![University of Regina logo]

THE CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

EXTERNAL REVIEW

2022

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) at the University of Regina is a highly functioning unit that provides a range of services internally to the University and externally to the community. The CCE has a long history of program and course development, collaboration with faculties and departments and providing access to both traditional and non-traditional learners.

In addition to reviewing a comprehensive package of materials provided by the Office of the Associate Vice-president, Academic, the review sponsor, the external reviewers conducted a remote site visit on March 10 and 11, 2022, and received feedback from administrators, faculty, staff, instructors, and students about their experiences with and perceptions of the CCE. Comments were positive, highlighting the knowledge and experience of leadership as well as the skills and responsiveness of staff and instructors working in the unit.

The Flexible Learning Division is seen by members of the academy as a professional, well-organized unit with skilled staff who are passionate about their work. Career and Professional Development is generating healthy revenues and is looking to expand and renew offerings in the face of growing societal demand. Other programming units within the CCE are in the process of reimagining their work following two years of working primarily from home. There are opportunities to realign programs and courses and develop new ones, taking advantage of interests of international students seeking employment opportunities and those from rural communities in in taking both credit and non-credit courses for career development.

Recommendations provided by the review team fall into the following themes:

- aligning the CCE's organizational structure and leadership more closely with the rest of the University, enhancing both its profile and efficiency as a unit

- integrating staffing, technology, and data from a learning journey and student-centered perspective; and

- building on strengths in programming, educational technology, and online delivery in alignment with the strategic directions of the University of Regina.

2. INTRODUCTION

The review team was provided with written documentation about the role of the unit review, strategic plans for the University and the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) including a self-study report and information relating to enrolment and budgets. Team members met virtually on March 10 and 11 with the Director, representatives from senior administration, staff, faculty, and students to learn more about the current operations and future plans for the CCE.

The review team was asked to provide recommendations relating to governance and the organizational structure of the CCE as well as advice about staffing, marketing, programming, and revenue expectations for each of the units. Programming units are looking for ways to increase enrolments and revenues post-pandemic particularly given plans for a new non-credit registration system and CRM.

The report is organized in three sections commencing with a background of the practice of continuing education including online and flexible learning, the review of the CCE, and concluding remarks. The review of the CCE focuses on the following areas: Role, Governance and Leadership; Organizational Structure, Finances and Access to Data/Shared Services; and Programming Units.   Suggestions for individual units are included within the report. The list of recommendations is provided in Appendix A.

3. CLIMATE AND CONTEXT FOR THE REVIEW

3.1. National Picture of Continuing Education

A recent survey by the Canadian Association of University Continuing Education (CAUCE) provides a snapshot of the organizational structure, mandate, staffing, and program focus of member universities. Thirty-seven out of 44 members responded to the 2022 survey identifying that: The majority of units in Canada are academically and administratively centralized; led by a Director or Dean; report to a Provost; offer a mix of non-credit and credit courses that are taught primarily by faculty; and provide courses in a variety of modalities including online, hybrid and face-to-face. Most units have staff working in the following areas: program administration, marketing, online learning, enrollment, leadership and management, and finance.

Some continuing education units focus on non-traditional students while others have a mix of program offerings that target both traditional and non-traditional students. The type and nature of programming is reflective of the local context as well as the mandate of the University. University continuing education units (UCE) are typically positioned as flexible and responsive, able to provide in-demand courses and services quickly, for example, digital badges and micro-credential programs. Over 95% of respondents indicated increased enrollment during the pandemic. To access the marketplace quickly, the number of UCE units outsourcing

specific services such as market research, instructional design, proctoring, and web development is increasing along with brokering courses with private organizations and other post-secondary institutions.

The divide between credit and non-credit courses is narrowing. Students are increasingly interested in programs of study that lead them to achieve their career goals, which may be many and varied, rather than aligned with a single profession or discipline or taken as part of a larger credential. The demand for short cycle, skills-based courses is growing; it is anticipated that the number and nature of both credit and non-credit micro-credentials will continue to increase given Canada's current and anticipated skill shortage. Due to the pandemic, most programs have been offered online in the past two years. While some students are interested in returning to campus, many are continuing to take all or part of their coursework online, particularly those living in rural communities.

