Crafting a Communication Strategic Plan for Launching

Southern Utah University's Community Outreach Programs

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Acknowledgement

There are many individuals who have contributed to the completion of this capstone project, and to my career as a public relations professional and student. I am grateful to my father, Paul, for including me in "take your daughter to work day" when I was a child, and to my mother for teaching me to "look up, think big." I credit my parents for challenging me to pursue opportunities, and to take the time to be kind to myself when life circumstances are most challenging and difficult.

Making this project entirely possible is Patrick Clarke, Southern Utah University Dean of the School of Integrative and Engaged Learning, Dr. Clarke, has been instrumental in challenging me to integrate creativity and career experience in charting a path for the university's new community and academic initiatives. I am honored to work under his direction and leadership. I am also lucky to be supported by a hard-working, encouraging and delightful staff.

To my children and wife who believe in me and cheer me on, always, I express my deepest love and gratitude. As a family, we feel blessed to live in a community open to new cultural experiences, personal improvement, and quality of life.

Abstract

In 2017, Southern Utah University established the Office of Community and Academic Enrichment for the purpose of introducing community education and professional development programs to adults in the region. Universities rely on support from their communities for success through participation, event attendance, enrollment, donations, referrals and reputation. Introducing community programming presents a significant opportunity for SUU to establish and reaffirm significant community partnerships and to extend its outreach efforts.

This paper provides rationale and documentation of the communication strategic plan and brand created to launch CAE programs. The plan is crafted using an eight-step strategic communications planning model, and employs marketing public relations strategies.

Keywords: marketing public relations, education marketing, community education, community outreach, elective learning, adult learning, lifelong learning, affinity travel

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Introduction

In 2017, the Office of Community and Academic Enrichment (CAE) was established at Southern Utah University and charged with the task of reintroducing community education and creating professional development offerings for adults in the Cedar City, Utah region. Though the university has offered a limited number of community education courses in the past, the program has been dormant for some time.

Introducing new community programming presents an opportunity for SUU to position itself as the local leader and source for elective, lifelong learning and cultural enrichment. Also, to reaffirm its partnership with the community that resulted in the very establishment of the institution in 1897. SUU's initiative to further engage in community partners by introducing new programming is significant because universities rely on support from their communities for success through participation, event attendance, enrollment, donations, referrals and reputation.

Marketing public relations (MPR) provides the strategic framework for successfully launching and growing CAE's five new programs: Community Education, Community Professional Development, Community on the Go, Summer Experience, and Road Creek Inn. Developing an MPR strategy and likeable, recognizable brand can help build trust, third party credibility, revenue, and tie program goals to SUU's overall institutional goals.

This paper provides rationale and documentation of the communication strategic plan and brand created to launch CAE's five programs. The plan is crafted using the eight-step Strategic Communications Planning Matrix (Hainsworth & Wilson 1992), and employs MPR strategies.

Literature Review

SUU Location: The Great Outdoors

Located in what could be considered the world's best backyard, SUU is dubbed "University of the Parks" (Burkitt, 2016) for its close proximity to several outdoor recreational areas and educational partnerships with the National Park Service. While within reach of major metropolitan regions (approximately 2.5 hours north of Las Vegas and 3 hours south of Salt Lake City), SUU's residential campus allows students to engage in outdoor adventures in conjunction with academic endeavors. So serious is the university about its geographic location, the institution filed to trademark the phrase (Burkitt, 2016) for building brand strategy around its location. In September, 2017, SUU Marketing Communications issued a press release stating:

> After filing government paperwork and months of waiting, Southern Utah University has officially trademarked the University of the Parks. By incorporating SUU's academic offerings and its geographic location, the University of the Parks designation sets SUU apart and promotes a unique proposition for students interested in the outdoors and experiencing hands-on learning outside of the classroom.

SUU's School of Integrative and Engaged Learning (SIEL) houses a variety of innovative educational programs where learning opportunities are often coupled with outdoor adventure. The role of SIEL is to recognize and respond to the ever-changing demands of the professional climate by offering marketable opportunities for students to explore, engage and excel in areas of individual interest. Ultimately, SIEL provides programs that lead to personal empowerment and academic advantage. Programs are built around exploring the national parks, engaging in

undergraduate research, elective learning, professional development, community service and other life-enhancing experiences that fall outside of the conventional classroom.

CAE Location and Charge

Organizationallly located in SIEL, the SUU Office of Community and Academic Enrichment (CAE) exists to extend academic experiences and opportunities beyond campus to the local community. Programs are designed to offer cultural, intellectual and skills-based learning opportunities while allowing participants to explore areas of personal interest, engage with the university, and excel by participating in experiences designed to enhance quality of life. Established in 2017, CAE is charged with providing affordable, short-term cultural and educational experiences to the community by introducing the following five new programs: Community Education, Community Professional Development, Community on the Go (an adult travel program), Summer Experience (designed to lure summer tourists to SUU for learning experiences), and Road Creek Inn, SUU's new field station near Capitol Reef National Park.

Each of these programs is designed to engage adults in experiential learning opportunities, and to assist with SUU's goal to "create, expand, and support collaboration between SUU and its larger communities (local, regional, state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity" (SUU Strategic Plan, 2016, p. 4). Community programs aim to provide something of value to participants by offering experiences that enhance quality of life and provide opportunities to advance careers and/or develop new knowledge, skills and hobbies in a social setting. A desired outcome is to establish "programs with strong stakeholder communication that positively impact

the regional economy and re-engage professional alumni/friends" (SUU Strategic Plan, 2016, p.

4).

Under SIEL, CAE operates on a soft-funded budget and must therefore generate revenue

to sustain its operation. The CAE office is charged with becoming 66% financially self-

sustaining by July 1, 2021. Due to the revenue-generating requirement for CAE programs, to be

successful, it is the belief of the author that a communication strategic plan must be crafted using

principles of marketing combined with public relations.

Marketing Defined

The American Marketing Association defines marketing as "the activity, set of

institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings

that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (American Marketing

Association, 2013). Essentially, marketers work to satisfy customer needs while generating

income. For CAE, this translates to offering educational experiences as a means of satisfying the

needs of members of the community in exchange for financial remuneration. By considering

each of its programs a sellable product or service capable of generating revenue, a plan can be

constructed to introduce and sell participation to the community, thereby providing infrastructure

and support leading to the achievement of revenue goals.

Public Relations Defined

Public relations is defined as "the management function that establishes and maintains

mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the public's on whom its success

or failure depends" (Broom & Sha, 2017, p. 5). Maintaining a public relations focus, in tandem

with a product marketing focus, will allow CAE to develop a brand capable of connecting with

the community while accomplishing goals that extend beyond community programming

nurturing partnerships between SUU and the greater southern Utah community.

