

COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

for Continuing, Digital, and
Online Education at SMU



MISSION



As described in SMU's 2016-2025 strategic plan, *Launching SMU's Second Century*, Southern Methodist University's continuing education programs will advance the University's academic mission and ensure close alignment of its values, visibility, and brand in the eyes of its stakeholders.¹ Additionally, the mission of SMU's continuing education initiatives, as defined in the President and Provost's campus-wide memo *The Future of Continuing Education at SMU*, calls for developing a University-wide framework to promote academic quality for the range of SMU's continued education programs.² This document provides an overview of that framework, which was developed in close consultation with SMU's academic deans during the 2017-2018 academic year.

DEFINITIONS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AND RELATED TOPICS

Continuing education: Continuing education at SMU is an internal, stand-alone unit which offers degree programs, for-credit courses, and non-credit courses, while also functioning as a delivery unit (defined below) for the online and in-person programs and courses developed by the University's academic units. SMU's continuing education students comprise qualified post-high school students, many of whom are working professionals.

Delivery unit: At SMU, the delivery unit is an organization which provides administrative and technical support across the following functions: market research, instructional design, marketing, recruiting, registration, platform management, payment, records, and financial distribution for an in-person or digital course, certificate or program. In this document the term "continuing education as the delivery unit" is also used.

Academic unit: The academic unit is defined as a College/School/department/unit, which contributes faculty and curricula for an in-person or digital course, certificate, or program.

Digital education: For purposes of this document, "online" and "online education" have been replaced by the more current terms "digital" and "digital education." All digital and hybrid programs (defined below) fall under this designator.

Hybrid: At SMU, hybrid programs and courses are those for which the total student contact time is a mix of in-person and digital. Deciding the exact percent of online learning in a course can

¹ *Launching SMU's Second Century*, p. 9.

² From the 8 February 2017 memo to SMU faculty, *The Future of Continuing Education at SMU*, p. 2.

sometimes be challenging and will require additional deliberation as we implement the framework.

Digital: These programs and courses are delivered 100% digitally (i.e., via computer technology). They may include discrete, in-person “immersions” or “symposiums” which comprise less than 10% of their total student contact time. The word “digital” in this document is used interchangeably with “online.”

Continuing education at the University serves in-person, digital, for-credit, and non-credit students, and includes various pedagogical methodologies and delivery platforms that give SMU a competitive edge.³ Historically, continuing education at SMU has been limited to non-credit offerings. Informed by *SMU’s 2016-2025 Strategic Plan*, and following the recommendations of the Task Force on Continuing Education, continuing education will now provide delivery unit support to the academic units to create a range of new opportunities. To facilitate partnership between continuing education and the academic units, SMU established a Continuing Education Program Council (CEPC), comprising the Deans, the Provost, and the Associate Provost for Continuing Education, which meets regularly to review and approve programs. The CEPC is addressed more fully beginning on page 8.

Investing in continuing education as the University’s delivery unit will promote higher levels of quality and efficiency across the University and can also help promote higher visibility and increased academic quality. For example, continuing education’s ability to conduct robust market analysis concerning new and/or modified offerings will broadly benefit the University and its academic units in ways such as: (1) Focusing scarce resources on programs most likely to succeed, (2) creating solid, evidence-based foundations for decision making regarding program choices, and (3) providing transparency for continuing education-related decisions campus-wide.

Along with these forward-thinking opportunities, continuing education has the potential to enable additional cross-campus partnerships because it creates bridges across disciplines. Lastly and importantly, the development of standardized, sustainable, collaborative processes for placing curricula online in programs, certificates, and courses is a new strategic priority for both continuing education as the delivery unit and for the University overall.