The CCE's organization and focus is like that of other universities in Canada. There are some exceptions. While many UCE units include online education services, only a few have a mandate parallel to that of the Flexible Learning Division. A small number of western Canadian universities manage a conservatory of music. English language instruction is most often, but not always, embedded within continuing education units. Most units offer some community programming; however, this number is decreasing as UCE becomes more focused on professional development and the demand for upskilling and reskilling through the development of short-cycle programming including micro-credentials.

3.2. Online & Flexible Learning

Prior to the pandemic, most established institutions considered themselves residential in nature, and online learning was a means to offer flexible learning options across a select number of courses for residential students, along with a limited number of undergraduate and course-based master's degrees to remote learners, in situations where geography, economics, or life situation precluded access to a campus experience. There were some institutions such as Athabasca University in Canada and others in the U.S. that were primarily online, but these served a niche, albeit steadily growing market. Residential institutions across Canada gradually have increased digital capacity and program offerings. In some cases, these efforts have been buoyed by initiatives funded by some provincial governments (e.g., Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, and B.C.), to increase the development of digital learning.

Some institutions have been pursuing online delivery at scale (i.e., thousands of students distributed globally). These come in a variety of forms and flavours, including credit and non-credit offerings; free, low-cost, or premium tuition; and individual course offerings or complete programs. While some institutions have been doing this in-house (e.g., Georgia Tech's successful Master's in Computer Science), other institutions have been partnering with global providers (e.g., "MOOC" platforms such as Coursera or Udemy, which charge a fee and/or

percentage of revenue) or Online Program Managers (who provide turnkey services in exchange for a more sizable portion of tuition) to mount programs.

Because of online delivery, traditional catchment areas and recruitment boundaries are becoming less meaningful, opening the doors to a global, multi-billion-dollar industry, leading to greater competition between mega-providers and fiscally challenged institutions. And this was before the pandemic. Virtually overnight, the pandemic transformed the online and flexible learning landscape across the country and worldwide from a peripheral activity to one experienced by every student and instructor. This shared experience is likely to have lasting transformative effects in higher education.

As noted above, having a Flexible Learning Division (FLD) that supports online learning situated within the CCE is unique, although not without peers, including University of Guelph, Toronto Metropolitan University, and others, including up until very recently, the University of Waterloo. A key factor to consider is if there will be increased demand for digital learning in the future, this impact this may have on the University and the FLD's ability to provide that support.

4. THE CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCAITON

4.1. The Role of the CCE

The CCE plays a key role within the University, providing access to domestic and international learners as well as coursework to those living in rural areas of the province. Through the process of reviewing documents and meeting with faculty and staff including the Director, the reviewers believe that the CCE is a well-organized unit with strong leadership. As with many continuing education units, the CCE has responded to new programming opportunities while maintaining legacy programs that are important to the community. As a result, there is a noticeable divide relating to some functions such as credit/non-credit programming and student enrolment. This has been perpetuated by different registration systems (Banner, ActiveNet) and the establishment of different units/service areas with similar and sometimes overlapping mandates.

To deliver courses operated through the FLD, the CCE appoints sessional instructors and faculty members from other faculties to teach courses offered through the CCE; the CCE's own credit certificate programs are taught exclusively by sessional instructors. Given that managing the ratio of sessional instructors to tenure/tenure track faculty members is important in any university, senior administration may want to consider tenure appointments or cross appointments within the CCE. This would assist with framing the CCE as an academic unit providing both credit and professional development programming in addition to internal and external support services.

While there are some challenges in organizational structure and with the integration of systems, the passion of faculty, staff and students is evident. Learners spoke enthusiastically about their experiences at the CCE with comments including: "...the program is a jewel in the park" ...; "...the skills and relationships are invaluable. Can't put a price on it...," and "I learned a lot of soft skills as well as specific ones."

The CCE is working on several initiatives that will assist with its future development. We support continuing with the implementation of a credentialling framework, as this will be a critical component in executing the University's strategy around CPD, as well as credit micro credentials. We believe it is important to maintain strong CCE representation on Student Information System Committees, including on any review and implementation groups formed if there is a migration away from Banner.