Marketing Public Relations Defined

The concept of marketing public relations (MPR), according to Harris and Whalen

(2006), is described as "the use of public relations strategies and tactics to achieve marketing

objectives" (p. 7). The trend leading communication strategists away from advertising-only

platforms to MPR platforms is described by Al and Laura Ries (2002) as one that is more

affordable and more effective. While MPR does not entirely abandon advertising, it requires

extensive strategic planning and implementation of several cross-platform tactics before

advertising dollars can be spent.

The emergence of MPR represents the trend in convergence of public relations and

marketing and has a broad purpose: to gain awareness, stimulate sales, facilitate communication

and build relationships between consumers, companies and brands (Harris & Whalen, 2006, p.

7)." Whalen (2012) goes on to describe that combining public relations strategies with marketing

campaigns adds brand credibility assets like third-party endorsements from the news media,

opinion leaders and key influencers.

> MPR strategies and tactics can bring a brand to life by building brand loyalty and
>
> generating word-of-mouth buzz, often by integrating an event, a mascot, providing useful
>
> or interesting information or incorporating a nonpaid promotional activity into an existing
>
> marketing campaign (p. 161).

Activities of MPR vary from traditional public relations strategies because their primary

function is to support an organization's sales and revenue goals, and typically promote a product,

brand or service. As Whalen points out, public relations supports broad corporate reputation

goals, whereas MPR focuses on things like product placements, publicity stunts, and building

relationships of trust between brands and customers (Whalen, 2012, p. 162).

Building trust will be a significant factor in creating a new brand for CAE programs.

Mindy Benson, SUU vice president of alumni and community relations, stated that many adult

members of the region have expressed a desire for the university to return to offering community

education classes and disappointment that such offerings went away (personal communication

September 21, 2017). Offered for a brief period in the institution's 121 year history, from 2010-

2013, SUU abandoned its community education program until now.

While SUU is seen as the local leader in higher education, the university has not earned a

reputation for quality nor consistent community education offerings. Introducing five new

educational programs for community members will require immediate trust building for

garnering participation in programs with varying price points ranging from $25 for enrollment in

a social dance class to $3,195 for participating in an SUU-sponsored educational trip to the Alps.

Marketing public relations is selected as the framework for crafting a CAE

communication strategic plan for its focus on brand authenticity which results in trust building

with target audiences. Whalen (2012) states that a good marketing public relations campaign

focuses on building trust by creating dialogue with key target publics, and identifying conduit for

getting information into the hands of influencers such as news media, bloggers, social media

personalities, and other opinion leaders. "To be truly authentic requires that MPR professionals

understand what is important to the target audiences, and this often requires a two-way

communication mechanism that bypasses traditional media gatekeepers and allows a direct interaction with key audience members" (Whalen, 2012, p. 165).

Community Event Strategy

Attaching events to MPR strategy can provide extended opportunities for valuable one-on-one interaction and engagement with target audiences. Events also open opportunities for social media broadcasting and use of hashtags to allow for extended engagement and tracking brand participants. David M. Scott recommends the consideration of events as marketing tools for their social media integration capabilities. According to Scott (2017), integrating real-time multimedia broadcasts with events can send important marketing messages to those not in attendance. Quoting Alan Belniak, director of social media marketing at PTC software company: "They can see that they're missing and possibly use these forms of real-time multimedia as justification that they should attend next year" (Scott, 2017, p. 267).

In a region where social media–particularly Facebook–is the number one source of information about local events (Tucker, Scott, Thorpe & Canaan, 2017), social strategies will play a key role in securing event attendance. Whereas events provide opportunities for one-on-one interaction and direct social engagement, events can be a useful tool for gaining CAE program enrollments. Not only do events provide exposure, they can also serve as on-site registration stations where technology allows for internet access.

Brand Building

For the purpose of this paper, branding is defined as a component of a strategic plan and the creation of clear and consistent messaging.

A brand is the articulation of an organization's purpose, the way it is presented to

customers, employees and other publics. The value of a brand is its ability to convey a

message and associate the corporate name with a favorable concept in the mind of the

consumer or other public. Branding is rooted in an organization's strategic

communication plan, shaping a messaging strategy to express its purpose and character,

(Smith, 2017, pp. 248-249).

Significantly, Smith (2017) goes on to state, "the goal of branding is to foster

understanding and goodwill, and to encourage participation and support. Strong brands come

from what people say about you, not what you say about yourself (p. 249)." Branding and public

relations allow users to develop relationships with an organization, where advertising and

marketing focus on making a sell. MPR merges the strategies and calls for a robust media

relations program for sharing content that creates a connection, elicits engagement through third-

party endorsers like journalists, bloggers, social media reviewers and other opinion leaders.

According to Wilson & Ogden (2015), creating and sharing free content to convert

prospects into customers and loyal followers is growing for its ability to generate value, brand

awareness, and user discussion. "Content marketing or communications marketing is perfect for

social media because it's fresh and so easy to share" (p. 164).

Brand elements like photos and graphic templates can also work to tell a story and

communicate consistency. "Core brand elements should include the most important points of

differentiation and be restricted to a small number to maintain a brand's focus. These

associations will define the brand as well as provide its positioning versus competitors" (John &

Torelli, pp. 46-47).

With emphasis on trust-building strategies, CAE intends to build a communication strategic plan and a brand that is authentic, consistent, reliable and appealing to its local community. Also, a brand that supports and promotes CAE programs and can successfully sell participation and encourage repeat customers and expanded participation with SUU. Ultimately, the CAE brand intends to establish a bridge between Southern Utah University and the community that has passionately supported the institution from its very beginning. Specifically, those who value lifelong learning and cultural enrichment.

RQ1: What marketing public relations strategies and tactics will best encourage initial enrollment and participation in CAE programs?

Method

The public relations model selected for constructing this plan is the Strategic Communications Planning Matrix inspired by professors Brad E. Hainsworth and Laurie J. Wilson of Brigham Young University. First named the Public Relations Strategic Program Planning Matrix (Hainsworth & Wilson 1992), the matrix model builds on the widely-used four-step RACE (Research, Action, Communication, Evaluation) method created by John Marston and first introduced in 1963. The RACE model is intended to provide practitioners with a formula for mapping out a public relations plan of action.

> In the public relations world a new formula using the letters R-A-C-E can accomplish the same result. These letters stand for a sequence of words used in attacking a public relations problem—Research, Action, Communication and Evaluation. Remembering these words won't make a dull man bright, but orderly consideration of them will prevent any mistakes or omissions. (Marston, 1963, p. 161)

Marston's RACE model offers a linear, four-step, progressive method for outlining each phase of public relations planning process. And while the matrix maintains Marston's same four phases, it offers an expanded approach by contributing to the accomplishment of overarching organizational goals. Tying public relations and marketing goals to organizational goals offers added organizational solidarity and helps to prevent communication efforts from becoming siloed or distracted in creative meandering. When public relations and executive goals align, an organization is best positioned for institutional achievement and success.

