnic, RU is well equipped to address this demand. Insofar as RU allows working students to take these degrees on a part-time and a distance education basis, the CS could play a leadership role helping to identify new opportunities and organize such courses and programs. However, responsibility for such degrees presently resides in the School of Graduate Studies and the number of, and BIU funding for, graduate students in Ontario is regulated by government fiat, so the opportunity for new graduate degrees may be limited. If regulations allow, Ryerson certainly should examine the opportunity for "unfunded" and presumably higher tuition graduate degrees to meet emerging demand. For example, unique programs offered in partnership with companies anxious to upgrade their work force in specialized areas may create some opportunities for corporate-funded professional master's degrees, especially in a high-tech, high skill urban economy like Toronto. However, at present, the role of the CS in this evolution is unclear. Should they provide "evening" and summer school courses to serve this market? Should they provide marketing advice or services to secure partnerships with large companies and professional partnerships interested in working on graduate degrees for their employees or members? Should they provide expertise and experience in customizing courses for such partnerships? If so, what funding model would apply? If the School of Graduate Studies and its existing graduate programs deliver these courses, should the CS simply act as a supplier of distance education technical services as required? Again, upon what funding model? These questions have not been raised to a sufficient level of discussion at Ryerson to allow further recommendations at this point save to say that this could represent an important opportunity for Ryerson that should be directly addressed by the Provost, the School of Graduate Studies and the CS if Ryerson wishes to achieve some "first-mover" advantages in this educational space.*

The task force recognizes the importance of the questions raised in this recommendation. Certainly Professional Master's Diplomas (PMDips) offer an opportunity to capitalize on the evolving needs of undergraduate degree holders who

find themselves lacking the credentials and specific skill sets to land a job. PMDips will need to be developed jointly with the Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS) to ensure they align with academic expertise and the strategic goals of graduate education. The possibility of offering unfunded graduate degrees at higher tuition levels with outside organizations needs to be considered carefully. Graduate degrees and diplomas are an important reputation builder for any university. There may be more opportunity for CE to develop further customized, in-house offerings for organizations. These opportunities should likely be targeted toward skill acquisition (e.g., big data analytics). PMDips are one example of where Ryerson needs to continue to explore what role and value-added CE might bring to graduate education. The task force noted the capacity issues will need to be addressed in CE if we are to make a major shift toward non-credit courses and customized solutions for organizations. This is a different market from the adult learner, and a much different market from undergraduate students looking for flexible degree offerings. These issues speak to the importance of a creating a salient mission for CE with input from all stakeholders in order to maximize buy-in.

11. *The CS should continue its strong focus regarding online enrolment expansion, which has grown enormously over the past decade. The CS has a very sophisticated digital education development capacity. Three other units at Ryerson also play a role in providing digital development expertise, professional development opportunities on how to teach under these conditions, and advice on how to access new government program funding for online education. Superficially, it appears that there is overlap among these functions that could be addressed by consolidating all distance and digital education functions in a centralized RU unit. At this stage, however, the case for consolidation and centralization is not compelling. The CS manages its resources well and its record of achievement is substantial. If RU wishes to expand this capacity to serve other parts of the university more effectively, it should consider expanding funding for this CS unit and give it a parallel mandate to serve a broader range of customers alongside its CS clientele.*

The task force is in agreement with the principles outlined in this recommendation. At Ryerson, there are a number of offices supporting digital education and the timing seems appropriate for more clearly articulated differentiation. Ryerson's priority should be the development of an institution-wide strategy. The risks of not better coordinating distance and digital education expertise are substantial (given RU's need to keep pace or stake a competitive advantage vis-à-vis other universities in this space). Many of our faculty members are confused about who to approach for support with integrating digital resources into their teaching and while the existing structures have some unique strengths, they typically work in isolation. As one option, RU could create an inclusive centre of excellence and promote Ryerson's digital learning activities to both internal and external stakeholders as well as support a wider range of scholarly activity related to digital education (e.g., scholarly research on digital learning). One key priority is the creation of a 'one-stop' service, as a first point of access, to assist anyone who is looking for help in developing distance and digital education. Providing a concierge-like service,

this office would be able to clearly direct faculty wishing to engage in course development or redesign to the appropriate units or teams, depending on the nature and scope of the project. As a service for anyone looking for information, know-how, course design, or best-practices in developing digital or distance content, this office would be a first point of access that could clearly help faculty focus and shape projects from the outset, directing them to the most appropriate support team (e.g., CCS, DES, DMP, LTO) and continue to support the projects to completion and beyond (with revision and updating of digital materials). RU will need to invest in additional instructional design support, in addition to ensuring we have adequate resources in terms of a wider set of digital skills across our support teams (using consistent digital platforms), in order to meet the demands from all faculties. As improving the student experience is at the forefront of our academic plan, the time is right to take action here.

