

## STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM THREE: NEW PROGRAMS Final Report

### *Process:*

During the fall semester, members of Strategic Planning Team Three (hereafter, Team 3 or the Team) met to draft the call for new program pre-proposals, develop a scoring rubric, determine a process for evaluation, and layout a timeline for the Team's work. In total, the Team received 25 proposals, with the vast majority (22 of 25) originating from the College of Arts and Sciences. Each pre-proposal was reviewed by three members of the Team, using the rubric posted to the Strategic Planning website. All pre-proposals were discussed among the Team within one, 3 hour meeting. The Team began by calibrating scores among the Team members, discussing a consistently low-scoring, medium-scoring, and high-scoring pre-proposal, respectively. The Team discussed the factors that caused the pre-proposals to receive these rankings and took these norming factors into consideration when reviewing the remaining pre-proposals. During the discussion, the Team recognized two major reasons pre-proposals were highly ranked: (1) the idea showed high potential to be very marketable and thus directly impact enrollments; or (2) the idea would enhance the reputation of the institution and thus indirectly impact enrollments. After all pre-proposals had been discussed, the Team reviewed the strategic priority rankings. In total, the Team assigned the following rankings: (1) high priority (either due to marketability or reputation); (2) medium high priority; (3) medium priority; (4) medium low priority; and (5) low priority. The Team recognizes that some ideas that may be a good fit for John Carroll may not have received a high ranking in this pre-proposal review process due to its focus on marketability and reputation.

### *Results of the review:*

The Team would like to thank all those who took the time to develop pre-proposals for new programs. Given the premium on everyone's time, we acknowledge the care and labor our colleagues brought to their pre-proposals. Our discussions and the need to rank them was not easy, and we recognize that the results may not be as the proposers hoped. However, our ranking was due solely on the criteria we established at the beginning of our process, and all rankings reflect that of the entire Team's input.

All pre-proposals were given a final qualitative ranking (Table 1). The Team ranked nine pre-proposals as high priority for either market-driven or reputational reasons.

- Of these nine, three were related to some aspect of analytics. The Team felt that there was great synergy among these proposals and recommend that if analytics is a direction selected by senior leadership, that the authors work together to develop a fully fledged proposal. In doing so, the authors will be able to build on the strengths of each approach and potentially better leverage resources. In general, the Team sees analytics as a highly viable (although potentially costly) option for the university. Given the job market in the Cleveland area and beyond, the return on investment (ROI) for this area could be high and one for which employers may be willing to pay tuition. The Team, in particular, felt that finding ways to build analytics programs aimed at the graduate level involving stackable certificates culminating in a master's degree would be a strong option for investment.
- The Team identified two health-related pre-proposals as high priority (Population Health & Health Management and Medical Humanities). The Team was intrigued by the "health core" proposed in the PHHM pre-proposal but did wonder if this pre-proposal would have been better positioned as a School or Center for Health Studies with multiple degree pathways housed within it. The Medical Humanities pre-proposal ranked highly as the Team felt that it was mission-aligned and could be marketed as the "Jesuit Pre-med" option, but concerns were

raised over its title—would high school students search for this major or understand what it means?

- The Team felt that the ROI for the Intervention Specialist pre-proposal could be high. In general, the Team felt that given JCU's reputation in Education, it was necessary to invest in this growing specialization in order to remain competitive with other schools. Additionally, this program would likely be easier and faster to get off the ground than others proposed.
- The Team strongly backed the pre-proposal on Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity, given its attractiveness to prospective students and their parents, as well as the documented positive impacts this practice has on retention and persistence, particularly for under-represented minorities. JCU already has a good, endowment-funded summer research fellowship program, but current donor constraints limit the number of Colleran-Weaver SURF positions by discipline. Investment in this area would provide greater program flexibility, the ability to support more students, and the opportunity to further strengthen the program's co-curricular aspects. Given other emphases of the Strategic Planning process, this program supports multiple goals (marketability, institutional reputation, and student success).
- The Team also rated two pre-proposals as high priority due to their mission alignment, potential to positively influence institutional reputation, and their ability to attract donor funding: The Center for Ethics and Justice and the programs in Interreligious Engagement. The potential for JCU to be leaders in these areas were seen as strong aspects of these pre-proposals.