4.2. Governance

The CCE Council facilitates discussions and information exchanges about academic matters and approves and recommends courses and course changes, graduands, and award winners as part of the University's governance structure. The council is comprised of ex-officio and standing members. The composition and nature of the committee appears successful allowing for discourse and quality controls.

The Director is a member of Dean's Council and participates in academic decision-making. This is a key role given the importance of access programming and online course development to the mandate of the University and the increasing "blurring" of credit and non-credit programming relating to upskilling and reskilling courses.

The CCE effectively manages its operational requirements through the development of an annual operation plan with targets, goals, and measures. To further the exchange of information between faculties and the CCE, the Director may consider having CCE representatives on other faculty councils report briefly on CCE activities and then report back at CCE Council meetings. It is important that the University recognize the contributions of the CCE as both academic instruction and academic service that requires ongoing governance approvals and review to ensure continuous quality and rigour.

The Distance and Distributed Learning Committee (DDLC) oversees the allocation of centralized University funding for the development of online courses with support from the Flexible Learning division. CCE has both voting and non-voting members on this committee, enabling input into the selection of projects, which is appropriate given its expertise within the unit.

4.3. Leadership

The CCE has benefited from knowledgeable and consistent leadership over the past years. The current Director, Dr. Christie Schultz joined the University of Regina in August 2020. Her experience and passion for continuing education was noted by administration, faculty, students, and staff during the review. Based on our conversations, Dr. Shultz has earned the confidence of both academic and administrative staff. She is seen as organized, collaborative, innovative and knowledgeable about the financial requirements of a university. Deans from other faculties provided several examples of this including collaborative planning for a Bachelor of Integrated Studies and potential partnerships related to a range of research activities. Some Deans indicated an interest in working with the CCE in the development of micro-credentials and other non-credit programming to improve recognition and attract more learners to the University.

Dr. Schultz is a member of Dean's Council and serves on approximately 20 University committees. She is active in the adult education learning community and is building her research portfolio. She is aware of the challenges in being located offsite from the main campus and maintains connection with colleagues and others through attendance at meetings and initiating follow-up conversations and reports highlighting the activities of the CCE. She is working to align the plans of the CCE more closely with academic and support units through involvement in important initiatives including a CRM system and a new registration platform for non-credit programs and services. Several important partnerships are in development with Deans and Directors at the University of Regina relating to strengthening in person and flexible learning opportunities and to attract international students to the University. Stakeholders we met with identified that the CCE is well positioned to grow both in credit and non-credit areas; however, they noted that there is a need within the institution to support and leverage the growth potential that the CCE can provide.

To effectively build on past and current successes, recognize the role that the CCE plays in supporting the academic mission of the University, and to enhance the recognition and role of the unit, the reviewers believe that the unit should be recognized as a faculty or school with a Dean in the leadership role, similar to the organization of the School of Graduate Studies. The unit would continue to provide academic coursework as well as services in partnership with other faculties and schools. The Dean could be a in a tenured position with a renewable term appointment. A cross-appointment to another faculty should be maintained. An Associate Dean could be appointed to provide leadership to CCE's existing academic units while a Director could assume responsibilities for service units including registration, student support, marketing, and finance.

5. OPERATIONS

5.1. Structure

The CCE is organized into five business units (CPD, FLD, Conservatory, LL Centre, and ESL) and four support groups (Central Business Services, Marketing and Communications, Instructor and Student Support, Non-Credit, and Instructor and Student Support, Credit). Comments from individuals we interviewed indicated there is a lack of symmetry in the leadership structure, with the business unit heads reporting to the Director, and the support units reporting to the Assistant Director. This can lead to uneven leadership across the units and inordinate demands on the Director's time, which could potentially distract from strategic leadership. The Review Committee believes that the organizational structure of the CCE could be modified to increase efficiencies, reduce silos, and allow for improved communication within and outside of the unit.

Organizationally, the reviewers think that the CCE can be more like other faculties at the University. This would include having a Dean as the academic and administrative leader and an Associate Dean or Director, Academic to oversee the programming units. Administrative units such as marketing, central business services and student instructor services could be under the leadership of a Director. This would allow for day-to-day operations to be under the purview of the Associate Dean and Director, providing time for the Dean to become more involved in research and partnership projects.