12. *The definition of both innovation and key performance measures to assess the impact of various initiatives should flow from an organization's core strategy. Externally generated performance measures can, if one does not take care, drive an organization to meet non-core objectives. That said, success for the CS can be measured by its enrolment trends and its ability to manage its costs effectively to meet or exceed its financial targets set by RU. Within the scope of this review, it seems that the following items would be useful measures of CS success (with the caveat that new strategies may generate new measures):*

- *Total CNED enrolments by course and certificate*
- *Total CS enrolments by course and certificate*
- *Total enrolments by academic term*
- *Number of new CNED students annually*
- *Cost per student to recruit new CNED students*
- *Average, median and minimum class size*
- *Total distance education students by course & certificate*
- *Average annual/term cost per CNED/all CS student*
- *Ability to meet financial contribution targets*

The task force is in agreement with the use of performance metrics but notes that these are already in place at CE. That said, the number of metrics needs to be broadened and linked to the core mission. There is a need to balance input measures with tangible outcome measures of success, all set within the context of the strategic direction of The Chang School.

B: Academic Quality Processes and Structures

13. *The CS should regularly review existing certificate programs to ensure curriculum relevance in relation to market and skill needs, enrolment trends, relevant course*

and program nomenclature, and program viability. Current review practices and external advisory program board consultations occur too infrequently.

The task force agrees with this recommendation but notes that reviews are already in place at CE. It is acknowledged that more frequent and robust assessments are required in order to facilitate the canceling of courses/certificates with enrolments below expectations. These reviews would include robust but less onerous intermediate reviews. The scheduling of all reviews should also be known well in advance for the benefit of all stakeholders. External program oversight from advisory councils (or other such mechanisms) would be welcomed as we acknowledge the need for CE to be nimble and market driven. These goals are difficult to accomplish in CE without broadened industry involvement (e.g. advisory boards) providing feedback on trends, opportunities and threats in the competitive landscape.

14. *The CS should annually review enrolment trends in all certificate programs to weed out low demand offerings. Approximately 80% of current CS enrolments come from its 20 top certificates. Approximately 40 programs perform only modestly from an enrolment and revenue perspective and the remaining 30 or so programs struggle to cover their costs. Unproductive program clutter creates unnecessary work for program directors, an unwieldy calendar that leads to confusion for potential students, and administrative costs that can be eliminated. Collaborating deans, academic coordinators and CS program directors should develop policies based on a mindset which assumes that unless marked enrolment increases occur, perhaps as a result of new marketing or curriculum initiatives, low enrolment certificates will soon be terminated. (Special care must be taken for existing students in these programs to have an opportunity to complete their certificates in a specified time period.) Throughout this process, if there are unique courses in low-demand programs that appear to be thriving, careful study of this fact should investigate why this is so and how the entire certificate could be revised to reflect this popular strand of activity. In some cases, this process could lead also to a change in the name of the program, such as occurred with Strategic Marketing and several times with the Sustainability certificate that can revive substantial interest. All that said, certificate programs exist to serve student demand and if enrolment data demonstrates that demand no longer exists, there is no reason not to cancel those certificates.*

The task force concurs with this recommendation that CE should focus energy on a smaller number of certificates and courses based on market demand. There was mention that processes to remove CE certificates are currently in place, making this recommendation all the more salient. In other words, the effectiveness of the review processes are called into question if the vast majority of certificate programs are performing modestly or struggling just to cover costs. It is acknowledged that there may be high demand courses in low demand certificates. Again, this is likely a matter of matching supply and demand.

15. *There is no consistent model of organization within RU's faculties to manage "their" CS courses and no systematic process whereby they monitor academic quality, teaching performance, student feedback, enrolment levels and certificate viability, or the coherence of "their" CS certificates with the faculty's strategic plan. Every RU faculty should have a multi-year strategy for its continuing education activities and a systematic organization to manage its collaborative efforts with the CS. Every faculty should create a Continuing Education Committee made up of departmental academic coordinators, a Chang School program director and a senior faculty official, perhaps an associate dean for Continuing Education that reports to the dean and through the dean to the provost. Ideally the academic coordinator should be a full-time faculty member. The mandate of the committee should include the execution of the faculty's strategic goals for continuing education, oversight of program quality, review of teaching effectiveness by full-time and part-time instructors, a considered response to student concerns articulated through periodic surveys, consideration of new program initiatives and a focus on effective communication with the CS over mutual concerns including enrolment levels and assessments of proposals to cancel existing certificate programs.*

The task force believes that the enhanced communication channels described in this recommendation will form a key pillar in moving forward in a more collaborative fashion. The establishment of new committees will be addressed in recommendation 16 which follows but the taskforce does believe that every RU faculty should have a multi-year strategy for its continuing education activities and a commensurate internal organization to manage these collaborative activities. This strategic direction should most logically be run out of the dean's office, as deans are in a position to articulate their faculty's priorities.