Also uniquely built into the Strategic Communications Planning Matrix (Wilson & Ogden, 2015) is the requirement to identify a public relations problem or opportunity in the beginning stages of crafting a strategic plan. With a clear picture of a specific problem/opportunity, practitioners can then follow the matrix formula through steps including background research, crafting a situation analysis, identifying key publics and strategic messages, objectives, strategies and tactics in a combined and methodical effort to both reach and influence those key publics. (See Strategic Planning Matrix Appendix A)

Primary Research: CAE Community Survey

To gauge attitudes and interests of the community, CAE administered a community survey between September and October 2017 following the hiring of new director Melynda Thorpe. Results provide insight into demographic characteristics of local residents and adult interest in elective learning opportunities associated with SUU. The survey serves as a foundation for building SUU's community program offerings and a benchmark for measuring growth and progress.

A total 349 responses were collected by administering the survey at three regional events: SUU's Red Sky Rally community aviation event held at Cedar City Regional Airport, a Utah Symphony performance at the Heritage Center, and at the Iron County Fair at Parowan. Surveys were completed manually and entered into a Google forms digital file. A digital link to the survey was also shared and boosted in the Iron County region via Facebook. Social media accounts including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were created at this time for CAE programs and used to support distribution of the survey.

Overall, survey data demonstrates a high level of interest in a variety of community education offerings. Of 345 responses the the statement, "Ages of family members who may be interested in participating in SUU community education classes, workshops, academics or campus: Check ALL that apply," 548 responses were given. This implies that of 345 households represented by respondents to this question, 59% said that multiple individuals would be interested in community education offerings (Appendix F).

At the time of the survey, CAE began gathering contacts of those interested in participating with CAE by attending, teaching or leading a community education experience. This information serves as the beginning of a database of constituent email addresses and contact information to be utilized for marketing purposes.

Ultimately, survey responses demonstrated a wide variety of types of courses desired by community members. A number of common interests and characteristics did surface fulfilling the intended purposes of providing direction for building initial program offerings and marketing strategies.

Findings, Demographics: One important commonality between survey participants is the lack of adult elective education participation. Of respondents, 34.8% said they have been involved (directly or indirectly) in a community education course, skilled certificate program, workshop or learning camp on the campus of Southern Utah University. Even though more than 65% of survey respondents have not been involved with a community education course or workshop at SUU, all participants except five knew of people within their families who would be interested in classes (Appendix F).

Only 300 of the 349 taking the survey responded to gender identity. Of those, 73% answered female; 26.3% male. The largest age range of participants was 25-40 years old (34.2%) with 41-54 years old a close second (28.6%).

With education levels varying greatly, the largest percentage have had some college education with no degree at 25.1%. Of the other respondents, 24.2% reported having a bachelor's degree, 18.7% a master's degree, and 11.1% an associate's degree. Other education levels listed were doctorate degrees, high school graduate or GED, specialization certification, or licence holder. Almost all participants were employed in some way: full-time position (49.3%), a part-time position (21.4%), or self-employed (2.4%). Retired respondents were (11.3%), with a handful of participants identifying as students, volunteers, or unemployed.

Based on collective data, the best time for community members to take elective learning courses is weekday evenings. Of actual days of availability, Saturday held the majority at 60.2%, followed in order by Thursday, Wednesday, Tuesday, Friday, then Monday. Of actual times of availability, weekday evenings topped the charts at 69.9%. Weekend afternoons and mornings followed, then weekday afternoons and mornings.

Regarding dollar payment for courses, at 61.5%, most people stated that it "depended on the class" for how much they would pay. Otherwise, $50-100 was most commonly stated.

Findings, Community Needs and Wants: Of those taking the survey, the "love to learn," "fun," and "short term, cheap cost" were listed as top reasons they were interested in community education. Also, 83.4% of respondents said they have some sort of expertise and would be interested in teaching a course.

Respondents chose Facebook (42%) as their primary source for community event information, followed by websites (18%) and newspaper (15%). Results support findings by Tucker, Scott, Thorpe & Canaan (2017) regarding Facebook as the top source in southern Utah for event information.

Findings, Courses of Interest: Those taking the survey were allowed to mark multiple

Table 1

Community Courses of Interest

Course	Responses	%
Outdoor Photography	194	55.59
Dutch Oven Cooking	181	51.86
Breads/Pastries	168	47.46
Gardening	162	45.76
Hiking Southern Utah	160	45.20
Drawing/Painting	157	44.35
Cake Decorating	146	41.24
Healthy Eating	145	40.96
Couples Dancing	138	38.98
Adobe Creative Suite	137	38.70
Personal Finance	134	37.85
Yoga	133	37.57
Astronomy	129	36.44
Graphic Design	119	33.62
Social Media Marketing	116	32.77
Creative Writing	114	32.20
Marketing, Advertising	110	31.07
Southern Utah Geology	108	30.51
Guitar	107	30.23
Meditation	104	29.38
Dog Training	102	28.81
Communicating Effectively	99	27.97
Tapas Small Plates	93	26.27
Singing	89	25.14
Video Editing	86	24.29
Blogging	84	23.73
Wine Tasting	75	21.19
Parenting	73	20.62
Bird Watching	71	20.06
Conflict & Anger Management	6	1.69

Note: 2017 CAE community survey respondents were asked to identify community education courses of interest. Included are the 30 most popular responses including the number of times the response appeared in results and the percentage of total response share the course received.

answers for desired courses. The following list is a compilation of the top responses:

Measuring Public Perception

The 2017 survey conducted prior to the launch of CAE programs provides benchmark data to measure public perception as programs evolve. It is a goal of this strategic plan to repeat the CAE community survey annually, matching its original administration conditions as near initial circumstances as possible: conduct during August-September, gain approximately 300 responses, administer at CAE-sponsored community event, Iron County Fair booth, Heritage Center cultural performance event and online via facebook. A survey mechanism for Community on the Go trip participants has been created to encourage feedback about travel experiences, also to determine traveler perception and other markers for contributing to program development and quality management.

Situation Analysis

SUU is poised to launch a series of educational programs. Designed to appeal to the variety of interests that surfaced in the 2017 CAE survey, these programs aim to assist community members in exploring personal interests and developing new skills. CAE's purpose is to engage members of the community in experiential learning opportunities. Also, to design educational programs and experiences to appeal to those who love to learn and are seeking personal improvement, social engagement, cultural enrichment and professional advantage.

Potential Difficulties Certain obstacles may exist due to SUU's previous effort to offer community education programs going dormant, including possible loss of trust in similar SUU offerings. There may be some challenge in establishing benefit for attending courses with many instructional offerings available on the Internet. Providing relevant and consistent offerings, and responding to the needs and wants of the community will be critical in earning community trust.

The location of the CAE office may also prove to be troublesome for members of the community to locate and access. Currently, the office is located in the basement of the Community Outreach Center (COC) with stairs potentially difficult for seniors to access. The building is not clearly marked with effective signage to indicate that CAE is located within, while other building tenants are listed on external signage. As CAE anticipates several senior program participants, these challenges raise concern. The CAE office is located in the Community Outreach Center at 136 West University Blvd., Cedar City, on the Northeast outermost corner of campus. Other entities residing in the COC are Larry H. Miller Utah Summer Games and SUU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

As it is perceived that the community is interested in community education and enrichment offerings, the success of the programs relies on the effectiveness of CAE's marketing efforts, and the ability to create a likeable and valued brand.

