



Center *for*
Informed
LEARNING

Strategic RoadMap
BUSINESS
Plan

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Purpose/Scope

The Business Plan detailed below follows the overarching “Strategic Roadmap for Southern University’s Centers of Strength Initiative” and nests within it. It details the business case for the Center for Informed Learning. The Center, like the other four Centers at Southern, will utilize a common design that will link academics (workforce development), research (innovation and entrepreneurship), and service (community and economic development). From an academic standpoint, the Center’s primary function will be the development of interdisciplinary programs across colleges – degrees, certifications, and other forms of training that leverage Southern’s infrastructure to meet emerging needs. Further, the Center will be a key enabler in increasing Southern’s strength in faculty research, professional development, K-12 student engagement, innovation in education, celebration of faculty authors, workshops, and a means of bringing national resources to Southern’s faculty. It is important to note that the Center, while operating within an academic and non-profit construct, has the potential for regional economic benefit. Analyses of key elements of this design and the subsequent economic impact form the heart of this plan.

This document reflects a bounded analysis of three key topics pertinent to the launch of Southern University’s Center for Informed Learning. First, it provides a “Coursework Assessment” that evaluates the current offerings of the Center in light of the economic context of Louisiana. Second, it conducts a competitive analysis to consider the alternatives that students may consider when making a decision regarding attending Southern and pursuing a degree within the Center. Finally, a high level financial projection is included to ascertain the economic benefit derived from the Center when its outcomes achieve their projected result.

While traditional business plans are much larger and provide additional insights, the topics covered represent the priority topics Southern requires at this current point in time. As the Center moves forward, additional analysis and evaluation will be required to maximize the benefits to the state of Louisiana.

Coursework Assessment

This Business Plan commences with a Coursework Assessment to impartially gauge the applicability of the programs of study offered within the Center for Informed Learning. Knowing what strengths, gaps, and challenges face the Center is crucial to charting an effective way forward. To conduct this Coursework Assessment, a review of the Center’s majors was performed in light of the anticipated 4 & 5 Star Jobs which align to those majors, as described below:

Step #1: Center’s Majors mapped to Baton Rouge area 4 & 5 Star Jobs - The Louisiana Workforce Commission’s “4 & 5 Star Jobs” present an impartial, official view of forecasted job opportunities (“Long Term Projections for All Occupations to 2024”) for the broader state as well as specific regions within the state. This data set was filtered for as follows:

- 4 & 5 Star jobs (removal of all lower ranked jobs)
- 4 & 5 Star jobs which hire from candidates with the Center’s degree offerings. To ascertain appropriate majors, US Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook’s “How to Become One” educational recommendations¹ provided primary majors that align with various occupations.
- The Baton Rouge area (“Regional Labor Market Area 2”)
- Jobs whose “most significant source of education or training” equals a Bachelor’s degree or higher (removal of all jobs requiring less than a Bachelor’s degree)

The table below contains jobs which fit the criteria above and align to School of Education majors:

Stars	Occ. Code	Occupational Title	Dept of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook Identified Majors	2014 Estimate	2024 Projected	10 Year Growth	Annual New Growth	Annual Replacement	Annual Total Openings	Most Significant Source of Education or Training
5	26-05581	Education Administrators, Postsecondary	Various (Educational Leadership MA closely aligns)	720	790	70	10	20	30	Masters degree
5	21-1012	Educational, Guidance, School, & Voc. Counsel	School Counseling MA	1,470	1,640	170	20	30	50	Masters degree
4	11 19032	Education Administrators, Elem. and Sec. Scho	Educational Leadership MA	730	790	60	10	20	30	Masters degree
5	25-2021	Elementary School Teachers	Elementary Education	3,650	3,960	310	30	80	110	Bachelors degree
5	25-2022	Middle School Teachers	Relevant Bachelor's degree + teacher certification	2,330	2,540	210	20	50	70	Bachelors degree
5	25-2031	Secondary School Teachers	Relevant Bachelor's degree + teacher certification	2,800	3,040	240	20	70	90	Bachelors degree
4	13-1151	Training and Development Specialists	T&D, HR, Education, or instructional design	510	570	60	10	10	20	Bachelors degree
4	21-2011	Clergy	Various	90	110	20	0	0	0	Bachelors degree
4	25-2012	Kindergarten Teachers	Elementary Education	460	490	30	0	10	10	Bachelors degree
4	25-2052	Special Education Teachers, Kinder. & Elem.	Special Education	420	450	30	0	10	10	Bachelors degree
4	25-2054	Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	Special Education	720	780	60	10	10	20	Bachelors degree
4	27-2022	Coaches and Scouts	Various	440	470	30	0	20	20	Bachelors degree
4	27-3042	Technical Writers	Journalism, English, Communications	70	90	20	0	0	0	Bachelors degree