Of the remaining pre-proposals, various factors led to them not being ranked as high priority. Frequently cited concerns or reasons included: (1) requested information lacking; (2) unrealistic budget projections; (3) perceived lack of market appeal; (4) too great an emphasis on simply repackaging current offerings; (5) lack of alignment between prospective/current students and proposed area; (6) over-reliance on individual faculty or adjunct faculty.

**Table 1.** Rankings of all submitted pre-proposals. Within a ranking, pre-proposals are listed in alphabetical order.

<b>Pre-proposal</b>	<b>Priority Rating</b>	<b>Pre-proposal Origin</b>
Analytics-related pre-proposals	High: Marketability	
Analytical Economics & Finance		Boler
Applied Data Science		CAS (STEM)
Interdisciplinary Applied Analytics		CAS (STEM & HASS)
Intervention Specialist	High: Marketability	CAS Education
Population Health and Health Mgt	High: Marketability	CAS (HASS)
Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, & Creative Activity	High: Marketability & Reputation	CAS Dean's Office
Center for Ethics & Justice	High: Reputation & Mission Fit	CAS (HASS)
Interreligious Engagement	High: Reputation & Mission Fit	CAS (HASS)
Medical Humanities	High: Mission Fit & Potential Marketability	CAS (HASS)
ABET Engineering	Medium High	CAS (STEM)
Applied Behavior Analysis	Medium High	CAS (STEM)
Thriving Church Initiative	Medium High	CAS (HASS)
Exercise Physiology	Medium	CAS (STEM)
Islamic Spirituality	Medium	CAS (HASS)
School of Healthcare Leadership	Medium	President's Office
Health, Ethics, & Public Policy	Medium Low	CAS (HASS)
Sports Administration	Medium Low	CAS (STEM)
Arts Management	Low	CAS (HASS)
Emerging Media & Design Minor	Low	CAS (HASS & STEM)
Engineering Technology	Low	CAS Education
Global Studies	Low	CAS (HASS)
Health & Research Administration	Low	CAS (HASS) & Spons. Res.
Incoming Student Civ. Discourse Training & Freedom of Expr. Initiative	Low	CAS (STEM)
Music	Low	CAS Dean's Office & Stu. Aff.
Visual Communication Design	Low	Staff