16. *Every faculty should have a joint committee with The Chang School to review major concerns about the effective operation of the Ryerson collaborative model. The committee should consist of the dean of the faculty and the dean of the CS as co-chairs, a "lead" academic coordinator representing the Faculty Continuing Education Committee and the CS program director for the faculty. The mandate of the joint committee should be to review issues of general concern about the faculty-CS relationship, quality concerns and consideration of new initiatives. The Faculty of Arts currently has such a joint committee that works well. The Provost should consider whether responsibility for approval of new certificates should occur at the department level or within the mandate of the joint committee.*

The task force concurs that a joint CE committee should be struck in each faculty and be charged with all strategic aspects of program delivery (consistent with the faculty's articulated strategy). The composition of these joint committees will vary according to

local needs but should include the faculty dean, CS dean, CE program director, CE academic coordinator (for the faculty – from CE), and faculty CE coordinator (from the faculty). These committees can play the role of being a valuable communication mechanism (between faculties and CE in a manner much more formalized and wider in scope than is currently the case) with the ability to identify collaboration opportunities (including surfacing competing goals across faculties).

It is important to state that schools and departments play a vital role in an enhanced CE model, and this role must be more transparent to all stakeholders than is currently the case. When a school/department makes an offering supported by CE, the respective faculty/dean must be aware of this. Considerable costs (both financial and human) are devoted to CE efforts and a joint committee must examine the return on investment of these costs, and their alignment with the faculty's strategic plan. The joint committee in each faculty should be charged with ensuring the CE strategy is on track, and making adjustments in a timely fashion to changing dynamics in the marketplace. Support should also be given to novel non-credit courses, especially those that span faculties. The task force felt there was significant opportunity in this regard, and that more frequent meetings of the faculty deans with the CS dean will lead to more innovative thinking, and resultant programing in both credit and non-credit courses and certificate programs. It should be noted that we are already seeing positive developments in this regard.

In order for the joint committees to be most effective, standardized terms of reference should be developed and followed. There could also be a formal or informal mechanism established where all faculty CE coordinators would meet periodically to share information on best practices and lessons learned across the university.

17. *The financial model underpinning RU's collaborative model creates incentives for the partners in certificate programs to cooperate and innovate to support enrolment growth. At the same time, currently the direct flow of RU funding to academic departments bypasses deans and their faculty budget arrangements. This is unsound organizational practice and undermines decanal interest in continuing education innovation. RU enrolment-based financial transfers under the collaborative model should flow through the dean's office. The dean of each faculty should distribute these resources as she or he sees fit to enhance the operations of the faculty and encourage innovation and support for its continuing education activities.*

The task force had divergent views on this recommendation. Before offering suggestions, the task force believed it was important to ask two questions: Is the current model working; and is the current model undermining the faculties' ability to make strategic decisions? By and large, one could argue that the decline in CE revenues despite the new funding model would make it difficult to assert that the current model

is working well. We have pointed to other important ways to strengthen CE in this report due to the complexity of issues. While some members of the task force felt adding deans into the CE equation would add a layer to the current structures, it is unclear how any progress would be made without decanal buy-in or benefit. It would not be in CE's best long-term interests to bypass the 'line deans' offices. A more collaborative and transparent model that involves a committee with representation from schools and departments would be preferable to the existing system where deals are made with individuals, sometimes without the knowledge of schools/departments and deans. Decanal interest and buy-in to CE success can be significantly strengthened.

18. *Every dean should ensure that there is a component of the faculty's strategic plan which deals with continuing education activities and that the faculty has effective administrative structures, processes and controls, as per Recommendations 12 and 13, to manage its multiple Chang School relationships.*

The task force is in agreement that the strategic plan of the university, faculties, and schools/departments should all have components dealing with CE strategies. The task force concurs that adequate administrative structures are needed as per recommendations 12 and 13. The extent and complexity of CE relationships in any faculty should not be underestimated. Ryerson's current culture and practice has been established over many years and shedding light on all relationships will aid in the transparency of academic functioning and hopefully lead to less skepticism around CE. By bringing CE strategies into academic plans at all levels, we would hope to see associated discussion and debate about the role of CE in the university/faculty/school or department. Collegial discussion around the role of CE in the context of strategies for building a world-class comprehensive university would be welcomed.

19. *When faculties propose changes in their degree requirements that affect course offerings and course scheduling, such proposals should be considered by the Faculty Continuing Education Committee and the Faculty/CS Joint Committee for comment on the impact of such changes upon CS certificate requirements and CS students' educational opportunities.*

The task force agrees that improved communication mechanisms (such as joint committees) will help to mitigate the number of changes upon CS certificate requirements or course offerings. Again, a strategic set of priorities, agreed upon by the relevant stakeholders, and bolstered by increased communication will help to alleviate some of the juggling CE is now forced to deal with, and create a suite of courses and certificates with the buy-in of departments/schools along with deans.

20. *Managing course scheduling and the number of course sections offered by an academic department is a complex process reflecting degree requirements, available staff resources, room availability and so on, but academic departments*

should take special care to consider the implications of last-minute section or course cancelations upon the educational needs of CS students as well as their own degree students. These issues should be reviewed by the Faculty Continuing Education Committee and the Joint Faculty/CS Committee when unintended consequences impact either partner under the collaborative model.

The task force concurs with this recommendation and believes that comments around recommendation 19 would also be relevant here. In addition, how the university manages course intentions should also be a part of the process, as some of the changes from faculties result from differences in actual enrollments when compared to course intentions. Whenever there are unintended consequences for either the participating faculty or CE, the joint committee should collegially decide upon a course of action in the best interests of the university.