Step #2: Scoring System (means of scoring of majors based upon jobs) – With relevant majors mapped to specific job titles it becomes possible to assess the total number of roles available in the Baton Rouge areas for each Center for Informed Learning major using the Louisiana Workforce Commission’s forecast data. Many roles will draw from multiple majors, so to understand the scale of total jobs available for each major, the total number of jobs was replicated in each applicable major. Of note – this means that the following individual columns do not add up to the total number of jobs available for Southern’s graduates. Instead, candidates with differing majors may each be viable for a type of job. Totaling up all job opportunities then gives insight into how to evaluate majors against each other for marketplace viability. The table below provides the total jobs available for the School of Education majors:

Occupational Title	Dept of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook Identified Majors	Annual Total Openings	Elem Ed w/ Cert	EE Special Ed	Secondary Ed w/ Cert	Secondary Ed Sp. Ed	MA Clinical Counsel	MA School Counsel	MA Ed Leader
Education Administrators, Postsecondary	Various (Educational Leadership MA closely aligns)	30						30	30
Educational, Guidance, School, & Voc. Counselors	School Counseling MA	50						50	
Education Administrators, Elem. and Sec. School	Educational Leadership MA	30							30
Elementary School Teachers	Elementary Education	110	110						
Middle School Teachers	Relevant Bachelor's degree + teacher certification	70			70				
Secondary School Teachers	Relevant Bachelor's degree + teacher certification	90			90				
Training and Development Specialists	T&D, HR, Education, or instructional design	20	20	20	20	20			20
Clergy	Various	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten Teachers	Elementary Education	10	10						
Special Education Teachers, Kinder. & Elem.	Special Education	10		10					
Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	Special Education	20				20			
Coaches and Scouts	Various	20	20	20	20	20			20
Technical Writers	Journalism, English, Communications	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Possible Jobs			160	50	200	60	0	80	100

Key Summary Takeaways

- *Number of Different Job Types:* A total of 11 relevant types of 4 & 5 Star Jobs with forecasted job opportunities were identified for School of Education majors.
- *Total Number of Jobs:* Annually, 460 individual jobs aligned to Center for Informed Learning majors are projected to be available per year in the Baton Rouge area.
- *Alignment of Jobs:* 10 of 11 of the 4 & 5 Star Jobs identified as aligning to School of Education majors are “highly aligned” – meaning that the role requires a Bachelor’s degree specifically in an Education-related discipline.

Strengths

- 4&5 Star job opportunities exist in Education disciplines, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels
- Most current forecasts indicate that education roles will grow at 6% through 2024, which represents average growth compared to other professions.ⁱⁱ

Challenges/Issues

- There are zero forecasted 4&5 star job openings for MA Clinical Counseling majors (requires PhD in most cases, but even then, Louisiana Workforce Commission indicates 0 (zero) projected growth.
- Comparatively few jobs for Informed Learning graduates – for reference, Business School graduates are forecasted to have 610 jobs to choose from during the same time period (see Business Plan for Center for Social Entrepreneurship for additional details).

Opportunities

- Southern’s existing Master’s Degree offerings provide the necessary infrastructure to evaluate additional graduate degree offerings. Market surveys and customer sentiment should be weighed to determine whether additional offerings, and which ones, are merited.
- As a collaborative institution, Southern demonstrates a successful track record of partnerships with businesses, non-profit organizations, foreign institutions and other non-traditional means of expanding opportunities. Applying these relationships to maximize School of Education revenue presents a key opportunity for Southern.