VISION AND MISSION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

An agile, non-traditional area of education within the landscape of higher education, continuing education embraces change to thrive, engendering innovation, emphasizing the usefulness of appropriate traditions, and encouraging strategic risk taking. Simultaneously, continuing education is both authentic and transparent, impacting students’ lives and providing meaningful, significant, and applicable learning to benefit the students and academic units throughout SMU. Continuing education’s vision statement is “opening the doors of SMU and the world,” elucidating the overarching future state of continuing education. Continuing education’s mission

³ From the *Task Force on Continuing Education Report*, p. 3.

statement, “creating innovative learning experiences to boost your career, surprise you with ideas, and transform your life and organization,” defines the unit’s present purpose and its reason for existence.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

SMU’s Continuing Education unit operates under the following guiding principles:

- a. The governance structure for continuing education as the University’s delivery unit articulates the decision-making process regarding its portfolio of offerings and the sequence for:
 1. Developing and launching non-credit offerings
 2. Developing and launching for-credit offerings: degree programs, diplomas, and certificates
- b. SMU’s full-time faculty members oversee continuing education curricula and the instructional content of continuing education-supported programs.
- c. Fair and motivating incentives for SMU’s faculty members and academic units reward those so engaged.
- d. SMU will build a common infrastructure for support, marketing, development of teaching materials, and information technology to efficiently manage the costs of continuing education as the delivery unit.
- e. Financial surpluses from continuing education as the delivery unit will be reinvested to support the academic mission of the University and continuing education.⁴

DEFINITIONS AND DESIGNATIONS



At SMU, significant evidence points to the existence of, and desire for, several types of academic programs, either offered by continuing education or supported by continuing education as the delivery unit, to attract graduate and non-traditional students. For context, table one defines key attributes of the certificate programs SMU offers that will fall under the scope of the *Collaborative Framework*

⁴ From the 8 February 2017 memo to SMU faculty, *The Future of Continuing Education at SMU*, p. 3.

TABLE 1: CERTIFICATE TYPES

Type of Offering	Digital (Online) or In-Person	# of Credit Hours or Amount of Contact Hours
SMU For-credit Graduate/Undergraduate Certificate	Both	Minimum 9 credit hours
SMU Continuing Education Unit (CEU)	Both	10 contact hours (additional fractions possible, i.e. 1.2 CEUs)
SMU Non-credit Certificate	Both	Minimum 40 contact hours + at least 5 deliverables
Certificate of Completion (non-credit only)	Both	Up to 40 contact hours

Tables two and three, below, summarize the process to be followed and the approvals required for each of the program types (in-person and online) as a result of this new *Collaborative Framework*.

TABLE 2: DESIGNATIONS FOR IN-PERSON OFFERINGS

Type of Program	Process	CEPC Approval Necessary?	EPC Recommendation Necessary?
Master’s Degree (for-credit)	In academic unit as traditional	No	Yes, for new program
Certificate (for-credit)	In academic unit as traditional	No	Yes, for new program
Custom Shorter Programs for Specific External Organizations (for-credit or non-credit)	In-house at SMU; Collaborative between academic unit and delivery unit unless the academic unit alone has made the sale and uses pre-existing content and the School’s own full-time professors.	Yes	Yes, for new, for-credit program
Shorter Programs for Open Enrollment (for-credit or non-credit)	In-house at SMU; Collaborative between academic unit and delivery unit	Yes	Yes, for new, for-credit program

TABLE 3: DESIGNATIONS FOR DIGITAL (ONLINE) OFFERINGS

Type of Program	Process	CEPC Approval Necessary?	EPC Recommendation Necessary?
Master’s Degree (for-credit)	In-house at SMU; Collaborative between academic unit and delivery unit; pre-existing distance education at Lyle is excluded from this collaborative opportunity	Yes	Yes, for new program
SMU For-credit Certificate (graduate/ undergraduate)	In-house at SMU; Collaborative between academic unit and delivery unit for graduate; undergraduate compliance checks only	Yes	Yes, for new program
Custom Shorter Programs for Specific External Organizations (for-credit or non-credit)	In-house at SMU; Collaborative between academic unit and delivery unit. unless the academic unit has made the sale and uses pre-existing content and the School’s own full-time professors	Yes	Yes, for new, for-credit program
Shorter Programs for Open Enrollment (for-credit or non-credit)	In-house at SMU; Collaborative between academic unit and delivery unit	Yes	Yes, for new, for-credit program
SMU Certificate (non-credit)	In-house at SMU; Collaborative between academic unit and delivery unit	Yes	No
Certificate of Completion (non-credit)	In-house at SMU; Collaborative between academic unit and delivery unit	Yes	No
Program Using Online Program Provider (OPM) (such as 2U or Noodle)	External provider; Delivery unit handles: 1) Enrollment 2) Financial disbursement	Yes	Yes, for new, for-credit program