Smaller units could be combined organizationally to improve efficiencies and communication. Specifically, we think that the Conservatory of the Performing Arts and the Lifelong Learning Centre could be a single unit entitled: Community Programs. We understand that the ESL program name may be changing to English as an Additional Language. Consideration could be given to changing the unit's name to Language and Access Programs or Language and Academic Preparation to allow for a greater breadth of programming.

We heard from stakeholders that administration processes need to be reviewed and automated, when possible, to allow for more self-service options. The new registration system for non-credit programs will improve this. It would be helpful for the new system to integrate with Banner and other enterprise level systems such as the proposed CRM and the website. While the CCE does employ shared services, there were some aspects of the Unit that struck the Reviewers as unnecessarily siloed, particularly in the credit and non-credit support groups.

Reviewers heard that there is confusion around accessing support among credit and non-credit users. While they use the same LMS which benefits both learners and the support providers in terms of familiarity, there are separate instances for each side, and the two are not integrated. The Unit has been advocating for a single sign-on which will help make support more seamless for the learner. Staff in these areas recognize that students do not care about internal organizational structures – they just want help. Staff report that they "always getting cross

inquiries" and that "students confused and don't know where to go." The CCE is working on a website overhaul that will consolidate contact and help to break down silos so that learners will not have to seek different people for support. Amalgamating the support areas and establishing a student lifecycle that identifies the key steps and requirements along the student journey from a student learning perspective would assist with effectiveness and efficiency. We suggest that the CCE maps the student learning pathway for all learners from first contact through to completion. Looking at the process from a wholistic perspective should assist with understanding the various pathways; this information should provide the unit with an opportunity to establish a "one-stop" student support centre for all students. Creating a "book of knowledge" will help front line staff answer questions directly rather than referring the individual to another person or area.

5.2. Finances

The CCE provides an annual surplus to the University each year. While revenues dropped slightly during the pandemic, this was due primarily to decreased international and non-credit programming. This is consistent with reports from continuing education units in Canada.

The CCE offers online, early morning, evening and weekend credit courses through the Flexible Learning Division using a revenue sharing model. This is acknowledged to assist faculties with their budgets, providing an important source of revenue for projects and new positions. Some of the comments we heard suggest that the formula is becoming more complex; furthermore, there were concerns expressed about changes post-pandemic given uncertainty about what might continue online. Many of the deans indicated that the partnership with the CCE is integral to the operation of many of their departments and support its continuation. We see the FLD as a very effective unit that functions as an academic support unit providing important services and revenues to faculties in the University. Key to the success of the revenue sharing model is that is does provide for sustainability over time as the demand for these services grows.

Non-credit units within the CCE have struggled financially in the past few years, primarily due to the pivot to online course delivery. As courses and services move back to in-person delivery there should be improvements in revenues. It will be important to ensure that lessons learned from the past two years are incorporated into future planning and that growth targets are established. This is an opportune time to reposition and discontinue some programming and services and focus on career and workplace development. We support the interests of the Career and Professional Development unit in developing micro-credentials and other short-cycle career-oriented programming for domestic and international students.

As noted previously, we suggest that some units consolidate to increase effectiveness, improve communication, and reduce costs. Revenue expectations for the Lifelong Learning Centre and the Conservatory of the Performing Arts should take into consideration their community

partnership focus. The implementation of a new registration system and enterprise-level access to data and CRM tools should assist with the efficiencies of the unit and allow the CCE to expand academic support services to other faculties and units.

5.3. Access to Data and Shared Services

Data needed to drive decision making is limited and difficult to access. All units within the CCE would benefit from more easily accessing enrolment, graduation, marketing, and financial data to assist with planning. The review committee supports the inclusion of knowledgeable staff in the CCE who can work with other areas of the University on accessing and understanding data for planning and decision-making. Access to a dashboard that allows users to review data on demand would be helpful. Given that students move back and forth from credit to non-credit learning, understanding trends and an ability to retain students over the "60-year curriculum" is important.

Access to market data can support decision making concerning which programs and courses are promoted. It may be helpful to develop a marketing decision grid that is aligned with the University's and the units' operational plans and can guide decision making so that marketing is not perceived as arbitrary.