Discussion & Results

For the purpose of discussion, the author will focus on one of the five new CAE programs, Community Education. As brand strategy and key messaging are presented in the following communication strategic plan and appendices, it is evident that the MPR framework has provided a positive platform for program launch. Building 16 initial course offerings from outcomes of a community survey, the March 2016 launch of the new SUU Community Education program resulted in enrollment of 206 paid participants. In the first of three 2018 sessions (spring, summer, fall), Community Education reached 69% of its first-year enrollment goal of gaining 300 participants.

It is evident that social media and media relations efforts have generated much buzz about the launch of CAE programs, with branded content generated to include and reiterate key messages and terms identified in the strategic plan. Also, to include key messages designed to reach specific target audiences. For example, the cooking class offered by CAE and titled "Southern Utah Chef," included key messages designed to appeal to those who love to both cook and dine in local restaurants. Touted as "the class where favorite local chefs teach you to cook," third party endorsement came from press releases sharing messages of popular local restaurants signing their head chefs to teach sections of the course. Also, those restaurants shared information about the course on their own social media channels both adding to CAE promotion efforts and lending their own fan bases and credibility to the new class.

Branding for "Southern Utah Chef" aligned with the brand created to represent all CAE programs including a curious-looking baby owl underscored by the word "wise" and supported by the slogan, "Be wise. Keep learning" (See Appendix C). Additionally, an illustrated chef image was created to promote the class for additional personification designed to appeal to a more sophisticated learner (Appendix E).

Southern Utah Chef sold out within three weeks of opening registration on the newly created CAE website. Marketing tactics included social media posts, Facebook ads, and a community mailer sent to those living in Iron County in single family dwelling homes with a combined income of $35,000 or more.

It is clear that photos taken at the event (Appendix E) and posted to social media offered additional traction. Class participants engaged with the hashtag "#southernutahchef" by posting photos of themselves in class, and at home attempting to make the new recipes. This generated

additional demand for the course and resulted in a waiting list and creation of a new session of the course beginning in June.

CAE staff learned from their community survey that cooking classes were of interest to those expressing a desire to take courses. Building a course model and plugging it into the brand crafted to represent CAE programs, and an MPR-based communication strategic plan has been a successful method to date for promoting Community Education. Treating courses as products to be marketed has proven a successful approach. In its first session, Community Education revenue reached $21,728, exceeding its goal of $12,000 by nearly $10,000.

With an encouraging launch, and a brand that appears resonate with the local community as an extension of the SUU brand, CAE plans to move forward with the established model as outlined in this document for fiscal year 2018-2019. It is recommended that the CAE Communication Strategic Plan be both updated and revised annually, making adjustments and adaptations based on community survey results and analysis and effectiveness of strategies and tactics.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Strategic Communications Planning Matrix

8-Step Strategic Communications Planning Matrix

Research

1. Background

2. Situation Analysis

3. Core Problem/Opportunity

Action Planning

4. Goal and Objectives

5. Big Idea, Key Publics, Messages, Strategies and Tactics

6. Calendar and Budget

Evaluation

7. Communication Confirmat

8. Evaluation Criteria and Tools

Chart 1   (Hainsworth & Wilson 1992)

Appendix B: One Sheet Flyer

SUU
Community &
Academic Enrichment
SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2018

SUU wise Community Education

The Office of Community & Academic Enrichment supports SUU's initiative to maintain meaningful connections with its local community. We provide experiential learning opportunities and reaffirm the partnership between community and education that resulted in the institution's very establishment in 1897. We represent the university to its community by extending access to SUU experts, educational opportunities and resources. Our programs focus on personal improvement and enhancing quality of life in the areas of educational, social, cultural, and professional development.

PROGRAMS:

Community Education: Offers classes, workshops and clubs for creating community partnerships and generating fun, social, cultural, and educational experiences for those who love to learn. While increasing participant knowledge, programs are designed to provide experiences for developing new skills, hobbies or areas of personal interest. Subjects will be taught by community experts.

Community Professional Development: Offers classes, seminars and workshops to provide short-term training opportunities for those interested in increasing marketability and gaining professional advantage. The program is designed to provide area business owners with a credible venue for offering employee training courses culminating in SUU Institutional Certificates and credit.

Community on the Go: Acts much like a study abroad program for adult members of the community interested in educational travel. Trips are designed to offer cultural and immersive educational experiences led by SUU experts, and to support student scholarships. Groups of approximately 20-30 travelers at a time explore various parts of the world in a fun, affordable, and educational setting.

Summer Experience: Highlights Cedar City as a summer destination for travelers from other communities. Activities include touring the region's National Parks and engaging in expeditions led by SUU experts. Participants can immerse themselves in the Utah Shakespeare Festival and on-campus educational activities while staying in student housing for affordable rates.

Road Creek Inn, SUU's new Capitol Reef field Station: Located just outside Capitol Reef National Park, the Inn is also close in proximity to Fishlake National Forest, Canyonlands National Park and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Originally built as a ZCMI Co-op in 1912, this property offers a perfect getaway for educational groups, retreats, weddings and family reunions.

EVENTS

Community on the Go Reunion: An on-campus event designed to honor travelers for their contribution to SUU student scholarships and to reunite with fellow travelers.

Larry H. Miller Utah Summer Games Golf Tournament: Featuring guest host Byron Casper, professional golfer and son of the legendary pro from Utah, Billy Casper. To include pre-tournament golf clinic, book signing, and tournament.

Downtown Event: An outdoor live music event, Cedar Nights is scheduled to launch Fall 2018 in partnership with Southern Utah Museum of Art and Larry H. Miller Utah Summer Games. Additional cooperation from the Cedar City Historic Downtown Economic Development Committee.