C: Chang School Competitiveness and Marketing

21. *The Chang School should engage a new external agency to review its marketing and recruitment (sales) activities. Insofar as the CS currently has a longstanding relationship with an external marketing firm to assist its efforts, a different consultant or organization should be hired to undertake this review. In recent years, web traffic is up, but enrolments are down. Marketing costs per course enrolment have risen substantially, so these results do not appear to reflect a resource problem. Various explanations have been offered to explain this phenomenon including frequent changes in marketing strategies and tactics, an inadequate online registration capacity required to close sales, a cluttered calendar with too many certificates and courses that make focused marketing difficult, increased competition from other organizations and the like. In the absence of data and the results of a closer examination of these and other relevant issues, it is not possible to predict better outcomes in the future. This review should be a high priority for The Chang School.*

The task force concurs that a strategic review of marketing activities against benchmarked outcome measures is needed. Having a strong marketing strategy and executing upon its research findings are crucial to competitiveness in the CE space. A third party external review of marketing activities would likely yield valuable insights into developing a cohesive multi-year marketing plan. That said, the task force wants to be clear that the issues in CE go well beyond marketing practices. As outlined in this document, there are core questions around the mission of CE that need to be questioned. The relationship of CE to degree credit offerings, and to faculties more generally, is also a critical area that needs to be clarified, and communications improved. We would like to see better marketing efforts placed within the context of the overall challenges facing CE, rather than as a panacea to some of the more cultural nuances that will take time and trust to overcome.

22. The Chang School should consider changing its name officially to reflect better its current orientation and purpose. It no longer focuses primarily on "second chance" learners who never had the opportunity to go to university. Today, a majority of its students already possess a university degree and seek career advancement through new skills and expertise. The School's name should reflect its purpose. The words "professional" or "career" should be added to the title after careful review of the options and their implications. Something along the lines of The Chang School of Continuing and Professional Education seems more appropriate to current circumstances.

The task force concurs that the name of the unit should reflect its purpose but respectfully places the emphasis on articulating that purpose. It should be noted that "professional" schools in a university setting have traditionally been defined as law schools, business schools and medical schools, so that specific terminology should be discussed in light of higher education sector norms. Eliminating the word "continuing" would potentially not speak to the continuing adult learner population – a strategic source of revenue for most CE programs. In short, the task force did not have a major issue with the current name of The Chang School, and would emphasize the importance of clarifying the CE strategy and letting the strategy drive any change in name, taking into consideration the concerns raised above.

23. The CS already boasts a handful of effective partnerships with other organizations interested in continuing education for their employees or members. They should actively pursue more opportunities across the country using their capacity to customize programs and offer them through distance education courses or onsite in Toronto. CS should make a point in their branding to emphasize their commitment to customization of education to suit unique needs both for external partners and individual students (see Recommendation 5). The dean should examine a pilot project to assess the value of assigning or hiring someone with appropriate sales experience to finding external partners for customized CS programs. Enhanced flexibility in certification options as per Recommendation 4 could be helpful in this connection.

Our task force agrees with the thrust of this recommendation but places it in the context of finite resources. In other words, we should evaluate if current resourcing would allow for this kind of development, and if not, could CE employees be better deployed to address business development needs? External and internal partnership opportunities abound. On the internal side, CE provides an excellent way of beta-testing ideas that cross faculties in a way that is not feasible to do in rigid degree approval structures. The point being that CE will need to make strategic decisions with its internal resources based upon its core mission. CE cannot and should not be all things to all people. One needs to balance the breadth of offerings with overall profitability, and develop synergies and common curricula across a variety of certificates. Distance education, local programs (targeted at the '905 belt') and in-

person courses and certificates could all involve innovative development of markets. However, the task force would argue that the current structure has pushed CE to be a 'generalist' in too many areas, while being a 'specialist' in too few. There are many opportunities to pursue locally and internationally but all of these efforts need to be aligned with a more focused mission and strategy that builds on Ryerson's core strengths and institutional reputation.

24. *Since many CS students wait to take two or three courses before deciding to enroll formally in a certificate program, the CS should market relevant certificate program options internally to all new students whose first course puts them on one or more identifiable paths to further studies. Such marketing should not only include online and conventional communications but also "open house" style group advising sessions as a means to identify possible interest and fresh opportunities for further follow up.*

It is important when considering this recommendation to differentiate between day students and CE students. The extent to which degree program students are enrolled in certificates is unclear. The task force believes that a suite of courses attractive to the marketplace is the most important first step in developing longer-term relationships with all learners. Whether these learners go on to take degree programs, CE certificates or further CE courses as their lives and careers evolve, the point is that we want them coming back to Ryerson. We have to gain a better understanding of what types of offerings serve as "ladder" programs into degrees, and what other courses might produce high "return rates" (students returning for more courses). Marketing to all new students brings us back to a zero sum game. These are already Ryerson students, and we certainly need to retain them in the university. However, we maintain that the core CE mission and strategy should be the guiding principle in terms of retaining students and providing opportunities for follow-up studies.