It is anticipated that the new registration system will allow for improved access to student enrolment data. This along with plans for a CRM will improve access to information to guide decision making. It may be helpful to establish a tighter integration (e.g., ticketing system) with campus IT for LMS support. The CCE and IT could consider developing a service level agreement defining the terms of collaboration and respective role and responsibilities, including support infrastructure (e.g., shared Jira ticketing).

6. PROGRAM UNITS

6.1. Career & Professional Development

The CPD unit is transitioning from offering a range of courses and programs to focusing on increasing local programming, access to other University programs, providing dual credit, high school accelerated courses and programs for international students. The CPD unit has several additional roles including facilitating PLAR for the University; currently this is not widely used except for Social Work. The move to online programming provided an opportunity for the unit to reflect on the programming mix. Staff identified an interest in increasing the numbers of international students and partnering with key faculties on program delivery.

CPD has developed four micro-credentials to date and would like to increase this number through partnerships with faculties and research centres as well as with business and industry, specifically in areas such as freshwater testing, in-demand technology skills, and data

governance. A partnership with research centres (e.g., Institute for Energy, Environment and Sustainable Communities) and Indigenous organizations in the province may provide an opportunity for important programming and knowledge exchange in this area.

The CPD unit would benefit from identifying operational plans for the next 3 – 5 years that clearly outline the focus of programming, types of partnerships, staffing and other resource requirements and alignment with other units and the U of R's strategic plan. The separate version of Moodle is effective for leveraging resources and expertise, but it should be reviewed regularly to ensure that instructor and instructional design needs are consistent with best practices and client expectations. The unit needs to consider how it will "build, broker and buy" programming to maintain currency of offerings. The unit may like to consider specific sectoral partnerships in key areas of growth for Saskatchewan. Given the interest in expanding delivery within and outside of the province, the unit needs to work more closely with the FLD in the development of online courses. This may require the establishment of a program development fund for non-credit/short cycle programs. Given the growing interest in upskilling and reskilling, the CPD may want to consider how it can leverage partnerships with corporations and government agencies by working with the senior management of the University. For example, CPD could further cultivate a relationship with the VP, Research and leverage this relationship to foster partnerships with corporations, identifying opportunities for corporate training; understanding needs in the public sphere; and providing graduate student development.

6.2. Conservatory of the Performing Arts

The Conservatory of Performing Arts is a non-credit unit that is in its 110th year of operation. Due to the pandemic, programs and lessons have been offered online for the past two years. This resulted in a substantial decrease in the number of lessons and programming. Staff are now focusing on returning to Darke Hall and rebuilding in-person programming. Most of the revenue is from private lessons; the next largest revenue stream is from group programming. The Conservatory currently has 43 instructors; of this number 15-20 teach regularly. While the Conservatory has had enormous success over the years, staff are aware that the interest in western classical music is diminishing. The unit has introduced new genres such as world music, electronic music, and jazz; however, there is some resistance from some current instructors. According to staff and students, the Conservatory has a prominent place within the fabric of Regina's music community. Moving forward, the Conservatory may like to consider leveraging the return to Darke Hall as an opportunity to make some changes in programming, partnerships, and service support. Changes that may be considered include looking at ways to reduce administration through having instructors collect their own fees and paying an annual "membership" for use of the facility. Students using the facility could also pay an annual "student membership". This could include access to practice rooms and performance space as well as any scholarships or bursaries.

Other suggestions include expanding programming through partnerships with community groups in areas such as Early Childhood Music programs, student performances, school events including jazz/band lessons and concerts (perhaps in partnership with the Department of Music); seeking additional program sponsorship through service clubs and organizations; and working with Indigenous groups on a celebration of music/concerts at Darke Hall.
Striving to reach a balanced budget through gaining administrative efficiencies and increasing specific types of programming will be key to the ongoing viability of the Conservatory of the Performing Arts.

6.3. Lifelong Learning

The Lifelong Learning Centre (LLC) was established in 1977. The LLC currently has 234 regular members and 35 honorary members. The unit receives a grant from New Horizons for specific programming. During the pandemic, some regular participants did not attend programs; however, many continued online and have enjoyed taking these courses virtually during the winter months. The unit is planning to continue some online programming in addition to face-to-face classes.