Melynda Thorpe, Community & Academic Experiences Executive Director
(435) 773-0781 or melyndathorpe@suu.edu

Appendix C: Community Launch Postcard Mailer

Appendix D: Community Education Print Ad

Appendix E: Southern Utah Chef Promo Images
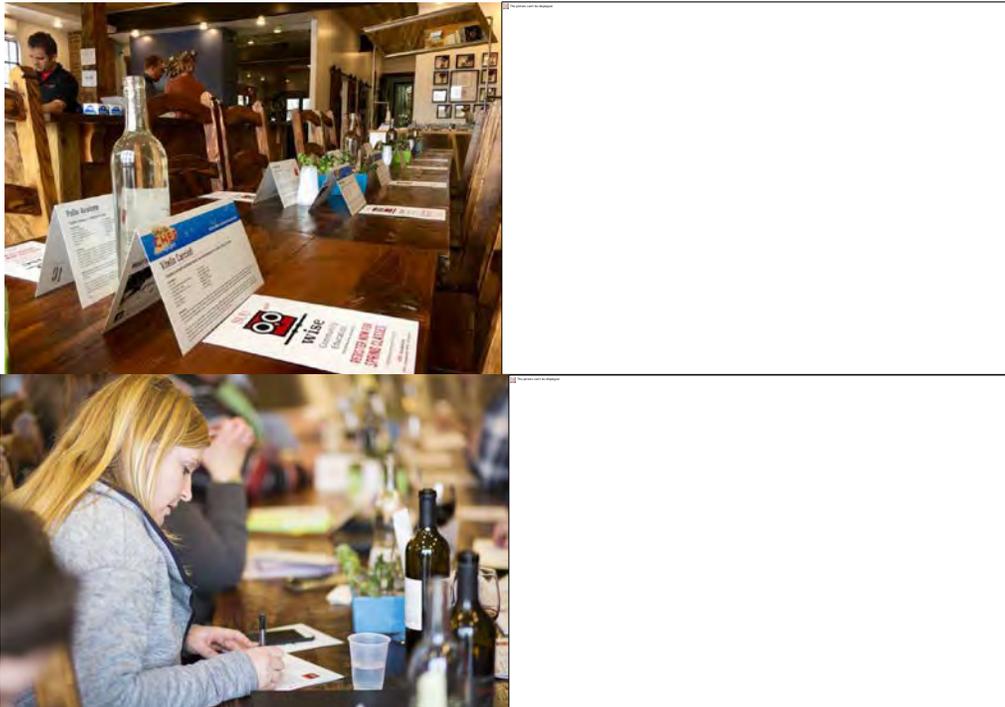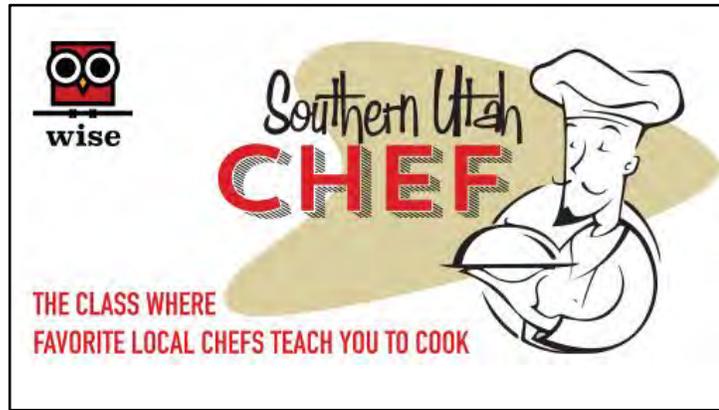
 Photos from first Southern Utah Chef class held March 15, 2018 at IG Winery, Cedar City, Utah.

Appendix F: Community Survey Question Results

Community Education Survey

Have you or someone in your household ever enrolled in a community education course, skill certificate program, attended a workshop or learning camp on SUU campus?

346 responses
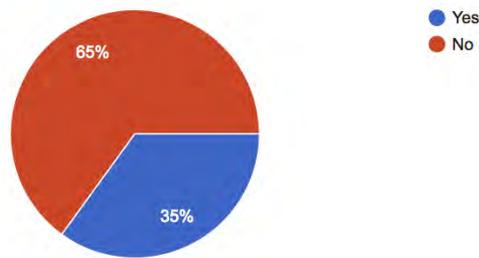
- Yes
- No

65%

35%

Ages of family members who may be interested in participating in SUU community education classes, workshops, academics or campus: Check ALL that apply.

345 responses

Age group	Count (Percent)
Age 15 or younger	99 (28.7%)
16-24 years old	109 (31.6%)
25-40 years old	138 (40%)
41-54 years old	115 (33.3%)
55-64 years old	49 (14.2%)
65 and over	38 (11%)
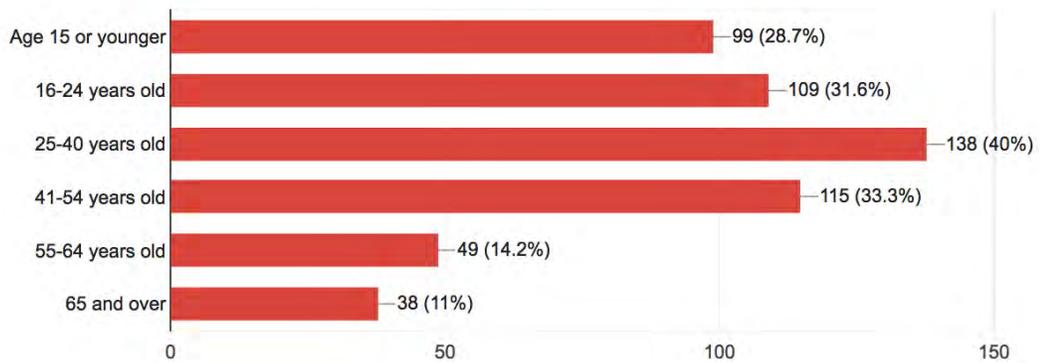
Appendix G: SUU Strategic Plan Community Excerpt

GOAL 1.3 Expand and support collaborative partnerships for learning.

Objectives	Goal Owner	Action Plan	Timeline	Indicator(s) of Achievement/Target(s)	Desired Outcome(s)	Status
OBJ 1.3.1: Create, expand, and support collaboration between SUU and its larger communities (local, regional, state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.	Benson/ Butikofer/ Cook	* Integrate curricula with new and existing partnerships through programs such as Jumpstart, Semester in the Parks, IIC, etc. * Investigate potential opportunities for procurement of a field station in the public lands. * Utilize campus athletic events to engage community. * Hold Community Outreach Meetings to promote open discussion. * Utilize campus events including the Gala, concerts, and Homecoming to engage the campus and community. * Utilize the Community Advisory Board, Regional Services, Utah Summer Games, Tournaments, and the Rural Summit to collaborate with and enhance community partnerships. * Identify alumni and friends in professional positions willing to partner with SUU to strengthen the exchange of knowledge/ resources through experiential internships and opportunities to current students/recent grads.	2016-2020	Positive gains in: * # of articulation agreements between SUU and the local state/national parks * # of internship cooperatives with parks/agencies * # of students utilizing articulation options * # community members attending athletic events * Economic impact * # confirmed and active professional partnerships * # experiential internships and opportunities offered to current students and recent graduates * # of student-started businesses	* Academic programs that embrace the University's unique local assets through the provision of meaningful national/state park experiences at the learning and exploring levels. * Programs with strong stakeholder communication that positively impact the regional economy and re-engage professional alumni/friends.	
OBJ 1.3.2: Create, expand, and support interdisciplinary opportunities and across campus.	Cook	* Expand marketing and recruitment for the BIS and BSGS programs. * Expand collaboration between BIS and BSGS programs and discipline-centric programs across campus. * Create pathways for graduate programs to enroll students from different degree programs within courses and encourage completion of second master's degrees.	2016-22	Positive gains in: * BIS and BSGS enrollment * Discipline participation in the BIS and BSGS programs of study * # of graduate students enrolled in courses outside their primary designated program * # students pursuing second master's degree.	Integrated programs of study that incorporate personalized degree planning.	