*Emerging themes from team discussion:*

- In general, the Team noted many pre-proposals focused on more limited curricular changes (e.g., many pre-proposals for minors and certificates, fewer proposals for Centers or Schools).
  - In part, the process itself, with its emphasis on marketability, may have limited submission of ideas, particularly for programs with limited offerings in the U.S., which may not have supporting data available yet (e.g., Bureau of Labor Statistics).
  - Discussion with colleagues revealed that, given the university's financial situation, some were reluctant to invest time in developing a program that may not come to fruition.
  - The university's historically incremental approach to new program development may have been an impediment to ideation.
  - A different process may have been more fruitful. For example, we discussed starting with a working group composed of faculty and staff from around the university whose role was to serve as an Innovation Advisory Committee. This Committee, working with a facilitator from an outside group like Eduvantis, could have helped us leverage outside expertise with our working knowledge of current strengths at the university.
  - Many in-demand programs not currently at John Carroll come with high faculty salaries, limiting program ideation in these areas.
  - The compressed timeline did not enable community members time to reflect and reach out to others on campus regarding their ideas.
- In general, the Team did not identify many programs that would be major revenue generators at the undergraduate level, although there were a number of proposed graduate-level programs (even some receiving lower priority rankings) that could position John Carroll more strategically. Overall, the Team felt that the university needs to focus more on differentiating opportunities for John Carroll, asking questions such as: How can our new offerings make us distinct? Are these offerings of interest to prospective students? Is the name we are giving to programs one that is understandable outside to the university? Will these programs be easily identified through web-based searches?
- The Team raised concerns that there were not enough healthcare-related options aimed at the undergraduate level (e.g., nursing). The Team felt that there is an opportunity for the university to develop a School of Health Studies, if the right programs can be identified and developed. The Team recommends working with Eduvantis on this potential direction.
- Analytics was a major theme and one that could cross colleges. However, the Team feels that someone needs to be identified to collaboratively lead this conversation and strategic initiative. Opportunities exist to leverage the Kramer School of Accountancy and Information Sciences, for example. However, the Team advocated for a cross-college approach to this area of focus to best leverage the university's investment. Furthermore, a realistic assessment of faculty, equipment, and computing needs to support these endeavors must be a central part of this planning process. The Team felt that all the analytics pre-proposals underestimated the level of investment needed to make these initiatives successful.
- Continuing Education is an area that needs to be addressed on campus. Currently, we do not have policy, procedures, or staffing to support these initiatives. However, this area has the potential to attract new revenue streams and could help support enrollment in graduate programs, if this strategic direction was identified upfront.
- Regardless of the direction the university chooses to go with new programs, they will not be successful without sufficient resources. These needs may include faculty, staff, equipment, library resources, computing resources, maker-spaces, etc. Furthermore, and very importantly, the university must invest in effective marketing and advertising strategies to raise awareness of these new programs to drive enrollment. These strategies must include leveraging our website

presence more strongly, investing in digital marketing, and frequently and effectively marketing faculty and student success stories. All of these initiatives will demand strong ties between marketing, enrollment, and academics to be successful. Although ties between marketing and enrollment, as well as enrollment and academics, have strengthened recently, the links between marketing and academics remain weak. Furthermore, to make this strategy the most successful, all three must work in close collaboration to market who we are and where we are going as a community to prospective undergraduate and graduate students.

- John Carroll University must invest in online opportunities. This goal will be a major shift for the campus community but will be necessary, particularly at the graduate level. These initiatives will require supports that do not currently exist on campus, including human capital (e.g., instructional designers) and equipment needs (e.g., IT resources).
- The Team agreed with Eduvantis' report that graduate education is a space with opportunity for our community. Where possible, the university should leverage opportunities for 5<sup>th</sup> year options, online options, and stackable certificates.
- The Team recommends developing (as part of CAP's processes) a means by which to rigorously assess program viability after new programs have been in place for 3-5 years. For these assessments to be meaningful, programs will need better access to data. One concern that was raised by the Team was that the university pulls data from multiple sources and that sometimes these data sources can conflict in their trends. The Team recognizes the work of the university in this area but also sees further room for improvement.

*Consonant or related themes from Teams 2 and 3:*

- Many APEs addressed new ways in which their programs could support graduate education via degree pathways and certificates, and often these ideas were proposed as online offerings. Not all of these programs were proposed in the pre-proposal process, so it is unknown how far along departments are in the ideation process for these potential new programs. Based on discussions within Team 3, some of these potential programs were not proposed due to the compressed timeline of the call. As a result, there likely are more good ideas for JCU to pursue. Finding a way to identify and implement these ideas will be important for diversifying our graduate offerings.
- Many new programs proposed were interdisciplinary in nature. However, one of Team 2's findings was the recurrent struggles interdisciplinary programs have on JCU's campus to gain traction. In part, these hurdles are structural, in that interdisciplinary programs have no "home" and are dependent on the cooperation of multiple departments regarding scheduling, hiring, and program promotion. As a result, some interdisciplinary programs have suffered following key faculty retirements and can come to rely heavily on part-time faculty. Furthermore, interdisciplinary programs lack visibility on campus, as well as resources. In particular, programs that span colleges (like some proposed in this call) have great difficulty launching. As an institution, we must find better ways to support interdisciplinary programs, via resources, marketing, data streams, and structural/institutional supports.
- Many APEs identified ways in which multiple programs could intersect with analytics. This theme is consonant with some of the strongest proposals we reviewed. One of the major hurdles of getting a larger data analytics program off the ground, however, is resources. Faculty salaries at JCU are not competitive for those with this expertise, and the university would likely need at least 2-3 cluster hires in this area to develop a robust, cross-college program. Further, resources will be needed for the equipment, facilities, and software to support the program, as well as marketing and advertising to bring in students.