Type of Program	Process	CEPC Approval Necessary?	EPC Recommendation Necessary?
Previously Copyrighted Material (already in digital format which meets SMU standards)	In-house at SMU; Collaborative between academic unit and delivery unit; Royalties are paid to the author	Yes	Yes, for new program
Individual Digital Courses (part of online program of any kind, graduate/ undergraduate)	In-house at SMU; Collaborative between academic unit and delivery unit for graduate; undergraduate compliance checks only	Yes	Generally no, but yes if part of new program

Note: The Associate Provost for Continuing Education is informed upon opportunity recognition and with regular communications about all potential programs at SMU as listed in the above categories.

GOVERNANCE



The governance structure for continuing education articulates the organizational structure and decision-making process regarding the portfolio of continuing education offerings and the sequence for developing and launching non-credit, for-credit, and other credential programs with continuing education the delivery unit.

INFRASTRUCTURE

SMU will continue to build a common infrastructure for support, marketing, development of teaching materials, and information technology to manage efficiently the costs for continuing education as the delivery unit.⁵

- a. Continuing education as the delivery unit will provide project management and oversee the new program creation and delivery process including market research, guidance through approval processes, marketing, recruiting, registration, payment,

⁵ From the 8 February 2017 memo to SMU faculty, *The Future of Continuing Education at SMU*, p. 5.

- records, reporting, and financial disbursement in coordination with the College/Schools.
- b. For instructional design and course management, in coordination with the College/Schools who oversee it, the Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) will manage the instructional design and course management processes.
 - c. In addition to marketing by the continuing education delivery unit out of the Provost's Office, (although not recommended because of the loss of efficiency and potential quality differentials) academic units may contribute marketing resources for existing continuing education programs in their respective fields (e.g., the Lyle School of Engineering may market their programs in engineering or the Cox School of Business may market their programs in business).

THE ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Associate Provost for Continuing Education reports to the Provost and consults regularly with the Continuing Education Program Council (CEPC) about continuing education regarding academic mission, values, visibility, and branding, as well as with Development and External Affairs (DEA) in relation to visibility and branding.

- a. The Associate Provost works with each Dean to review continuing education prospects and expansion of existing programs.
- b. For ongoing operational oversight and work, an Associate Dean in each academic unit is designated by the Dean to work with the Associate Provost.
- c. The Associate Provost presents information regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of continuing education programs in terms of revenues, creates regular reports to the CEPC, and informs the Office of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness (IPE) for SACSCOC compliance.⁶
- d. The Associate Provost holds regular, strategic meetings to foster communication and success of the continuing education initiatives. Meetings are held as follows:
 1. Each Dean: twice per semester and regular communication
 2. Associate Dean working group (one per College/School): once per month in spring and autumn
 3. Director of Academic Technology Services (an OIT unit) and Director of CTE: once monthly
 4. Head of Executive Education at Cox and parallel function at Lyle: twice per semester
 5. DEA: twice per semester check-in meetings and more regularly when a collaborative effort is being planned

⁶ From the 8 February 2017 memo to SMU faculty, *The Future of Continuing Education at SMU*, p. 4.