The programs and the opportunities for engagement are considered extremely important by learners. Programs such as the "Grandmothers' Group" are highly valued by participants. Engagement levels are high; some people have been attending programs for 30 years. Members can volunteer to assist with programming as well as attend workshops and courses.

The courses are taught by faculty at no charge. The LLC has not posted positive revenues over expenses since 2017-18 and 2018-19 ; it needs to work on its budget model to ensure ongoing sustainability. Units such as this struggle to fit with the current mandate of continuing education and the emphasis on access and skill building as well as building revenue streams. The University must determine if this a legacy program that should continue to be supported as part of a community engagement mandate or if there is an opportunity to partner with another organization who can take over some or all programming. If the Centre remains in the CCE, consideration could be given to consolidating staff with another unit, introducing programming for the 49-65 age group, and rethinking the budget model. Some new program themes that may be considered include working after retirement, block chain technology, coding, and social media. Pricing for current courses is extremely low and could be increased given that there is a bursary for those who require it.

6.4. ESL

The ESL unit provides an academic pathway to credit studies at the U of R as well as courses for recent newcomers to Canada through the federally funded LINC program. The unit is contemplating changing its name to English as an Additional Language in keeping with current practices in the field. Enrolment dropped commencing in 2020 due to the pandemic and the

inability of many international students to come to Canada. This has resulted in some challenges relating to workload for tenured instructors.

Upper-level ESL courses were recently approved as credit courses. This will provide students with the ability to start credit studies while still studying English. Courses are offered both in person and online. Staff identify the primary strength of the program is the ability to transition students to other programs of study at the University.

The unit attracts two distinct groups of students, those who are preparing to attend credit studies (international students with study permits; CLB 7-8) and newcomers to Canada who require introductory English language training and settlement support (CLB 1-4). Given that the unit does not offer CLB 5-6, students in the LINC program require further language studies elsewhere before being able to return to the ESL program at the CCE. This creates a challenge given that students must leave the institution to further their English language studies. Prior to the pandemic, the unit offered successful short-term study programs during the summer months. Such short-term study programs should be expected to increase in numbers as international travel resumes.

Consideration could be given to developing a clearer focus and mandate for this unit that will allow it to increase enrolment and revenues while maintaining expenses. If the primary strength is transitioning students to credit studies, additional approaches could be implemented such as building more formal pathways and/or earlier or expanded conditional acceptance into programs that can ladder to undergraduate degrees such as Administration; Hospitality, Tourism and Gaming Entertainment Management; Foundations for Nursing; or Statistics. Including a WIL component would attract students who require English language competencies and provide a specific pathway to a program along with future employment opportunities. Working more closely with UR International to provide agent incentives and multiple program pathways at the University is key. Some students may already have a diploma or undergraduate degree from their home university and be looking for a 1 – 2-year Canadian university experience while others may be interested in achieving an undergraduate or graduate credential.

Trends suggest that the numbers of students coming to Canada for ESL only courses are waning in favour of specific program pathways that will lead to employment in Canada. India and China are predicted to remain the dominant markets for the coming years. Students are typically seeking safe cities in Canada that provide job opportunities and programs that meet the requirements for a post-graduation work permit. Hybrid course delivery could be of interest to short-term study program students who could take courses online and then travel to Regina for hands-on workshops, tours and work integrated learning activities. The unit may consider working with the Career and Professional Development unit as well as UR International in combining online micro-credentials and English communication courses with an in-person component.

6.5. Flexible Learning

The Flexible Learning Division (FLD) collaborates with University Faculties, Federated and Regional Colleges to deliver credit-bearing courses, including off-campus, face-to-face, live-streamed, online, and blended classes offered outside the traditional Monday to Friday schedule. It is a key conduit for access to the University of Regina's courses and programs facilitating over 36,000 enrolments, which positions them among the larger programs in the country.

Through these offerings, FLD generates significant revenue from tuition, the net of which is shared with Faculties and the central budget based on a specific formula. Faculty partners and University administration spoke favorably about the current financial model, and the reviewers notes several positive aspects: it incentivises the development of flexible learning and working with CCE in this endeavour; it provides crucial revenue for faculties and departments, and provides for scalability in support, as growth in demand drives a commensurate increase in revenue. Although there were recurring comments about its complexity and the lack of clarity around the formula, and there is some of questioning about revenue sharing and musing about the possibility of Faculty "going it alone" by offering courses without going through CCE, the University should maintain this successful model.

