

## **Strategic Plan At-A-Glance**

### **Context**

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

In recent years, the CTTL has enjoyed a period of tremendous growth: demand for services and programs is on the rise (at both the individual and unit-level), and the regional and national reputation of the Center and its staff are growing. In 2011, the University invested new resources in the Center, doubling the size of the staff and creating the [Learning Studio](#) and the [Innovative Teaching Fellowship](#) that sustains teaching there. In 2012, the Center officially changed its name to better represent the importance of transformational teaching and its renewed commitment to innovative, reflective pedagogical practice. The new name also better represents a larger vision for the Center and its role at the University, and the degree to which it has become ingrained in the larger University community. As we look ahead to the next three years of the Center's development, we anticipate a number of shifts in the instructional needs of SLU educators and in the University's larger educational initiatives – all of them consistent with broader shifts in higher education generally and in the profession of faculty/instructional development. All of these shifts are likely to mean new challenges and opportunities for SLU faculty, graduate students, and other instructors, and the CTTL must be poised not only to respond to but also to anticipate them.

The state of the Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning is strong, but we have much work to do if we are to increase our reach across the University, to improve the quality of our services and programs, and to enhance our reputation. We are confident that, with continued support from faculty and administrators, we can achieve the goals laid out in this strategic plan and that we can continue to add value to SLU. As we head into this new period of transformation, we commit to honoring the values and traditions that have shaped our work over these last 15 years and to find innovative new ways to live out our mission. And we commit ourselves fully to doing so in ways that express the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm.

### **Guiding Vision for 2013-2015**

The guiding vision for the next phase of the Center's development is **Transforming Teaching and Learning at SLU**. The Center largely has been committed to the formation and transformation of individual teachers, helping them to create transformational learning experiences for SLU students over the last 15 years. In light of the recent growth of the Center and its staff, we will strive to expand our imprint/impact, both on campus and off, in ways that we believe have the potential to transform the broader teaching and learning culture of the University and to foster even more transformational educational practices. Alongside our continued commitment to individual instructors, this service to the larger educational community of the University will help to both deepen and broaden the Center's reach.

There are many ways the Center can honor its commitment to transformative teaching. We can enhance programs focused on transformational and high-impact pedagogical practices; adopt more innovative methods of program delivery for our audiences; offer more programs for academic units (thereby having a greater impact on curriculum

design and implementation); begin to share our expertise with other educational units across the campus; create more (and more evidence-based) resources for educators; and increase our reach and reputation, both on and off campus. To accomplish these things, we must bring together the traditions and values of Jesuit education and Ignatian pedagogy with the innovations and challenges of teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. And we must transform our own ways of thinking about the work we do in the Center.

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

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

## Strategic Directions for 2013-2015

Over the next three years, we will focus on enhancing programs, services, practices, and resources in four key areas:



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

These strategic directions will guide our operations and the strategic goals that derive from them. They emerge naturally from the data we collected and the reflection we undertook during the 2011-2012 academic year, and they are linked to the University’s strategic plan. While each direction represents a key driver for our development over the next three years, the directions also overlap, as do the specific goals that derive from them.

## Strategic Goals for 2013-2015

The strategic goals we have set for the next three years will help us to better serve the needs of individual SLU educators and to make a greater impact on the educational culture of the University more broadly. Of course, along the way, we also will have to concentrate on building capacity (knowledge and skills, financial resources, personal resources, and the like) in a variety of areas, and we will need to measure progress toward achieving our goals regularly. The following table lays out our overarching strategic goals for 2013-2015:

CTTL Strategic Direction	CTTL Strategic Goals
<p><b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b> In order to meet the needs of all SLU students, we will develop programs that <b>prepare educators to engage all learners and to meet the complex demands of increasingly diverse educational environments.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop online resources and offer workshops to cultivate awareness of the cultural assumptions and values that inform educational practices in a global university (e.g., cultural competence for faculty, international educator programs), and embed this awareness into existing Center programs.</li> <li>2. Design and develop a set of linked programs and resources to develop clinical teaching skills.</li> <li>3. In partnership with other University stakeholders, identify, develop, and offer online resources to improve accessibility in online, blended, and on-ground courses.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Community-Building</b> In seeking to be more inclusive in our programming, we aim to <b>strengthen the Center’s role as a collaborative and community-building resource, both on and off campus.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Design and pilot two Faculty Learning Communities, one focused on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and the other on online/blended learning, to promote collaborative innovation and research among SLU faculty.</li> <li>5. In partnership with University stakeholders, develop a plan to integrate the Certificate in University Teaching Skills program into University-level initiatives for graduate education (e.g., Preparing Future Faculty).</li> <li>6. Develop partnerships and seek external funding to support the Center’s instructional design and development programs (e.g., reflective integration and assessment of learning technologies, SoTL, Ignatian Pedagogy).</li> </ol>
<p><b>Reflective Innovation</b> For transformative learning to occur, teachers must go beyond content delivery to create meaningful, high-impact learning experiences, particularly for today’s learners, which means the Center must develop programs that <b>promote the shift from informational to transformational teaching and learning.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Develop online resources and offer workshops on engaging learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century more effectively (e.g., learner-centered pedagogies, discovery-based teaching methods, High-Impact Practices, generational learning).</li> <li>8. Enhance and increase online resources and sequenced workshops on Ignatian pedagogy.</li> <li>9. Develop resources to assist instructors with assessing, researching, and documenting the effectiveness of teaching innovations and practices (e.g., learner-centered pedagogies, learning technologies, learning spaces).</li> </ol>
<p><b>Quality &amp; Impact</b> In order to deliver quality programs, and to help the University achieve its goals of increasing educational quality and reputation, we must <b>increase the Center’s impact on the culture of teaching and learning at SLU and its reputation for developing reflective, innovative educators, both on and off campus.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Design scaffolded, online, self-guided resources and customizable workshops to assist departments and programs in creating assessment protocols that are appropriate for their unit-specific needs and that align with institutional needs.</li> <li>11. Assess and re-design the Center’s Certificate Programs to be more flexible, more rigorous, and more relevant in their offerings and to be more focused on transformative teaching practices for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.</li> <li>12. Develop a long-term plan for ongoing assessment of Center services, programs, and website, and implement new assessment methods.</li> <li>13. Create opportunities to publicize and disseminate the work we do, both on and off campus.</li> </ol>

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

## Strategic Planning Process

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

Throughout the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, the CTTL's Strategic Planning Committee worked to develop strategic directions, goals, and objectives that are consistent with the Center's mission and that can position the Center well to achieve its [vision](#). (Strategic planning committee members were: Dr. Debra Lohe, CTTL director; Dr. Gina Merys and Michaella Thornton, CTTL assistant directors; Dr. Darina Sargeant, associate professor in physical therapy and athletic training and CTTL Faculty Fellow/Advisory Board member; and Dr. Stephanie Mooshegian, assistant professor and chair of organizational studies in the School for Professional Studies and CTTL Innovative Teaching Fellow/Advisory Board member.)

During the strategic planning period, we collected many kinds of data to better understand the Center's current state (including visioning sessions, SWOT activities, a Service Quality Survey, and benchmarking research). We also considered a number of environmental factors – including institution-level educational priorities for the University; trends in higher education and learning technologies; and trends in faculty/instructional development more broadly – to ensure that we understood the complexities of both the local and national contexts for our work. Throughout, we took as our guide the framework of [Ignatian pedagogy](#); this reflective process enabled us to identify key elements of context, to better understand our previous experiences, and to consider appropriate actions for the Center's future.

As we enter the next phase of our identity, it is essential that we continue this process and not see strategic planning as concluded for another three years. Indeed, as we move forward and undertake new initiatives, we also recommit ourselves to acting in ways that are consistent with SLU's Jesuit mission and the framework of Ignatian pedagogy. We remain committed to *cura personalis* (care of the whole person) for those whom we serve and to contributing our expertise to broader conversations about curriculum design and implementation, assessment of student learning, and purposeful integration of learning technologies in order to demonstrate care of the whole *University*. Finally, as demands for services and programs increase, and as we find ourselves involved in numerous new initiatives, it will be more important than ever to ground all the work we do firmly in [our mission](#) and [our core values](#).