OPIE 6/24/2016 md

Appendix H: 2018-2019 CAE Communication Strategic Plan

Research

Background

History of Programs

Community education existed for a brief period between 2010-2013, and has since been dormant at SUU. New community programs began to formulate in 2016 under the direction of Leilani Nautu. Below is a 2016-17 summary:

SUU Community Education: A very successful partnership was established between the Office of Community and Academic Enrichment, Alumni and Community Relations, Utah Shakespeare Festival, and Cedar City Tourism Bureau. Informational meetings were held with possible instructors. A proposal process was established.

SUU Community Professional Development: The process of offering SUU Institutional Certificates has been established and initial partnerships explored. Local self-defense company, Spy Escape, is interested in offering a certificate to those who complete a four-level training course. Stagecraft of Las Vegas also expressed interest.

SUU Community on the Go: A very successful partnership between the School of Integrative and Engaged Learning (Office of Community and Academic Enrichment), Alumni and Community Relations, Office of Institutional Advancement, and Office of International Affairs. Community trips have been planned. The trips are: Many Facets of China, Operation Overlord: The Normandy/D-Day Experience, Christmas in London, Inca Empire Peru, Halloween in Transylvania, and Christmas in the Alps.

SUU Summer Experience: A partnership was established between the Office of Community and Academic Enrichment, Alumni and Community Relations, the Shakespeare Festival, and the Cedar City Tourism Bureau. A list of campus and community resources was collected. Advertising was developed and disseminated.

Location

SUU boasts being located in the world's best backyard. Campus lies within close proximity to several outdoor recreation destinations and world-renowned National Parks. Within reasonable distance, students can enjoy spectacular hiking, biking, water recreation and endless outdoor adventures.

Located in Cedar City, Utah, population 31,223 ("Population Estimates Report," 2016), SUU is within a short distance from the Mighty Five Utah National Parks, Bryce, Zion, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef and Arches National Parks, and is only a couple hours from the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Salt Lake City lies four hours to the north, with Las Vegas three hours to south of campus.

SUU History and Current Climate

Southern Utah University was established in 1897 as college for producing teachers for the new Cedar City region, settlement community for Mormon pioneers. Having grown and transitioned to meet the evolving needs, in 2018, SUU enrollment reached a new high of 10,245 students. This number marks three years of record enrollment growth for the 121 year old institution. Recent enrollment increase can be attributed to economic upturn, increase in population, and global location recognition for its proximity to Utah's world-famous national parks.

Current & Relevant Trends

An interesting regional phenomenon is the number of Fundamentalist Latter-Day Saints (FLDS) families moving into the Cedar City area. With a history of deprivation of education, FLDS families are making education a priority as they are moving from remote areas to new homes in Iron County. Other trends include an increasing interest among adults in lifelong learning and education travel experiences, and societal emphasis on earning a college degree. Additionally, the rising Generation Z has been noted for its desire for experiential education.

Marketing Trends: In the area of marketing and communications, a new trend calls for grassroots assistance from groups of supporters. Often, the practice is referred to as employing brand ambassadors or message warriors.

"In the information revolution, message warriors are the foot soldiers in the campaign to capture hearts and minds. Social media has irrevocably altered the reputation landscape. Institutions used to control their own reputation. Now the stakeholders do. It's not what you say about yourself that matters as much as what your constituencies say about you. This is third-party endorsement in its truest sense—and it's what PR professionals have been excelling at for years. We are the generals who deploy armies of message warriors to preserve, protect and enhance a company, product or individual's reputation. Our ability to analyze audiences, craft messages and make sense of complex communications channels is moving us closer to the Golden Age." (Makovsky, 2011, p.3)

By establishing advisory committees for CAE programs, teams of brand ambassadors can begin to help share and spread the messages of enrollment opportunities.

Careful consideration will be put into selecting committee members and to include influencers in the community.

CAE Program Descriptions

The following is a list and associated descriptions of each of the five programs housed in Community and Academic Enrichment.

Community Education (CED): Offers classes, workshops and clubs for the purpose of creating community partnerships and generating fun, cultural, educational opportunities and experiences for those who love to learn. While increasing participant knowledge, programs are designed to provide non-credit experiences for developing new skills, hobbies or areas of personal interest. Subjects will be taught by community experts.

Community Professional Development (CPD): Offers classes, seminars and workshops to provide short-term training opportunities for those interested in increasing marketability and gaining professional advantage. CPD is designed to provide area business owners with a credible venue for offering employee training culminating in SUU Institutional Certificates and credit. SUU students can also participate in CPD by engaging in opportunities to customize their college transcripts earning Institutional Certificates. The rationale for offering certificates to SUU students is to allow individual colleges and schools to provide a credential in response to changing needs, emerging partnerships, and innovative new ideas in experiential learning. Institutional Certificates may also support recruitment efforts and assist in advancing strategic priorities.

Community on the Go (COG): Acts much like a study abroad program for adult members of the community interested in educational travel. Trips are designed to offer

cultural and immersive educational experiences led by SUU experts, and to support student scholarships. Groups of approximately 20-30 travelers at a time explore various parts of the world in a fun, affordable, and educational setting. Activities are flexible and designed using community feedback. Community on the Go gives adult members of the community opportunities for educational travel. Trips are led by SUU experts and offer culturally immersive expeditions to groups of approximately 20-30 travelers at a time. Activities are flexible and designed to explore various parts of the world in a fun, affordable, and educational setting.

Summer Experience (SXP): Highlights Cedar City as a summer destination for travelers from other communities. Participants can tour the region's National Parks, participate in expeditions led by SUU experts, immerse themselves in Shakespeare Festival activities and on-campus educational experiences, and stay in student housing for affordable rates.

Road Creek Inn (RCI): SUU's new Capitol Reef field station and retreat destination offers students, faculty and community members opportunities to book educational vacations in Loa, Utah. Located just outside Capitol Reef National Park, the Inn is also close in proximity to Torrey, Fishlake National Forest, Canyonlands National Park and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Originally built as a ZCMI Co-op in 1912, the historic property now offers 15 guest rooms, a classroom and full kitchen providing a getaway option for educational groups, retreats and family excursions to another of Utah's world-famous national parks.

Primary Research: CAE Community Survey

Method

To gauge attitudes and interests of the community, CAE administered a community survey between September and October 2017 following the hiring of new director Melynda Thorpe. Results provide insight into demographic characteristics of local residents and adult interest in elective learning opportunities associated with SUU. The survey serves as a foundation for building SUU's community program offerings and a benchmark for measuring growth and progress.