Stakeholders consulted in the site visit recognized the team for its professionalism, and depth of expertise. Reviewers noted that the unit has a mature and robust development process, that is comparable to many other similar units across the country.

The institution has a well-defined intake and review process that is overseen by the Distance and Distributed Learning Committee, ensuring that FLD resources are allocated to worthwhile projects that best meet the University's selection criteria. However, there is no way to ensure a distribution across Faculties, which may result in inequitable distribution of projects. There also does not appear to be a clear strategic plan that guides the selection and development of online courses and programs.

Course authors report having an overwhelmingly positive experience working with the FLD, although they do not always enter the process with that expectation, which speaks well of the division's ability to meet their needs. Most faculty identify with the FLD when thinking of CCE, largely because most interactions are with this unit, and it is directly involved in credit-bearing course development. This visibility is an advantage for the FLD, but something that would need to be addressed when promoting awareness of the other units, notably Career and Professional Development, as they seek to recruit more faculty involvement.

Instructors also report that technology support received from FLD is "second to none," adding that the FLD has been extremely helpful in stepping in to provide support beyond their normal

role during the pandemic. It is likely that the need will only continue to increase post-pandemic and potentially create capacity issues for the unit. Currently, support for the learning management system is coordinated with Information Services in limited ways. Better integration will make campus support for digital learning more seamless and efficient. CCE and IT could articulate the terms of collaboration and define their respective role and responsibilities, including support systems that make collaboration easier. Also, while the LMS platform Moodle seems to be serving needs well, it would be beneficial to understand the landscape if it has been some time since a review. It is important to note that although Moodle is an open-source system, that does not mean that fewer resources can be allocated to it versus a commercial system, as open-source systems require additional in-house expertise to operate, maintain and customize. Whether the University remains with Moodle or switches to another system in the future, CCE should retain in-house LMS expertise to ensure CCE can employ the system in the specific and likely more sophisticated ways it needs for both Flexible Learning and CPD.

The FLD may face disruption and long-term changes because of the pandemic, given instructor's increased experience with remote teaching and the proliferation of digital teaching materials. This may result in a growing demand for FLD's services, and/or instructors or departments willing to offer online courses without FLD's support using existing materials. Instructors may also wish to experiment with different modalities (i.e., synchronous delivery). The demand for blended or hybrid learning may also increase. While we did not speak with the Centre for Teaching and Learning, the reviewers did hear that the CTL may be expanding. This may lead to questions about delineation of responsibilities between the two units. Ideally, this should be discussed as part of an overall learning support strategy for the University.

The reviewers did hear that there was a lack of understanding within the University about the distinction between the Distance and Distributed Learning Committee (DDLC) and the Centre, conflating them to be the same entity. It may help to support the DDLC Coordinators in an awareness-raising campaign within their respective Faculties and Colleges. An updated name to reflect the committee's role more accurately may also help raise its profile and increase internal awareness.

It was not clear to reviewers if the CCE Flexible Learning Division has established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and performance metrics for total cost of development, yearly outcomes, etc. as well as demand statistics. If not, these should be implemented to help justify future budget and growth requests, as well as indicate how efficiently the unit is performing, as it takes on more diverse responsibilities.

In terms of ensuring that the FLD's efforts align with the strategic efforts of the University, the FLD may also want to consider an intake mechanism to ensure that development resources are distributed equitably across Faculties. Furthermore, the University may wish to identify appropriate overall institutional goals (e.g., focusing on growth in complete online programs

that will attract net new students) that can inform DDLC decision-making and focus the FLD's efforts.