25. *Ryerson presently only has two online degree program offerings, but there appears to be an international market for additional educational partnerships. Given the expertise in the CS to develop online course offerings, RU should examine further the financial opportunities associated with offering its successful programs abroad. Recommendation 34 speaks to the financial incentives that should be considered to induce greater campus interest in such opportunities.*

This recommendation touches upon many offices and initiatives at Ryerson. There is currently a director of eLearning who reports to the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic, and outside of The Chang School, and there are international aspirations that differ across the faculties. The competition for online international education is fierce. If we want to develop more expertise in this area it will require us to consolidate our efforts and to devote substantial resources to the cause. A guiding principle should be to capitalize on what Ryerson is known for internationally, and then market and deliver these types of programs to international audiences. In other words, these efforts will

also be showcasing Ryerson and its strengths to the world. It is unclear if an international (or even pan-Canadian strategy) is preferable in CE, in comparison to the population that surrounds the university. This recommendation will obviously need to form a core of the CE strategy in order to be feasible and should be consistent with a new mission.

26. *The RU Task Force to address these recommendations, or if necessary, a more appropriate Ryerson body, should address the evolving problem of who has responsibility for executive education at Ryerson. Executive education for traditional clients and stakeholders of faculties like the School of Management pose boundary problems in their relationship with the CS. Focused offerings like short workshops or one-time sessions can build useful professional relationships and enhance the brand of a faculty among its community of external stakeholders. This seems a reasonable practice. On the other hand, when the CS creates new courses or certificates in an area of widespread impact like social media, this is an appropriate expression of its longstanding mandate for continuing education, even if in some lights it could be regarded as a form of executive education. This is the nub of the boundary problem about what should be legitimate, but limited, executive education by a faculty and what is a legitimate part of the historic CS mandate. These boundaries must be settled through internal RU discussion and, if the task force or another forum cannot resolve the matter, ultimately by the provost.*

Executive education is an important issue for Ryerson to resolve. It may be useful to first define executive education and develop buy-in. Traditionally, business schools have provided executive education as executives in the 'C-Suite' look to update their skills with the latest management thinking. In Canada, business schools including Ivey (Western University), Rotman (University of Toronto) and Sauder (UBC) have dominated the landscape. Executive education can be offered through programs (e.g. executive MBAs), or more commonly, through custom training designed for a particular organization's senior management team (common topics include leadership development, developing a more creative culture, etc.). Traditionally, continuing education faculties or schools have targeted employees at the lower to middle rungs of an organization. Executive education requires highly specialized training and delivery. This backdrop helps to frame the Ryerson discussion, because the core question becomes where would CE source the talent to provide executive education? The two most likely answers are from the university faculties or from external consultants. So, it likely makes little sense to duplicate executive education opportunities provided by a business school, centrally by CE. Again, this argument goes back to the core mission of CE. If the lifelong learner is the target audience, the suite of courses that need to be developed leave little bandwidth for developing competing executive education courses. It is imperative that Ryerson move forward understanding what each of the faculties does well, and how CE can leverage that talent in ways that are not already being offered (including online delivery). The challenge for CE is to narrow its focus, not

expand it. A renewed mission would almost certainly ask difficult questions around whether the number of current offerings is sustainable. Executive education is one example of 'mission creep'. Regular meetings (through the committee recommended in this report) would help to ensure all internal stakeholders know what is happening in the university and leverage that information. We should not be competing with ourselves. Through improved dialogue and mutual understanding we can build enhanced CE programs that are novel and exciting to the adult learner. There are more opportunities than a university can successfully juggle: the key is to differentiate oneself.

D: Administrative Streamlining and a Stronger Service Culture

> *27. Students and CS staff frequently complain about unnecessary or unhelpful administrative processes and requirements. Most universities find it easier to add new regulations than to scrap old ones that have outlived their initial purpose. The CS should institute a "Red Tape Review Process" to identify opportunities to streamline administrative procedures and requirements and increase student convenience. This project should have a targeted end date, publicity about resulting changes to enhance confidence in the possibility of reform and some modest prizes for the best suggestions to boost interest in the project. Where streamlining requires adjustments within other RU operations to accommodate CS needs, the Provost should champion full consideration of reasonable proposals to test their merits and viability.*

This recommendation speaks to streamlining "red tape" policy issues both within CE and outside (after speaking to the author). These issues include tuition fees policies, and most importantly, daily front-line service. In addition, one pressing need appears to be in enrollment and registration. The current process of becoming a CE student is cumbersome and cannot be completed entirely online. Here we need to see change in order for CE to simply meet industry norms. Red tape within CE must also be challenged, especially if it directly impacts student satisfaction. CE must re-orient itself to a 'customer-first' or 'student-first' culture, and streamline processes that frustrate students. A process review could uncover aspects of CE where time is not used as effectively as it could be. Focus should be paid to investments that reap the highest rewards, while resources should be limited or eliminated in areas that fail to attract market interest over a feasible period of time. In any organization there is a history and culture around how things have always been done. As CE looks to redefine itself it may have to question some of the fundamental assumptions, look to new business models and acquire the talent to execute its new mission and strategy. Cutting red tape is important yet dealing with the underlying culture that creates the red tape would seem to be the most appropriate way to operationalize this recommendation.