A total 349 responses were collected by administering the survey at three regional events: SUU's Red Sky Rally community aviation event held at Cedar City Regional Airport, a Utah Symphony performance at the Heritage Center, and at the Iron County Fair at Parowan. Surveys were completed manually and entered into a Google forms digital file. A digital link to the survey was also shared and boosted in the Iron County region via Facebook. Social media accounts including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram were created at this time for CAE programs and used to support distribution of the survey.

Overall, survey data demonstrates a high level of interest in a variety of community education offerings. Of 345 responses the the statement, "Ages of family members who may be interested in participating in SUU community education classes, workshops, academics or campus: Check ALL that apply," 548 responses were given. This implies that of 345 households represented by respondents to this question, 59% said that multiple individuals would be interested in community education offerings.

At the time of the survey, CAE began gathering contacts of those interested in participating with CAE by attending, teaching or leading a community education experience. This information serves as the beginning of a database of constituent email addresses and contact information to be utilized for marketing purposes.

Ultimately, survey responses demonstrated a wide variety of types of courses desired by community members. A number of common interests and characteristics did surface fulfilling the intended purposes of providing direction for building initial program offerings and marketing strategies.

Findings: Demographics

One important commonality between survey participants is the lack of adult elective education participation. Of respondents, 34.8% said they have been involved (directly or indirectly) in a community education course, skilled certificate program, workshop or learning camp on the campus of Southern Utah University. Even though a more than 65% of survey respondents have not been involved with a community education course or workshop at SUU, all participants except five knew of people within their families who would be interested in classes.

Only 300 of the 349 taking the survey responded to gender identity. Of those, 73% answered female; 26.3% male. The largest age range of participants was 25-40 years old (34.2%) with 41-54 years old a close second (28.6%).

With education levels varying greatly, the largest percentage have had some college education with no degree at 25.1%. Of the other respondents, 24.2% reported having a bachelor's degree, 18.7% a master's degree, and 11.1% an associate's degree. Other education levels listed were doctorate degrees, high school graduate or GED, specialization certification, or licence

holder. Almost all participants were employed in some way: full-time position (49.3%), a part-time position (21.4%), or self-employed (2.4%). Retired respondents were (11.3%), with a handful of participants identifying as students, volunteers, or unemployed.

Based on collective data, the best time for community members to take elective learning courses is weekday evenings. Of actual days of availability, Saturday held the majority at 60.2%, followed in order by Thursday, Wednesday, Tuesday, Friday, then Monday. Of actual times of availability, weekday evenings topped the charts at 69.9%. Weekend afternoons and mornings followed, then weekday afternoons and mornings.

Regarding dollar payment for courses, at 61.5%, most people stated that it "depended on the class" for how much they would pay. Otherwise, $50-100 was most commonly stated.

Findings: Community Needs and Wants

Of those taking the survey, the "love to learn," "fun," and "short term, cheap cost" were listed as top reasons they were interested in community education. Also, 83.4% of respondents said they have some sort of expertise and would be interested in teaching a course.

Respondents chose Facebook (42%) as their primary source for community event information, followed by websites (18%) and newspaper (15%). Results support findings by Tucker, Scott, Thorpe & Canaan (2017) regarding Facebook as the top source in southern Utah for event information.

Findings: Courses of Interest

Those taking the survey were allowed to mark multiple answers for desired courses. The following list is a compilation of the top responses:

Table 1

Community Courses of Interest

Course	Responses	%
Outdoor Photography	194	53.59
Dutch Oven Cooking	181	51.86
Breads/Pastries	168	47.46
Gardening	162	45.76
Hiking Southern Utah	160	45.20
Drawing/Painting	157	44.35
Cake Decorating	146	41.24
Healthy Eating	145	40.96
Couples Dancing	138	38.98
Adobe Creative Suite	137	38.70
Personal Finance	134	37.85
Yoga	133	37.57
Astronomy	129	36.44
Graphic Design	119	33.62
Social Media Marketing	116	32.77
Creative Writing	114	32.20
Marketing, Advertising	110	31.07
Southern Utah Geology	108	30.51
Guitar	107	30.23
Meditation	104	29.38
Dog Training	102	28.81
Communicating Effectively	99	27.97
Tapas Small Plates	93	26.27
Singing	89	25.14
Video Editing	86	24.29
Blogging	84	23.73
Wine Tasting	75	21.19
Parenting	73	20.62
Bird Watching	71	20.06
Conflict & Anger Management	6	1.69

Note. 2017 CAE community survey respondents were asked to identify community education courses of interest. Included are the 30 most popular responses including the number of times the response appeared in results and the percentage of total response share the course received.

Measuring Public Perception

The 2017 survey conducted prior to the launch of CAE programs provides benchmark data to measure public perception as programs evolve. It is a goal of this strategic plan to repeat the CAE community survey annually, matching its original administration conditions as near initial circumstances as possible: conduct during August-September, gain approximately 300 responses, administer at CAE-sponsored community event, Iron County Fair booth, Heritage Center cultural performance event and online via Facebook. A survey mechanism for Community on the Go trip participants has been created to encourage feedback about travel experiences, also to determine traveler perception and other markers for contributing to program development and quality management.

Situation Analysis

SUU is poised to launch a series of educational programs. Designed to appeal to the variety of interests that surfaced in the 2017 CAE survey, these programs aim to assist

community members in exploring personal interests and developing new skills. CAE's purpose

is to engage members of the community in experiential learning opportunities. Also, to design

educational programs and experiences to appeal to those who love to learn and are seeking

personal improvement, social engagement, cultural enrichment and professional advantage.

Potential Difficulties

Certain obstacles may exist due to SUU's previous effort to offer community education

programs going dormant, including possible loss of trust in similar SUU offerings. There may be

some challenge in establishing benefit for attending courses with many instructional offerings

available on the Internet. Providing relevant and consistent offerings, and responding to the

needs and wants of the community will be critical in earning community trust.

The location of the CAE office may also prove to be troublesome for members of the

community to locate and access. Currently, the office is located in the basement of the

Community Outreach Center (COC) with stairs potentially difficult for seniors to access. The

building is not clearly marked with effective signage to indicate that CAE is located within,

while other building tenants are listed on external signage. As CAE anticipates several senior

program participants, these challenges raise concern. The CAE office is located in the

Community Outreach Center at 136 West University Blvd., Cedar City, on the Northeast

outermost corner of campus. Other entities residing in the COC are Larry H. Miller Utah

Summer Games and SUU Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

Core Problem or Opportunity

As it is perceived that the community is interested in community education and

enrichment offerings, the success of the programs relies on the effectiveness of CAE's marketing

efforts, and the ability to create a likeable and valued brand. In the absence of effective

marketing methods, the programs will not gain enrollments nor participation, and will fail.