Competitive Analysis

Academia, to its credit, places a strong value on collaboration. For purposes of assessing the academic “market” and options that prospective students may choose, however, it is imperative to identify and understand the available alternatives. The following analysis seeks to provide insight into who Southern’s

key alternatives or “competitors” are, the characteristics they possess, and what insights Southern can draw from this understanding. The analysis assesses the competition from multiple perspectives, since customers employ a range of factors in making decisions. Of note – competition does not equate to antagonism – competitors often collaborate together to achieve mutually beneficial results.

1) Who are Southern’s Competitors?

The first step in understanding the overall context in which Southern’s Center for Informed Learning operates is to define who the key competitors are. This analysis will attempt to answer the question from the following vantage points – competitors as defined by Southern’s customer’s recent behavior, competitors from a broader geographic perspective, competitors who have been previously identified, and HBCU competitors in the region. Given that the Center for Informed Learning’s “product” offerings are the majors offered, the analysis will examine which majors are offered by the various schools.

a) **Current Customer Insights:** Competitive markets are dynamic environments as evidenced by customer preferences changing over time. Understanding current customer decision-making, however, serves as a critical starting point in assessing the competitive landscape. Only when we know the current status can we understand the broader context and emerging trends. While Southern does not possess current customer insights in the form of student surveys or Admissions data indicating other schools that applicants are considering, securing this information for ongoing insights is highly recommended.

b) **Competitive Landscape:**
 Beyond immediate customer data, an understanding of the broader “universe” of competitors is required. While technically any training program, in any location, may represent a competitor, most colleges operate in one or more “spheres” with like institutions. For Southern University’s Center for Informed Learning, this analysis will look at four different spheres – schools within Louisiana, previously identified “peer” institutions, other regional HBCU institutions, and non-traditional competition.

i. **Louisiana Competitors:** There are 65+ degree-granting institutions in Louisiana, but this analysis excludes community colleges, for profits, and smaller/non-competitive institutions.

The table below displays the School of Education-related offerings from these institutions:

State	Identified Competitor Institution	Enrollment	Tuition	Bachelor's Degrees								Graduate Degrees					
				Elem Ed	Second. Ed	Sp Ed	Health/Human Perf.	Indus Tech	IDS	Early Child	Bilingual Ed	Clinical Coun	School Coun	Ed Lead	Teaching Curriculum	Sp Ed	
LA	Louisiana State University (LSU)	31414	\$ 10,758	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	✓
LA	Grambling State University	4863	\$ 7,371	✓	✓	✓					✓			Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
LA	Louisiana Tech University (Ruston)	12694	\$ 5,553	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
LA	McNeese State University (Lake Charles)	7626	\$ 7,474	✓	✓	✓					✓		Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
LA	Nicholls State University (Thibodaux)	6267	\$ 7,628	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LA	Northwestern State University (Natchitoches)	9819	\$ 5,180	✓	✓		✓				✓		Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
LA	Southeastern Louisiana University (Hammond)	14499	\$ 5,778	✓	✓	✓							Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
LA	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	17519	\$ 10,026	✓	✓		✓				✓		Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
LA	University of Louisiana at Monroe	9115	\$ 8,282	✓	✓						✓		Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	PhD	
LA	University of New Orleans	8037	\$ 7,150	✓	✓	✓							Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
LA	Tulane University	13581	\$ 51,010	✓	✓						✓						
LA	Centenary University (Shreveport)	630	\$ 31,156	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓		
LA	Cornerstone University (Lake Charles)	N/A	\$ 1,950														
LA	Dillard University (New Orleans)	1261	\$ 16,580														
LA	Louisiana College (Pineville)	1126	\$ 13,800	✓	✓									Multiple			
LA	Loyola University New Orleans	4330	\$ 39,492		✓								Multiple				
LA	University of Holy Cross (New Orleans)	1250	\$ 13,050	✓	✓	✓						Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
LA	Our Lady of the Lake College	3173	\$ 12,984														
LA	Xavier University of Louisiana	2359	\$ 21,212	✓	✓								Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
LA	Southern University & A&M College	5438	\$ 8,102	✓	✓	✓	✓						MA	MA	MA	MA	