28. *The CS should consider appointing someone to oversee all of its administrative processes to ensure that they are efficient, service-oriented, cost effective and well coordinated across administrative silos. CS staff with long experience of the institution identified areas where administrative silos, turf protection and resistance to change were a problem for students and other staff alike. Strong administrative oversight should address this. Various titles have been suggested for such an officer, such as senior administrative or executive director. The title should fit the job description and Ryerson's administrative culture.*

It was noted by the task force that a similar position has been created before in CE and it did not have the intended effect of creating a service-oriented culture that cuts across the silos in CE. It was also noted that more regular meetings are occurring between the Registrar's Office and CE. This is to be commended. However, some people within CE may be wedded to processes that need to change. Despite previous attempts at cultural change, the CS dean should be given sufficient latitude to hire a change agent (or executive director) with the mandate of efficiency and focus. Just because something has failed in the past is not reason enough to abandon a renewed effort, if that renewed effort is placed in the context of a change in mission and strategy. CE employees will need to adapt to the realities of being nimble and focusing on the most profitable business lines.

29. *To become more competitive, the CS must build a strong reputation for a proactive, responsive and supportive client service culture. There is a perception among CS students and some CS staff that the organization has become inward-focused and takes a bureaucratic rules-based approach to student problems and concerns that does not meet modern standards for client responsiveness. All university officials should be problem solvers, not gate-keepers who unnecessarily slow students' progress. The dean and the new senior administrative official should address these concerns as a high priority. The annual innovation process recommended in Section A of this report should address this issue as a regular agenda item.*

The task force endorses this recommendation but would like to see specific action items as CE looks to become more responsive and client-focused. For instance, it was felt that more training is needed around the CE program offerings by front line staff (rapid response team). One recommendation is that a CE point person (manager level) be created to work collaboratively with the Registrar's Office. Should students have queries through the web, text, telephone or in-person, there needs to be adequate real-time responses that cannot only answer questions but view each call as a business development opportunity. In other words, once CE front-line staff are aware of what a student is interested in, they should provide a number of options that play into CE strengths. A person interested in photography might be told of a specific course while also being made aware of certificate opportunities and career paths. Of course, all of this hinges on a clear strategy and mission, as the CE learner will have different needs

from degree students looking to take a course in a more flexible form of delivery. It was also noted that CE's website needs to be improved and become more client-friendly and that modern standards for responsiveness to clients (e.g. real-time chat sessions) need to be implemented. A thorough review of CE front-line service should be undertaken with serious thought given to providing an effective one-stop shop for all CE student requests. The unique needs of CE students should be considered when reviewing service quality.

30. *CS program directors are each supposed to address a significant portion of time to strategic planning for changes in "their" faculty's continuing education programs. Most of them, however, spend substantial time on routine administrative duties such as room booking, scheduling and the like. The dean and the new senior administrative official should examine whether it would be more efficient to centralize these activities with a single administrative person who could do them more efficiently and free program directors to devote more time to pressing strategic concerns.*

The task force strongly endorses this recommendation and further recommends that the role of program directors be reevaluated so as to move the administrative duties of program directors to the coordinators. There is also potential for program directors to be the interface and facilitate common dialogue between faculties. Program directors must be focused on creating or enhancing the strategic offerings. The faculty-level committee must ensure that CE goals are being met and that innovative new programs are replacing stagnating ones. Role definition, transparency and communication will all be key in creating the cultural change to take ownership over the quality of CE offerings. This will take time and there must be an incentive system that works to motivate key internal constituents to work collaboratively. The academic plan must drive the plans of the faculties, including CE, and the areas of overlap represent fertile ground for new CE program content.

31. *CS program directors expressed concerns that continuing education students have trouble securing access to CS degree-credit courses that fill immediately with degree students as soon as the registration period opens, sometimes in a matter of just a few hours. To some extent this is a result of CS students putting off enrolment decisions until the last moment. Further discussion of this issue is important. For example, the Registrar's Office could investigate whether it is possible to open registration for CS students in CS degree courses a couple of days prior to opening registration for all degree students. Or, to ensure fair access for both student constituencies, perhaps quotas could be imposed for a brief period during the first phase of registration with such limitations disappearing after a reasonable time to allow students on waiting lists to gain access to empty "quota" seats. Of course, there may well be other options to address this situation, but the point is that RU should make it a priority to examine the problem.*

This recommendation speaks to a symptom of the greater issue around the mission of CE at Ryerson. The recommendation sees the "problem" as degree credit students filling sections that CE students then have difficulty accessing. The first question to ask is whom is CE serving? Who are CE's prime constituents? The answer, in the near-term is likely both degree credit and CE students. Given this assumption it is then appropriate to ask if CE and day students have compatible learning styles and goals. Should they be placed in the same classroom? If we define the average CE student as a mature adult learner it is unlikely that their experience is going to be made richer by a room filled with undergraduate students (and vice-versa). This issue requires careful study as there is a risk of adopting extreme solutions that could have unintended consequences on degree students, CE students, or revenues. To their credit, the CS and the Registrar's Office have already begun examining these issues. One possibility is to create tied sections for CE and day students, but a full cost/benefit analysis needs to be undertaken to determine if this would address a student mix issue as opposed to an internal financial model issue.