7. CONCLUSION

The review team submits that the Centre for Continuing Education is a well-functioning unit supporting the mission of the University of Regina. The reviewers see great growth potential in the primary business units of the Centre: providing access to credit and non-credit studies; supporting international and domestic learners in all types of programming ranging from language acquisition to career and development; and providing online learning development and expertise to other faculties and engaging members of the community in courses and experiences for personal interest. However, we recommend several changes for consideration to improve the operating efficiencies of the unit and align the CCE more closely with Faculties at the University, including: changes to titles and roles; combining all student facing services into a "one-stop" shop for all students regardless of the type of program they are taking; restructuring some of the units to enhance effectiveness and efficiencies; and continuing to support the growth and development of the Flexible Learning Division (FLD) as a hub for course development and digital learning more broadly. We feel these changes will place the unit in an even better position to support the future needs of the institution as identified by the Strategic Plan and senior administrators.

The FLD experienced growth during the pandemic providing online course development and support for credit courses to both domestic and international students, and discussions with learners identified a continuing and growing interest in online. We believe that with additional resources the FLD has the capacity to provide more online support and guidance to units such as Career and Professional Development as well as other faculties and research centres, increasing revenues and growing the provincial and national reach of the University. Conditions are ideal for growth in Career and Professional Development as well. There are high levels of market interest in microcredentials, professional development, and short-duration degrees such as online masters, as the nation experiences unprecedented levels of job displacement, mobility, and turnover. The priority should be to leverage the unique expertise within the University, and also understand and address the needs of both the business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) markets. The University should continue with implementation of the nascent credentialing framework, as greater flexibility and accessibility for learners will provide a competitive advantage and help foster growth.

To achieve success, it is important that CCE and senior administration work in concert. CCE must be regarded as an equal partner in these initiatives and have a seat at the table for all

strategic and ongoing discussion, as well as secure the collaboration of key University partners. It will be important to identify key performance indicators and trends, and continue to establish plans and targets for each unit. Moving forward, data and evidence-based decision-making will be critical for all business units within CCE. This will require access to institutional level data to support decision making and collaborations with the Registrar, Office of Institutional Research, UR International and IT, to identify enrolment and retention patterns and ensure full utilization of enterprise level systems such as Banner and the CRM.

APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Position the CCE within the academy to reflect the current organizational structure of the University. We recommend that the Director title be changed to Dean, that there be an Associate Dean, Academic overseeing the academic programs and issues of the unit and that consideration be given to changing the unit's name from Centre to Faculty or School.

2. Change the reporting structure to the Dean so that all service units (Marketing, Central Business Services, Student and Instructor Services) report to one individual, a Director. All academic units could report to an Associate Director, Academic.

3. Change the name of the English as a Second Language program to English as an Additional Language and consider changing the name of the unit to reflect broader programming (e.g., Language and Access Programming or Language and Academic Preparation).

4. Combine the Conservatory of Performing Arts and the Lifelong Learning Centre into a single unit: Community Programs. Retain the CPA and LLC names, for external recognition purposes, within that new unit.

5. Consolidate the Student and Instructor Service Units into one unit that is, ideally, co-located. Move towards integrating the services (notion that all students are students and that all courses are academic). Map the student journey from recruitment through admissions. Develop clear guidelines relating to supporting students through programs. Continue to prioritize the recognize and support non-credit students and processes within the institution including other faculties and the Federated Colleges. The commitment to implementing a new non-credit registration system will assist with providing a seamless registration experience for all students.

6. Data is key to effective decision-making and evidence-based planning. We recommend that consideration be given to implementing robust data sharing processes and building relationships between CCE and data stewards (Registrar, OIR). CCE should have in-house designated staff (either existing or new) that are cross trained in the primary University information systems (e.g., Banner) and are proficient in data analysis. This internal expert could also serve as the internal data steward and UR liaison should CCE move to Destiny One.

7. Establish the CCE as the educational technology leader within the University by supporting the FLD as the hub for online course development and educational technology support and ensure clarity of functions throughout the University. The CCE could consider embedding or identifying liaisons for each Faculty for cultivating relationships, identifying potential projects, and providing support. Part of this work could include developing and implementing a digital learning strategic plan; identifying expected trends and outcomes

from the pandemic (e.g., increased demand for online and hybrid learning) and establishing a plan to deal with them including the establishment of quality standards for online delivery.

8. Retain the Faculty/CCE relationship and funding model as it is clearly advantageous for the University and helps drive flexible learning, while providing funding to Faculties and other areas of the University. The funding formula for Flexible Learning should be clear, transparent, and consistent.