THE ROLE OF THE CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM COUNCIL

Important to the ongoing process of creating new digital and in-person programming, the CEPC reviews and recommends proposals for new and revisions to existing continuing education programs. The CEPC comprises the Deans of academic units and is chaired by the Provost. The CEPC:

- a. Provides guidance to the Associate Provost regarding the overall strategy for SMU's continuing education programs.
- b. Reviews and recommends proposals for new, and revisions to, existing online and continuing education programs. Such reviews include:
 1. Market research (analysis of market opportunities)
 2. Estimated benefit to associated College/School/unit
- c. The CEPC aims to ensure minimization of program duplication. Degree programs subject to CEPC review and recommendation still undergo vetting as is customary for SMU's academic programs.⁷

THE ROLE OF THE ACADEMIC UNIT

When a potential continuing education program for SMU falls within the expertise of an academic unit, that unit informs the Associate Provost of the opportunity and holds the right of first refusal to develop the program at an appropriate level and scale in partnership with the delivery unit. The College/School may not "reserve" that topic, preventing it from being developed elsewhere at SMU should the capability and expertise exist. If the unit decides not to mount such a program, the Associate Provost and a Dean may explore ways to design and offer a program by continuing education with proper academic oversight.⁸

Some of the academic units have been in the process of creating online policies and procedures for their organizations. They may continue to do so (non-curriculum related); however, the authority of the present SMU-wide process document supersedes such policy documents in case of a discrepancy.

THE ROLE OF FACULTY

SMU's full-time faculty members oversee curricula and the instructional content of degree programs delivered by continuing education as the delivery unit.

- a. Program faculty craft the curricular content itself. Fair and motivating incentives for SMU's faculty members reward those engaged in those initiatives. For programs in specific Schools, Deans may set compensation for faculty. Some flexibility must be maintained for external speakers and various adjuncts.

⁷Ibid., p. 3.

⁸ From the 8 February 2017 memo to SMU faculty, *The Future of Continuing Education at SMU*, p. 4.

- b. Additional investments and instructors are required to expand continuing education at SMU.
- c. The Associate Provost, in coordination with the Deans and the Associate Deans, can recruit, develop, reward, and retain SMU and non-SMU instructors for continuing education programs. Tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenured full-time SMU faculty must be pre-approved by their Department Head or their Dean as appropriate before being contacted for participating in these initiatives. Special consideration should be given to pre-tenure faculty work load according to School/College policy.
- d. Tenure-track and tenured faculty do not receive credit toward their teaching load for delivering continuing education courses (unless directed so by their Deans). Tenure-track and tenured faculty members may receive financial compensation for design and preparation of a continuing education program or course.
- e. Qualified faculty members at SMU approve curricular content for continuing education programs. The Associate Provost consults with the Deans or the Deans' designees to determine which faculty members are academically qualified.⁹

SMU APPROVALS

Besides the CEPC approval process discussed elsewhere in this document, the for-credit digital programs, both graduate and undergraduate, comply with the usual SMU academic program approval and recommendation processes. Digital degree and certificate programs must be approved by the College/School and the CEPC, and recommended by the EPC. The CEPC will continue to meet regularly and will approve programs as needed at each meeting.

All digital programs will follow the process for creating new programs. Undergraduate digital programs will follow the process herein through compliance checks by both CTE and OIT, but will not need to be supported by the delivery unit.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The intellectual property developed for continuing education follows SMU's IP provisions in *12.1 Intellectual Property Policy of SMU* to be found in *Southern Methodist University Policies and Procedures*.¹⁰

SUMMARY

The work underlying this document is as a whole greater than its component parts. Willing strategists, experienced faculty, and SMU leadership contributed to this project over several

⁹ From the 8 February 2017 memo to SMU faculty, *The Future of Continuing Education at SMU*, p. 4, 5.

¹⁰ www.smu.edu/OIT/Infosec/Policy

years. With these guidelines, SMU will move forward to take a leadership role in the digital, online world of education. The University will learn with progress, and so re-visiting this document by the CEPC is expected and encouraged. The trajectory and guiding principles will remain constant, while some details could change given the changing world of higher education.