Takeaways

- The “price of admission” to compete in the realm of teacher education is Elementary and Secondary Education training – nearly every institution offers these programs
- Specialization in undergraduate offerings by multiple institutions exists, including in Special Education and Early Childhood Education. Southern’s offering of Special Education programs is an important positive step to compete for these in-demand students
- The arena of graduate offerings shows significant breadth and depth of offerings by many institutions. Southern has a solid presence in this area, but may be losing out on revenue due to more extensive options at other institutions meeting market demand.

ii. HBCU Competitors: One of Southern’s distinctives is its status as an HBCU institution. In itself, however, this is not a differentiating advantage because there are over 100 HBCUs in the US. Understanding the landscape of offerings related to Informed Learning at similar HBCUs in the immediate neighboring geographic area (LA, MS, AL, TX and AR) provides insights for Southern.

The following table captures the School of Education-related offerings from these institutions:

State	Key Neighboring HBCU Competitor Insti.	Enroll.	Tuition	Bachelor’s Degrees										Graduate Degrees					
				Elem Ed	Second. Ed	Sp Ed	Health/Human Perf.	Indus Tech	IDS	Early Child	Bilingual Ed	Clinical Coun	School Coun	Ed Lead	Teaching	Curriculum	Sp Ed		
MS	Mississippi Valley State University	2210	\$ 3,114	✓	✓		✓				✓						Multiple		✓
LA	Xavier University (New Orleans)	2366	\$ 21,212	✓	✓									✓		Multiple	✓	✓	
AL	Tuskegee University	2485	\$ 19,210	✓	✓		✓												
AR	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	2545	\$ 10,740		✓		✓				✓						Multiple		
MS	Alcorn State University	2911	\$ 6,720	✓										✓			Multiple		✓
LA	Grambling State University (Grambling)	3583	\$ 7,371	✓	✓	✓				✓						✓	Multiple	✓	Multiple
AL	Alabama A&M University	4496	\$ 17,738	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	Multiple			✓
AL	Miles College	4638	\$ 10,632	✓	✓														
AL	Alabama State University	4764	\$ 16,156	✓	✓		✓			✓			✓	✓		Multiple	Multiple		
TX	Texas Southern University	6696	\$ 13,740						✓	✓		✓	Multiple	✓			Multiple		
TX	Prairie View A&M University	6923	\$ 22,272	✓	✓				✓				Multiple			Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	✓
MS	Jackson State University	7475	\$ 17,494	Multiple	✓				✓							Multiple	Multiple		
FL	Florida A&M University (Tallahassee)	8128	\$ 26,403	✓					✓		✓			✓		Multiple	Multiple	✓	
LA	Southern University & A&M College (BR)	5438	\$ 8,102	✓	✓	Multiple							MA	MA	MA	MA			

Takeaways:

- Many of these institutions are offering Early Childhood Education undergraduate degrees. Southern should evaluate the impact of not offering this degree program on the 4-Star job “Kindergarten Teacher (Occupational Code 25-2012) and on whether students are choosing a college based upon the range of undergraduate education offerings (early, elementary, secondary education).
- No one key competitor for Southern stands out due to the fact that Southern’s range of education offerings are more limited than many HBCUs assessed. The exception to this is the fact that the only other institutions offering Special Education undergraduate degrees are Grambling State and Alabama A&M.
- Numerous HBCU competitors offer multiple graduate degrees (beyond Southern’s offerings) in the areas of Teaching and/or Educational Leadership – enabling students to pursue PhD studies and achieve greater specialization. This represents a competitive advantage in attracting graduate students to their institutions.

iii. Previously-Identified Peer Institutions – SUBR possesses a 2011 report identifying “Peer” institutions, based upon criteria including enrollment similarity, land grant status, HBCU status, and number of PhD programs. There is some overlap with previous portions of this competitive analysis, but the institutions are included here as presented in 2011 to provide further context and comparison.

