Committee Members
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Charge: To actively consult with the Provost’s Office and the Office of Continuing Professional Education to support, evaluate and refine programs in the areas of adult learning and executive education, including program development, admission policies, awareness programs, online resources, program evaluation, and degree completion initiatives.


Report: The committee met during the fall 2017 semester and determined that one of its most important and immediate tasks should be to determine the relevance of its charge to the university’s strategic plan, which has a number of goals and objectives that relate to adult learning and executive education. This report notes two aspects of the university’s strategic plan that should be a focus of the committee’s work in future years.

Most notably, goal 5 of the strategic plan stresses the university’s ambition to become the “region’s go-to destination for executive, professional, and continuing education” (p. 10). Further, metric 4 under goal 5 provides a target for the university to increase its annual executive and professional education revenues from their current level of $7 million to $50 million (p. 11). The central organizational unit for achieving this goal is the Executive and Professional Education (EPE) program (https://execed.gmu.edu/), formerly known as Mason Learning Solutions. Last year’s report from this committee provided an overview of Mason Learning Solutions’ operations.

As a follow-up to last year’s report, the committee learned that the university is currently searching for a new executive director for EPE. The search committee for this position has representatives from across the university and is being led by the dean of the School of Business. The search process was begun during the spring 2018 semester, and it is expected that the search will extend into the summer. (The committee thanks Michelle Marks, Vice President of Academic Innovation and New Ventures, for speaking with the committee and providing an update on this search.) It is recommended that the members of the Adult Learning and Executive Education Committee meet with the new executive director of EPE during the next academic year to learn about the director’s plans for expanding EPE and confer with the director about how this committee might advise and assist in this effort. In consultation with EPE and the Provost’s Office, the committee may also consider whether and how it might go about collecting more systematic information on other executive education efforts that university departments are undertaking on their own without the involvement of EPE. The committee has learned informally
of some such programs as documented in last year’s report, but a more systematic inventory of these efforts may be valuable in tracking and managing the university’s progress towards its strategic goal in this area.

Finally, the committee notes that goal 6 of the university’s strategic plan discusses the expansion of community classes (and increased faculty participation in such) as part of the university’s goal of contributing to community building and engagement. Though not mentioned explicitly in the strategic plan, the expansion of classes for adult learning would seem consistent with this objective. Last year, the committee reported in detail on the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI), which offers non-credit/non-degree courses through Mason for adult learners, targeted to northern Virginia retirees. The committee is also aware that the university makes classroom space available in Arlington for adult learning through its affiliation with the Encore Learning program (https://encorelearning.net/aboutus/), a non-profit organization that organizes non-credit courses for older adult learners (over age 50) in the local area. The committee noted last year that other college-level offerings for adult learners appeared largely ad hoc and infrequent, based on an informal assessment undertaken by the committee. Given the university’s goal of expanding community classes as a form of community engagement, the committee should consult with the Provost’s Office in the coming academic year on whether there is interest in collecting more comprehensive information on current adult education efforts in the university and how this committee may assist in any future deliberation or planning in regards to expanding these efforts.

Submitted on behalf of the committee by Christopher Koper (Chair)