

## Career and Personal Education (CPE): Overview of Strategy

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Career and Personal Education (CPE) is one of the six pillars of Flexible Learning, the UBC strategy developed in response to the multiple external forces shaping higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. UBC has a long tradition of supporting lifelong learning both in the Faculties and in Continuing Studies. In the face of increasing demand for continuing education, UBC is committed to expanding its capacity to serve non-traditional students on both campuses with a focus on areas of University excellence. At UBC, CPE will be led by Associate-Provost Academic Innovation, Hugh Brock. He will work closely with Continuing Studies leadership to shape the strategy, consolidate cross-campus organization support and build institutional capabilities for sustained success. The CPE strategy has the support of Deans, alumni, and the Executive.

### Rationale for a new approach in CPE at UBC

Amidst many far-reaching changes impacting universities, there is growing government, industry and society demand for quality career-directed and continuing education that is relevant, modular and flexible. Of particular relevance to UBC, professional development and personal growth are two of four primary motivations cited by alumni for greater engagement with UBC. CPE is primarily a regional business, and 200,000 of the University's 300,000 alumni reside in the Lower Mainland.

CPE is a prominent focus at most leading institutions in the US. UBC is facing assertive regional competition predicated on immediate application and community engagement (BCIT, Royal Roads, SFU). However CPE has not to date been viewed as integral to UBC's academic excellence. The University has limited penetration in CPE markets, and activity is currently fragmented across UBC Faculties and Continuing Studies.

Within the institution, it needs to be recognized that CPE learners have different requirements in view of their focus on skills acquisition and cohort interaction, as well as their need for accessibility and efficiency of learning. Market agility and sustainable economics are imperative as these programs are not government funded. Greater market coherence and capability integration are also a requisite, neither of which is currently in place given the distributed nature of CPE across both campuses at UBC.

### CPE role in supporting UBC's mission

As a public institution, UBC has a mandate to be responsive to needs of learners, to expand accessibility and to foster community engagement, and CPE is a significant contributor in each of these commitments. CPE supports the University's symbiotic relationship with industry and government, both of which are critical in a world that requires investment in education and external matching of funds for research. CPE offers scope for reputation building and strategic reinvestment in UBC areas of excellence. Importantly, CPE will also serve as an incubator for innovation in pedagogy, learning delivery, support systems and student services, and this experience is likely in time to yield broader benefit across the University.

### Overarching principles

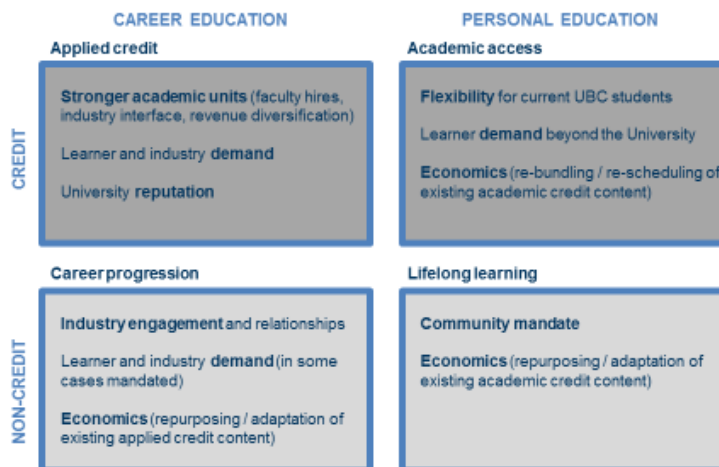
Based on extensive Provost Office (VPAO) consultation and collaboration with UBC faculty and Deans, and shaped by Canadian and US peer review, a set of high-level principles has been agreed. These will guide UBC's approach as it seeks to expand its presence and impact in CPE:

- Highest levels of academic integrity, quality and professionalism;
- Faculty autonomy in program development, curriculum design and faculty management;
- Faculty content 'ownership' in areas of domain expertise;
- Programming in areas of sustained (often inter-disciplinary) UBC advantage;
- Market coherence, both in programming and messaging;
- Consolidated support to complement Faculty capability and capacity in both Vancouver and Okanagan, generating economies of scope and scale where possible;
- Clarity in accountabilities across Faculties, CPE support team and UBC;
- Clear scope for (at least) recovery of investment.

## Growth and development priorities

Four learner segments (*see below*) have been identified, and corroborated through primary research. The segments are defined by two axes: career or personal learning objectives, and credit or non-credit certification requirements. Each of the resulting segments (applied credit; career progression (executive education); lifelong learning; and access (primarily online or off-peak access to academic content for either current or non-UBC students) has strong academic and strategic rationale for growth.

### CPE SEGMENTS AND RATIONALE FOR GROWTH



Initial focus has been on applied credit and summer programs given Faculty interest and strong economics. Four applied master's programs have been launched with VPAO support (Master's of Public Policy and Global Affairs, Master's of Engineering Leadership, Master's of Health Leadership, and Master's of Data Science). The next objectives are expanded sets of data science degrees and MPGGA options, as well as greater traction in Health and Medicine. High school programs have been realigned to strengthen the learner proposition and remove intra-UBC competition, with the Vancouver Summer Program (VSP) serving as a valuable model in approach and pricing. UBC's academic summer programs are coordinated through Continuing Studies.

More recently UBC has launched a number of online (primarily career progression) courses on the edX continuing education (paid) platform. This will be an ongoing area of innovation as UBC seeks to take advantage of the wide learner reach of edX and to experiment with different models of CPE certification,

modularity and recruitment. Online delivery is increasingly a structural imperative in CPE, and program development efforts will need to reflect this shift in focus.