The following table captures the School of Education-related offerings from these institutions:

State	Identified Competitor	Enroll.	Tuition	Bachelor's Degrees								Graduate Degrees					
				Elem Ed	Second. Ed	Sp Ed	Health/Human Perf.	Indus Tech	IDS	Early Child	Bilingual Ed	Clinical Coun	School Coun	Ed Lead	Teaching	Curriculum	Sp Ed
TX	Prairie View A&M	6,923	\$23,278	✓	✓		✓	✓				Multiple		Multiple	Multiple	✓	
TX	Texas Southern	6,696	\$13,740						✓					Multiple			
LA	U of Louisiana-Monroe	9,115	\$ 8,282	✓	✓							✓	✓	Multiple	PhD		
VA	Norfolk State University	6,281	\$16,920	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				Multiple		✓	
AL	Alabama A&M	4,496	\$17,738	✓	✓	Multiple	✓	✓		✓		Multiple	Multiple	✓	Multiple		
IN	Indiana State University	13,565	\$18,876	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	✓	✓				✓	✓	Multiple	✓	✓	
TX	Texas A&M – Corpus Ch	12,174	\$18,258				✓		✓				Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple	
VA	Virginia State University	5,634	\$19,002		✓								Multiple	Multiple	Multiple		
TN	Tennessee Tech	10,492	\$15,864	✓	✓	Multiple	✓	✓				✓	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple		
TX	Texas A&M - Kingsville	8,300	\$20,356						✓		✓		✓	Multiple	Multiple	✓	
LA	Southern U & A&M College	5,438	\$ 8,102	✓	✓	Multiple						MA	MA	MA	MA		

Takeaways:

- The range of undergraduate degrees offered by these competitors exceeds those of the other competitive analyses performed. Offerings in Industrial/Technology, Early Childhood and Health/Human Performance appear repeatedly in these institutions.
- Continuing a previously identified trend, the vast majority of these competitors exceed the range of offerings in graduate education studies that Southern possesses.
- Southern’s previously identified strength (compared to HBCUs) in undergraduate Special Education is matched by multiple institutions – Alabama A&M, Indiana State and Tennessee Tech all offer multiple special education baccalaureate degrees.

iv. Non-Traditional Competitors – while generally considering other traditional four-year colleges as Southern’s primary competitors, several other options are available to learners seeking training:

Online education: For traditional “brick and mortar” colleges, online options represent both an opportunity and a competitive alternative. More than 28% of higher education students in the US now take at least one online course as part of their studies. That represents a growth trajectory that has continued for 13 straight yearsⁱⁱⁱ. Online education does not have as significant a presence in bachelor-level education type degrees – instead tending to focus on master’s level programs.

Demographics: Much has been made of the impact of the Millennial generation, due to its size and different characteristics. As Millennials (defined as those born between 1981-1995) have completed their sojourn through the education system, attention turns to Generation Z students (those born since 1996) who will also have a significant impact on education. The size of this generation, projected to be even larger than the large Millennial generation^{iv}, will directly impact the market demand for educators. While the size of the generation itself is important for the demand for teachers, experts believe that Generation Z will be educated differently, as various forms of alternative education (charter/private schooling, homeschooling, etc.) decrease number of students in public education.^v

2) SWOT analysis

The following analysis focuses on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that Southern’s Center for Informed Learning faces:

<p><u>Strengths</u> <i>Special Education major, Graduate programs</i> – foundations to build upon <i>People</i> – leadership, faculty, staff Location – positioning in BR <i>History/Track Record</i> – experience, reputation & institutional knowledge <i>Relative Price</i> – inexpensive option compared to many alternatives <i>HBCU</i> – differentiating advantage</p>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u> <i>Lack of Depth & Breadth</i> – numerous other institutions offer significantly more undergrad & grad degrees, resulting in decreased revenue for Southern <i>Cost/Time Commitment</i> – significant barrier for many students <i>Organizational Inertia</i> – difficult to rapidly adjust to a dynamic market</p>
<p><u>Opportunities</u> <i>Early Childhood Ed & increased Graduate offerings</i> <i>Increased offerings/specialization Baton Rouge</i> – anticipated growth and potential for high demand <i>Partnerships</i> – Government contracting, industry, foreign schools <i>Economic Growth</i> – state-wide and national economic growth</p>	<p><u>Threats</u> <i>Lack of breadth in graduate programs</i> – competitors offer larger range of offerings, resulting in lost position <i>Specialization</i> – Southern’s “basic” degree offerings not meeting market requirements, disadvantaging grads <i>Direct Competitors</i> – LSU, other Louisiana state institutions, Grambling, Alabama A&M</p>

3) Competitive Analysis Key Takeaways

- a) Southern possesses a solid, but undifferentiated suite of undergraduate and graduate degree offerings in its School of Education.
- b) Numerous competitors offer a far larger array of graduate degree offerings, which presents both a lost opportunity and a key threat as other institutions secure customers who are drawn to the range of options/specializations available
- c) An opportunity may exist in offering Early Childhood Education bachelor’s degree, if internal costs of implementation present a positive Return on Investment.
- d) Partnership opportunities exist for Southern which present important means of leveraging the creation of a Center for Informed Learning for Southern’s advantage:
 - i. Industry: Partnering with local industry secures valuable “real-world” experience that enables teachers to make education come to life. Possible partners include the health care institutions, Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce, technology-based businesses, and petroleum industry firms the wide range of options available.

- ii. International: Southern’s existing relationships with organizations and institutions in China and Africa present strong opportunities to teacher education that would differentiate a Southern education from other institutions and enable graduates to enhance their resumes.
- e) Pay close attention to demographics, in particular changing demand for teachers based upon population. This is both a risk and an opportunity for Southern. Armed with advanced notice, if effective preparations are made, it will be better positioned than many schools to deal with changes in the economic demand signal.

Financial Projections

Projecting the financial impact of any new entity is an inexact science. However, by clearly capturing the detailed costs and carefully/conservatively projecting the anticipated financial benefit, an overall measure of the impact can be obtained.

Center Cost Structure

The following items represent the identified costs associated with operating the Center:

Staffing: \$350,000. For staffing, the Center will be very streamlined, relying upon minimal staffing focused on driving economic impact, as described below:

- Center Director – key leaders tasked with building partnerships across stakeholder groups both within and outside of Southern. Oversees engagement activities, research projects and grants and partnerships.
- Project/Engagement Manager – responsible for coordinating projects and facilitating events designed to drive economic growth through the Center’s initiatives
- Research Associates – graduate student roles, performing assigned research into new opportunities, partnerships, supporting grant writing and center initiatives
- Administrative Assistant – office management, scheduling, coordination, administrative support to Center staff and participation in events/initiatives

Offices/Facilities: \$0. The Center will leverage existing SUBR infrastructure, enabling a highly streamlined operational structure. For office facilities, the Center will be located on Southern’s main campus and utilize currently underutilized space. These offices will enable close collaboration between faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders while keeping overhead costs low.

Marketing/Advertising/Outreach/Partnerships: \$50,000. While various forms of free advertising (news releases, speaking engagements, etc.) are useful, achieving the needed return on investment involves active marketing and outreach initiatives. The forms these activities take will vary depending upon both opportunity and need, but may include sponsoring events, paying for high profile speakers/luminaries, marketing and financial participation in initiatives that raise the Center’s profile.

Additional costs: \$20,000. Office operations, travel and miscellaneous needs

Total Annual Operating Budget: **\$420,000**

Regional Economic Benefit

An estimated forecast for the economic impact of the Center for Informed Learning can be created by evaluating several key factors:

Baton Rouge's need for increased economic activity: Recent reports indicate that the Baton Rouge area has performed significantly below the US large metropolitan area average from 2010-2015^{vi}. Gross Metropolitan Product (GMP) for the Baton Rouge market ranks in the bottom 20 (out of 100) with economic growth of only 3.2% over the five year period. Further, hiring by firms 0-5 years old shrank by 12.7% during the period, indicating weakness in entrepreneurial ventures. For most other metropolitan areas in the US, these years following the economic downturn of 2007-2008 saw significantly more growth. While there are positive indications of future growth in the region (see Louisiana Economic Development forecasts), the region lags its peers nationwide.