E: University Financial Policies and Services

32. *The Provost should address continued and widespread misunderstanding about recent changes in the amount and the use of the surplus funds the CS contributes to RU general revenues. This situation creates ongoing friction for the faculties and their departments with the CS. The real problem, of course, is that the university's financial circumstances preclude its ability for many understandable reasons to meet all faculty priorities. This frustration expresses itself incorrectly in jibes about the CS gaining unreasonably from teaching degree students in its evening and summer school courses. This is not a simple matter to untangle, but the senior administration of RU needs to continue its educational activities about the character of the CS surplus fund transfer and the use of these funds to reduce the impact of negative adjustments to faculty budgets. No doubt there are different mechanisms by which this could be done, but it is recommended that the annual adjustment (plus or minus) to faculty budgets and other administrative budget units as appropriate be presented as two figures: the first is the "preliminary adjustment" that would apply in the absence of the available Chang School surplus, and the second is the "final adjustment" that occurs after The Chang School surplus is factored into the university's budget calculations. This will foster greater appreciation of the extent to which the entire university community shares in the financial success of The Chang School. No doubt, in this era of constrained resources, budget frustrations are inevitable, but there is no gain in pointing the finger at Chang School operations as the source of this problem.*

Although increased transparency is a laudable goal, the task force is not sure the method described in this recommendation will yield positive change at Ryerson. In fact, several faculties in any university contribute a surplus to central on an annual basis, so

any meaningful discussion around transparency in budget figures shouldn't selectively choose the contribution (or lack thereof) of any one school. Real change is likely to only occur if stakeholders are engaged in regular and meaningful dialogue that ties their own performance and that of their own academic units to the success of CE partnerships. We are looking for nothing short of cultural change and another budget model or expressing budget cuts in terms of CE shortfalls is unlikely to accomplish this objective. Cultural change occurs when people feel meaningfully and collegially engaged in an authentic process. CE is a critical piece of Ryerson, and its work enables the university to meet its financial obligations, and provides faculties with the means to sustain themselves. The task force stresses that it is not just the financial model that is unclear but the role CE plays within the university should also garner widespread attention.

> 33. *New program initiatives sometimes generate substantial development and other start-up costs. Current financial transfers under the collaborative funding model may not adequately address these costs and thereby pose a barrier to innovation in certain circumstances. The dean of CS and her decanal partners should discuss such situations as they arise with The Office of the Provost to ensure appropriate financial support for all the interested parties in the early phases of new programs. Where agreed, special financial arrangements should be developed to support such start-up costs for a reasonable period until the normal budget process kicks in to finance the, by then, well established certificate.*

While the task force agrees in principle with this recommendation, it has not found evidence that financial incentives are creating a barrier for faculties to work with CE on innovative new initiatives. Indeed, CE has been funding the vast majority of start-up costs and should a situation arise where the initiative is of such scale that it requires more seed funding, a cost sharing arrangement could be initiated with the participating faculty(ies), CE, and The Office of the Provost.

> 34. *RU should analyze new revenue sharing models for partnerships between the Faculties and the CS that target international markets through distance education or foreign on-site programs. Faculties need a larger incentive to consider offering programs to international markets and international partners to compensate them for the substantial challenges that such incentives entail. Since such initiatives would attract new revenues to RU that otherwise would go to other competitors, any new resources secured under this framework would be a win-win situation for all Ryerson financial stakeholders.*

This recommendation speaks to both distance education and internationalization. Both are priorities in the university's academic plan and both include and extend beyond CE. Before making any institutional plans around internationalization, it is likely prudent to outline the geographic areas the university plans to focus on as an institution and the types of programs that would garner reputational and financial support globally. If this foundation building work is not done first, we would risk CE initiatives being haphazard

and opportunistic. By finding points of alignment between the academic plans of the university, faculties, departments/schools, and the CE renewed mission and strategy we would be better equipped to make decisions conscious of where one piece fits within the broader strategy of internationalization. There is great downside risk here in that every moment Ryerson spends sorting out internal structures is further time where we will have to play catch-up in the dizzying world of online and distance education. So, we first need to sort through what we mean, in concrete terms, by internationalization, while pulling substantive expertise on distance education, in a collaborative model, into CE. It is only then that we can begin to offer win-win propositions to the marketplace that will elevate our reputation in targeted corners of the world.

35. *The CS and RU should respond more effectively to complaints that CS students do not receive sufficient student support services. Many RU student support services close at 5pm and are not easily accessible for CS students who daily work on a full-time basis and study in the evenings. Orientation programs about available services focus on the needs of degree students who study primarily during normal office hours and CS students sometimes remain unaware of valuable opportunities available to them as RU students.*

The task force concurs with the notion that CE students who may be working 9-to-5 jobs need support mechanisms beyond the traditional work day hours but notes that most student affairs offices are open beyond 5pm specifically to support CE students. In addition, an awareness campaign that explains to CE students what services are available to them would be welcomed. A 'one-stop shop' approach and enhanced support online would be positive developments. An important hurdle to overcome is likely academic advising, as CE students will require an academic advisor in the evenings.