The emerging UBC learner proposition in CPE is built around 'connections': connections across content (curation); connections with expert faculty, with industry and with community; and connections with peers (cohort learning). The proposition will anchor UBC's efforts to build market awareness and support program-level recruitment. Informed by learner research and Faculty consultation, the phased CPE marketing plan targets current students, alumni and 'UBC intenders' before extending reach (and spend) to a broader audience in proximate areas and beyond. UBC will seek to consolidate its CPE offerings around 'clusters' of discipline focus in order to strengthen market coherence and credibility and to foster intensive industry and community engagement. Current thinking identifies business, policy and economics, applied health, applied science, data science and analytics, and communication as six likely clusters, all of which align UBC academic excellence with market demand and regional advantage.

## New model of organization support

CPE growth and development will be enabled through a streamlined Faculty-facing unit that provides operational support across both campuses in areas in which Faculties typically lack capability and capacity: business development, marketing and pricing; non-credit / off-peak program development; and program approval. The VPAO has had demonstrable success supporting Faculties and designated faculty 'champions' in these functions through the development of the first four 'new' applied master's programs. Over time these support functions will transition to Continuing Studies. This team will continue to help the University define and launch an expanding range of fiscally sustainable CPE programs that align learner goals, Faculty focus and UBC excellence.

Extensive operational planning is also underway to develop CPE-specific, but University-connected, student service infrastructure and systems for registration, CRM and learning technology, as well as to establish a coordinated approach to CPE space, facilities and scheduling both on- and off-campus.

Continuing Studies will be realigned to create the CPE support organization, with additional talent seconded or hired as needed, enabling the University to leverage current UBC resource and expertise as it consolidates its new working approach. Curriculum and teaching will be Faculty-based in all CPE programs, consistent with the overarching principles, with Faculties able to choose from four models of CPE support.

1. Faculties can opt to sustain their own CPE operations, subject to alignment with CPE principles of quality and market coherence, and consistent with current revenue sharing arrangements;
2. Faculties can deliver their CPE programs in full collaboration with the CPE support team, with mutual accountability and a 25 / 75 revenue share to offset incremental CPE costs, risk mitigation, CPE reinvestment and UBC contribution. A two-year bye on the share will be granted to programs in which the CPE team has 'go / no go' and pricing decision accountability;
3. The CPE team can operate the program on behalf of (and with the full support of) the Faculty, with a proportionately higher Central revenue share (40 / 60) to reflect higher associated costs;
4. Some programs will continue to be offered by Continuing Studies.

At the appropriate time, motion will be brought to Senate to change the name of Continuing Studies to s UBC Extended Learning (ExL), and to formally change its mandate.

## Challenges

There are a number of systemic challenges going forward, resolution of which will prospectively have profound positive implications for the broader University if CPE is viewed as an incubator for academic and operational experimentation. Much of the CPE action program is designed to address these issues:

- Achieving a coherent portfolio of CPE offerings across campuses and Faculties, and ensuring alignment with areas of UBC excellence and market opportunity;
- Accommodation of CPE requirements for market agility in program approval, financial aid and systems implementation, while maintaining and enhancing the excellence that will make these programs desirable. Provincial approval parameters must be considered in all development;
- Embedding learner relationship management and service excellence across all CPE offerings;
- Department management of increased and competing demands on faculty member bandwidth and resources;
- Overall financials are highly sensitive to tuition, enrolment and development pace assumptions. The University needs to evolve its pricing and student financial aid strategies accordingly to ensure that it sustains its ability to attract the best students and to offer the highest quality programs, while returning a dividend to Faculties and the University.

## Risk mitigation

Strategically, the approach to program development is highly targeted, with clear academic, market and financial criteria, and a requirement for shared Faculty and CPE commitment. In support of the overarching principles, operational governance principles have been developed that seek to balance Faculty autonomy with the protection of UBC quality and market reputation in areas such as program development, faculty participation, student support and space. The Board approves program pricing.

Senate retains ultimate accountability for policy and program approval and Enrolment Services for learner records. Content repurposing, a critical feature of CPE, helps assure academic quality with Senate-approved credit content providing the basis for program development in associated credit, non-credit and online applications.

Financially, there is limited capital investment beyond IT, CRM and space. All of these are extensions of UBC-wide infrastructure, and all require upgrading even to sustain the University's current CPE position. Organizational expansion in CPE will occur in stages, with financial transparency and accountability to Faculties.

The VPAO and Continuing Studies have committed to taking a highly collaborative approach in change management, working together to transition the current organization to a streamlined, Faculty support team, with enhanced capacity in business development, program agility and marketing.

## Roadmap

Considerable work is underway in program development, operational planning and organization consolidation. The primary engines are currently the Associate-Provost Academic Innovation and Continuing Studies working collaboratively with faculty and staff to:

- Support Faculties in priority areas of program development;
- Facilitate operational planning in non-credit student registration, CRM, learning technology, IT, classification of programs for learner service provision, and space;
- Operationalize an integrated communications and marketing plan, and CPE portal, which both need to interface with and reinforce alumni and broader UBC engagement and messaging;
- Discuss integrated UBC approaches to student recruitment and industry engagement;

- Hire or second business development personnel to augment current capacity;
- Identify Faculty CPE leads to constitute a CPE network, and create of a pan-UBC advisory group, ensuring coherence with Faculty advisory boards.

## Conclusion

CPE represents a substantive opportunity for the University to strengthen its contributions to learners, society and industry, helping UBC fulfil its academic mission and its public mandate. Success will be measured through program progression, expanded Faculty capacity for investment and improved UBC market perception. This is an exciting period of growth and transition for UBC. Whilst plans will need to be refined with experience and as market conditions shift, the strategy provides clear direction and a practical framework for University and Faculty action.