- A concern raised in many APEs was a need for fundraising support for academic programs. This concern also was raised by members of Team 3 during our discussions--many of the most promising ideas will require resources, and in the university's current fiscal situation, these resources likely will need to come from outside sources.
- Multiple APEs addressed the potential for continuing education, which is consonant with Team 3 discussions. As described above, there is a lot of groundwork that needs to be laid to make continuing education a reality at JCU.

*Recommendations for the Committee on Academic Policies:*

The Team recognizes and embraces the faculty's ownership of the university's curriculum. At the same time, the Team identified ways in which the new program review process could be improved by what the Team learned through this review process. Many institutions have a pre-proposal process similar to what was used in this strategic planning process. Although it varies by university, new ideas may first be submitted to the Dean or Provost's Office prior to moving to a curriculum or academic committee; at other institutions, a pre-proposal goes directly to a curriculum or academic committee. Regardless of the process, the goal of the pre-proposal process is to identify strategic opportunities for the university prior to a major investment of time and energy by the curriculum committee in reviewing and vetting a full proposal. This pre-proposal step also can shorten the time needed to review ideas and give feedback to proposers. The Team feels that one impediment to new program development is the onerous process for program review, with insufficient vetting for support by other parts of the university. As a result, the Team respectfully submits the following recommendations to CAP:

- Incorporation of a pre-proposal step: The Team felt the pre-proposal review process was an efficient means by which to gather and evaluate a number of ideas simultaneously before getting bogged down into necessary details. This pre-proposal step might even have two stages. The first could be focused solely on the idea (to foster creativity). Then, if the committee felt the idea had merit, a second step could add in the requests for marketability and career outcomes data.
- Incorporation of a rubric for program proposal evaluation: A rubric should be developed for the committee, to ensure a more equivalent review process among submissions. Likewise, rather than requesting letters of support from various campus partners (e.g., Budget, Enrollment, etc.), rubrics should be developed for each entity for program evaluation. The Team believes more meaningful information could be revealed via this rubric-based process. If a rubric is developed, the Team would recommend the following:
  - Emphasizing qualitative rather than quantitative scores. Although numerical scores were initially assigned to pre-proposals in this review process, the Team found the quantitative scores, at best, an initial starting point for discussion but found the qualitative scores more helpful in the end as pre-proposals were ranked.
  - Including comment boxes for each rubric subsection to support the scores given for each area.
  - Including an option for "not addressed". In general, many pre-proposals omitted required information, making their assessment and ranking challenging.
  - Providing an opportunity to assess mission-alignment and vision-alignment separately. Although the Team did not take this tack in the beginning, in the end, we found it was most helpful when rating and ranking the pre-proposals.
- Reviewing multiple program proposals simultaneously: One major strength of this review process was reviewing multiple ideas in conjunction, as it allowed the Team to identify themes and strategic directions. The current CAP process reviews proposals as they arrive each year, making it more difficult to make strategic investments in new programs.

- Incorporating a rigorous assessment process to determine program viability: Currently, the university has mechanisms for starting programs but no means by which to assess program viability once launched. CAP should consider developing policies related to program assessment once new programs have been in place for a period of 3-5 years to determine whether the program should be continued.

Respectfully submitted by members of Strategic Planning Team Three  
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