Social Media Opportunity

In a recent survey of 383 Iron County residents by SUU graduate student Haven Scott,

more than 75% of residents said they get information about events going on in Cedar City from

Facebook. Six percent said they get their information from *The Iron County Today*, less than 5%

from the Cedar City/Brian Head Tourism Bureau website, less than 5% from the Cedar City

website, and less than 4% said they get information about events from *The Spectrum & Daily*

News. In today's media climate in Iron County, it is proving beneficial to have a press release

carried by a respected news organization, and then share that link through CAE, SUU News, and

other Facebook groups, such as "What's Happening in Cedar City and Iron County," which is

comprised of more than 11,000 members.

Action Planning

Goal and Objectives

Goal: represent SUU to its community by extending access to campus experts/resources,

offering adult education and enrichment opportunities, engaging as an active partner, and

running a profitable business model and earning $80,000 in revenue fiscal year 2018-2019.

Objective 1: Position SUU as an active community partner by engaging with residents at

events and in professional groups thereby gaining CAE awareness resulting in program

enrollments and return participation. Engage in six community events and maintain

membership in five community groups during fiscal year 2018-2019.

Objective 2: Operate with professionalism and provide a positive customer experience with commitment to resolving concerns and maintaining meaningful relationships. Obtain 70 percent satisfied participants as indicated in post-experience surveys for Community Education and Community on the Go. Also, receive 70 percent or more positive response to CAE fall 2018 community survey question regarding level of professionalism and staff willingness to resolve concerns.

Objective 3: By June 30, 2019, offer 30 Community Education courses (enrolling at least 500 community members) resulting in increased percentage of CAE fall community survey respondents who say they have been involved in a community education course, skilled certificate program, workshop or learning camp on the campus of Southern Utah University from 34.8% to 39.8%.

Objective 4: Establish a profitable business model for growing CAE to become 67 percent financially self-sufficient by June 30, 2021. Generate at least $80,000 revenue in fiscal year 2018-2019.

Objective 5: Grow Community on the Go program into a revenue-generating program by completing 3 international trips and 1 domestic trip by June 30, 2018 to a minimum of 20 paying travelers per trip.

Big Idea, Key Publics, Messages, Strategies & Tactics

Big Idea

Enroll adult community members in elective learning programs designed to help them explore areas of personal interest, develop new hobbies/skills, enhance quality of life, and create professional advantage and personal wisdom.

- **Big Idea Strategy:** Offer classes as well as cultural experiences designed to encourage residents to learn something new thereby enhancing quality of life. Include community events as a marketing strategy for providing one-on-one interactions, on-site registrations, and brand visibility in the community.

- **Message:** Stay academically and culturally engaged by enrolling in SUU elective learning experiences thereby enhancing quality of life, social life, and personal wisdom.

- **Visual Representation:** Hootie the Owl secondary symbol and professional photo/video library of community members engaging in fun, educational, social and enriching experiences.

- **Slogan(s):**
  - Be wise. Keep learning.
  - Learn something new.
  - Try something new.

Key Publics

The following key publics have been identified as primary target sectors for CAE messages: SUU faculty, SUU students, SUU Alumni, SUU administration, young professionals, community members interested in quality of life and cultural experiences, members of

community clubs and groups, retirees with expendable time and income, CAE program

participants, and Southern Utah business owners. As the majority of survey respondents were

female, a focus will be made to connect with females in the primary target sectors.

Messages: Brand Rhetoric

CAE Boilerplate

The Office of Community and Academic Enrichment supports Southern Utah

University's initiative to maintain meaningful connections with its local community. We provide

experiential learning opportunities and reaffirm the partnership between community and

education that resulted in the institution's very establishment in 1897. We represent the

university to its community by extending access to SUU experts, educational opportunities and

resources. Our programs focus on personal improvement and enhancing quality of life in the

areas of educational, social, cultural, and professional development.

Our five programs: Community Education, Community Professional Development,

Community on the Go, Road Creek Inn (SUU's field station near Capitol Reef National Park),

Summer Experience (a Southern Utah destination experiential learning program).

CAE Mission Statement

The Office of Community and Academic Enrichment at Southern Utah University

provides experiential education opportunities outside of the traditional university setting. We

engage with the community on behalf of SUU to provide programs for personal improvement,

social engagement, cultural enrichment and gaining professional advantage. Our programs

provide experiential learning opportunities allowing participants to explore areas of personal

interest, engage with the university, and excel by engaging in quality of life experiences.

CAE Value Statement

At the Office of Community and Academic Enrichment at Southern Utah University, we

work to gain community trust by providing rewarding elective learning and culturally enriching

experiences that result in positive feedback, return participation and further engagement with

SUU. We operate with professionalism focusing on the customer satisfaction of every

participant, and to create a culture of learning that increases the quality of life for residents in the

Southern Utah community. We value credibility.

Calendar

Historical Timeline

- Background research Aug. 16 - Sept. 15, 2017

- Community survey Aug. 30 - Sept. 30, 2017

- Staff strategic planning retreat - Sept. 5-6, 2017

- First CED community mailer - Feb. 2018

- New CAE programs campaign launch - Feb. 2018

- First session of course offerings - March 2018

- First CED course: Southern Utah Chef - March 15, 2018 at IG Winery

Fiscal Year End 2018 Calendar

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Strategic Plan 11 - COG Retreat	2- CAE Bulk Mail to community 5- University Journal	5- University Journal 15 - CED Spring Session Begins	5- University Journal 3 - Present Fest of Excellence	COG Peru 15 - CED Summer Session	15 -USG Golf Tournament & Movie Series 25-28 ELLI Conference

Fiscal Year 2018-2019 Calendar

July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1- Publish class schedule Fall	20- SUU Fall begins Fall Community Survey Cedar Nights Launch	15 - CED Fall Session Begins	CED Conference CAE community survey COG Transylvania	Launch downtown event Publish class schedule Spring COG NYC	COG The Alps Sponsor Christmas on the Air

Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June
Strategic Plan 11 - COG Retreat CAE Bulk Mail	15 - CED Spring Session Begins	15 - CED Spring Session Begins	Publish class schedule Summer	Sponsor Equality Utah South Celebration	CED Summer Session Begins

Evaluation

Annual Report

Produce annual report at fiscal year to include outcomes of the following data gathering mechanisms. Include comparative data from surveys, media relations outcomes spreadsheet, social media outcomes data, testimonials from program evaluations forms, calendar review, and branding guide updates.

Participation Survey/Data

Gather data from the Community Education program participation survey/evaluation tool regarding customer service, satisfaction, extended campus participation. Pull reports for tracking T-numbers to determine enrollments, donations, demographic data, and cross-program participation.

Budget Review

Compile a fiscal year-end evaluation of budget will determine earned revenue for comparison against campaign goals.

Community on the Go Survey

Compile data from the Community on the Go trip participant survey designed to capture feedback about travel experiences. Also, compile findings regarding other markers for contributing to program development and quality management.

Community Survey

It is a goal of this strategic plan to repeat the CAE community survey annually, matching its original administration conditions as near initial circumstances as possible: conduct during August-September, gain approximately 300 responses, administer at CAE-sponsored community event, Iron County Fair booth, Heritage Center cultural performance event and online via Facebook.