36. *Not all continuing education students are working professionals with a steady income and CS students complain that they are not eligible for OSAP support and have limited access to constrained RU bursary awards. Increased bursary funds should be a priority in future RU fundraising initiatives. The university should also press for additional financial support for needy CS students from the provincial government through OSAP changes or additional programs that address their needs.*

This recommendation and the problem of non-credit students being ineligible for OSAP is an issue that extends beyond Ryerson. The task force suggests exploring the possibility of working together with a group of universities to approach the Ministry about funding issues. For what we can control, more funding should be made available for top CE students in the form of bursaries in order to signal Ryerson's ongoing support for continuous learning as part of our mandate.

37. *The CS cannot improve its competitive position without a better website and e-commerce capacity within the RU registration system. Website design should*

be dealt with through the marketing review under Recommendation 21. E-commerce capacity, or connectivity to the RU registration system, is a substantial and continuing problem. At present, a new student who wishes to register for a CS course must acquire a Ryerson ID if they don't have one, register through the current Student Administration system and wait another twenty-four hours before setting up their student accounts online. This process takes between two and three days. Needless to say, these delays put Ryerson and the CS at a serious competitive disadvantage trying to recruit a student looking at a variety of educational opportunities provided across Toronto and online globally. At present, the Registrar's Office and Computing and Communication Services are working with the CS to enhance the RU system to facilitate this process more quickly. The earliest completion date is the Winter 2015. This solution will only address about half of CS prospective students. At the same time, the CS is currently looking to purchase a new system to enhance its website and enhance its online registration capacity. While there appears to be good will among all the parties discussing this problem, frustration is high. Moreover, significant system enhancements or new bolt- on products promising work-around solutions both typically take much longer to implement and cost more than anticipated. This would be true especially in an environment where the basic university registration system is described commonly as substandard but very costly to replace. It would be prudent before large sums are spent on tweaking the university system or purchasing stand-alone systems that absolutely must link to the RU registration system to maintain the integrity of university data sources, that RU should devote careful study to find the optimum solution available among various time and cost options.

We are pleased to report that CE and the Registrar's Office are already working to address this problem. That said, where we need to move quickly (e.g., website design) an RFP should be put in place, and the work outsourced. We see no reason why the administrative hurdles cannot be accomplished with the will of senior management, including the resourcing to use outside expertise as required.

Appendices

Appendix A – Terms of Reference

Background

The reason for creating a task force is to examine and evaluate the performance towards current goals and objectives of continuing education and from that build the foundation for setting the strategy for the future.

Objectives and description of work

The review process will include two phases:

Phase I

Phase I will be undertaken by an external expert with broad experience in post-secondary education. In conducting the review, there will be community wide consultation with individuals and groups involved in continuing education (e.g., students, faculty, deans, chairs, program directors, staff). The resulting report will be presented to the Provost. The report with then be shared with deans and vice-provosts, and a taskforce committee which will undertake Phase II of the assessment.

Phase II

The task force committee, chaired by the dean of Ted Rogers School of Management, will develop recommendations that address matters arising from the external examiner's report. The emphasis will be on recommending actions that are consistent with the objectives of this review. The recommendations will be provided to the provost for action as appropriate.

The provost is establishing a task force that will look at a full range of areas specific to the delivery of continuing education. This includes, but is not limited to the following questions:

- What are key drivers in the continuing education market to which Ryerson will have to respond to ensure on-going success? Who are the key competitors, both current and emerging? What types of education are needed in the market (e.g. what duration, degree of flexibility, credential requirements)?

- How can Ryerson enhance its competitiveness in attracting continuing education students through breadth, depth and delivery mode of programs?

- How effective is CE in functions such as marketing and communications, recruitment, client support, instructor hire, awards and bursaries and financial analysis compared to sector-wide norms?

- The unique collaborative model used by Ryerson in developing and delivering continuing education has led to many achievements. How do we ensure that this collaboration continues to work effectively with respect to program development, faculty oversight and academic standards? How do we ensure that the collaborative model provides the Chang School with the flexibility to aggressively pursue new markets and opportunities and be competitive with other continuing education providers?

- How can we define success in continuing education? What should be our key performance indicators?

- Based on comparative models for offering part-time degrees, should Ryerson consider this a priority area?

- What is the role of continuing education in providing flexibility and access for degree students through evening, weekend, intensive and online courses?

- What is the role of continuing education in designing and delivering alternative delivery approaches (e.g. online and hybrid offerings and e-learning tools)?

- What are some other structural models for delivering evening, weekend, intensive and online courses? What are some leading practices from other models?

- Is there a viable market for corporate and executive education? What defines success for this portfolio?

- Should our certificate program structure be changed?

Appendix B – Task Force Membership

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Ava Cross
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