Factoring in Impact

The Center as Key to Economic Vitality: One key for Louisiana's economic success is building upon progress in public education and addressing critical shortages amongst educators. Employers routinely site the quality of public schools as one of the factors when locating their businesses. Significant efforts have been made in recent years in Louisiana public education but more work remains. Recent evaluations, such as Education Week's rankings^{vii}, highlight the need for ongoing focus on education. Complicating matters, however, are demographic trends. While public school enrollment is projected to grow 8% in 2011-2023^{viii}, the acceleration of retiring baby boomers from education is forecasted to exacerbate the ongoing shortage of teachers in Louisiana.^{ix} Southern's educational efforts within the Center will play a key part of addressing this need.

Southern's graduates who are presently leading Louisiana's push towards educational excellence know that when subjects connect with each other, greater learning occurs. To accomplish the same end within the University, the Center will be comprised of the College of Humanities and Interdisciplinary Studies' School of Education.

University Financial Sustainability

For Southern University, creation of the Center portends direct economic benefit associated with increased student enrollment and new outside investment. Conservative forecasting based upon market demand and successful initiatives in other universities leads to the following:

- Estimated Tuition Revenue from Increased Student Enrollment/Retention: **\$250,000/year**
 - o Current data^x indicates that the School of Education student enrollment is at/near 674. Based upon the aforementioned need for more teachers, as well as expanding offerings into Early Childhood and graduate program, it is estimated that an additional 50 FTEs can be supported (\$5,000/student revenue) within five years.
- Estimated Gift Revenue from Increased Donor Development: **\$500,000/year**
 - o Advancement efforts centered on education has the ability to tap into a recognized need by donors – society's need for a strong public education. As the Baby Boomer generation retires and transitions its wealth, an estimated \$40 trillion is set to change hands within the next few decades, which makes development of donors a key source of Center revenue. Outreach for giving in support of the Center is conservatively estimated to achieve \$500,000/ year if actively pursued.
- Estimated Grant Revenue from increased proposals: **\$500,000/year**
 - o Charitable giving statistics show that educational causes are the 2nd leading category of philanthropy, representing 15% of total giving^{xi}, thereby also presenting a powerful opportunity to engage with foundations. Southern's leadership in this arena could achieve significant investment and operating revenue, but is modestly targeted at \$500,000 for planning purposes.
- Estimated Local Baton Rouge Increased Corporate Investment: **\$500,000/year**

- Businesses understand that a strong education system enhances the economic vitality of the Baton Rouge region which will bring direct benefit to existing local businesses. Active solicitation of local partnerships that involve financial investments is targeted at \$500,000 per year for planning purposes.

Return on Academic Investment

Like weather forecasting, identifying the total return on any investment is an inexact science. However, as described above, numerous benefits are derived from establishment of the Center for Informed Learning. The following table captures the previously identified costs and compares them to the identified benefits, presenting them in a “Return on Academic Investment” structure so decision-makers can readily see payoffs. It should be noted that sales tax benefits were not incorporated into this evaluation, which would only increase the return on investment calculation.

Investment			Return	
- Staffing	\$350,000		- Tuition Revenue	\$250,000
- Marketing/Ad.	\$50,000		- Donor Revenue	\$500,000
- Office/Support	\$20,000		- Grant Revenue	\$500,000
Total Investment	\$420,000		- Corporate Investment	\$500,000
			- Total Return	\$1,750,000
Total Return on Academic Investment	416.67%			

The total Return on Academic Investment (Total Return/Total Investment) is calculated to be 416%. Stated differently, for every \$1 the State of Louisiana invests in this Center, it is forecasted that over \$4 will be returned to the University from various sources. Further, this analysis does not incorporate broader economic benefits associated with the initiative.

Bibliography

- ⁱ Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook: available at: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>
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