1. Executive Summary

Continuing Studies (CS) is central to SFU’s provision of a broad range of high quality educational programming and its community outreach and engagement activities. The unit’s mission is to provide opportunities for adult learners and groups to achieve their intellectual, professional, aspirational and cultural goals through the development and delivery of lifelong learning programs and activities that link and build upon the strengths and academic capital of SFU and the resources of the various communities we serve.

Continuing Studies’ programs and activities introduce adult and non-traditional learners to a university environment, act as a public showcase for the university's teaching and research activities, and present a positive public image of SFU as an engaged and innovative university. CS activities help build new and lasting partnerships, incorporate the latest educational technologies, and are quick to respond to the changing needs of communities. The acknowledged excellence and success of many CS programs shows how they can be responsive, enriching, relevant and innovative.

The SWOT Analysis shows Continuing Studies to be in a reasonably healthy state overall. Its strengths lie in its strong reputation, the physical location of the University and the unit’s presence at all three SFU campuses, the institutional support it enjoys, the breadth and diversity of its programming and the high educational level, professionalism, values, and commitment of its staff. Its weaknesses are chiefly organisational, although compounded by outmoded systems, financial challenges, and a perceived lack of recognition of its work among the broader university culture. Despite this, Continuing Studies is well-positioned to take advantage of the many opportunities provided by changing regional demographics, social, economic and cultural changes, and increasing demands for more and broader varieties of post-secondary education. The threats it faces are related to the fortunes of the university, national and provincial economic trends, competition from nearby institutions, and the pressures to continue to provide a broad range of high quality lifelong learning programs in the most cost-effective way.

As a largely cost-recovery unit, Continuing Studies must be attentive and responsive to changes in the external and internal university contexts. Both its organisation and the programs and services it offers should reflect changes in SFU’s administrative architecture, changing student demographics, and should acknowledge and address the needs of adult and lifelong learners. Its four objectives for 2010-2013 are designed to address these:

1. Foster the university’s provision of adult and lifelong learning opportunities and enhance support for adult learners.
2. Coordinate and extend the university’s provision of online and distance education and identify, plan, develop and deploy courses and programs for delivery using online, mixed-mode, and/or new and emerging technologies.
3. Foster and extend the university’s community outreach and engagement activities locally, nationally and internationally.
4. Streamline administrative and programming systems and structures in order to maximize efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility and strengthen CS’ financial position.
2. Core Activities

Continuing Studies has a rich and diverse programming portfolio, well-known for its creativeness, strong curricular and pedagogical underpinnings and overall cost-effectiveness. It strives to develop and provide high-quality educational activities and programs of lifelong learning for the communities served by SFU including for under-privileged and under-represented groups.

The unit is led by a Dean (currently pro tem) assisted by an Associate Dean and an Assistant Dean. It has 115 full-time, part-time, continuing and temporary staff and is organised into 22 distinct program areas supported by a unit-wide administrative group:

- 7th Floor Media
- Career and Life Planning
- Centre for Online and Distance Education
- City Program
- Community Education Program
- Continuing Health Education
- Continuing Studies in Science
- Dialogue Programs
- English Language and Culture Program
- Extension Credit
- Integrated Studies
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- International Development and Faculty Engagement
- Interpretation and Translation Programs
- International Teaching Assistant Program
- Language, Culture & Heritage Programs
- Management and Professional Programs
- Office of International Development
- Research & Evaluation Unit
- Seniors Program
- SFU-NOW
- Writing and Publishing Program

For administrative purposes, these units and programs are grouped into four programmatic clusters. Although individual programs are organised differently and operate semi-autonomously, all their activities have appropriate academic oversight provided by Program Advisory Committees with representatives drawn from relevant Faculties and Departments, students, instructors and community and client groups. Working closely with faculty members and external partners drawn from the public and private sectors, government, business and community groups, each program develops a unique set of courses and other educational activities and/or services to provide university-level programming that meets community needs and enhances faculty research and teaching. Thus SFU’s academic expertise is extended into the community and community knowledge and priorities are brought into the university. Placing
such a high priority on these academic and community partnerships remains critical to CS’ ongoing success.

Such a diverse group of activities requires an administrative structure that promotes organisational efficiency yet maintains program and unit autonomy. A Management Committee consisting of the Dean, Associate Dean, Assistant Dean and the Chairs of the various programmatic clusters makes decisions about unit-wide policies or activities.

All CS programs and activities are based on the following sets of values and goals:

**Values**
- **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**: Belief in lifelong education as a key resource for enriching the quality of life, promoting social and economic development, and strengthening the future of Canada and its citizens.
- **ADVOCACY**: Responsiveness to the needs of non-traditional and part-time students and representation of their interests within the University.
- **LINKAGES**: Commitment to fostering strong relationships with academic departments and administrative units and with the community.
- **TEAMWORK**: Recognition that supportive working relationships are fundamental to achieving goals and that each person contributes to the success of the organization.

**Goals**
- **ACCESS**: To provide opportunities for lifelong learning and access to the University’s academic and instructional resources.
- **PROGRAM EXCELLENCE**: To work closely within the University and the community to advance our tradition of innovation and leadership in providing programs of the highest quality.
- **HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**: To encourage teamwork within Continuing Studies and promote personal and career growth through training and educational opportunities.
- **ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE**: To create and sustain a high performance organization that is accountable, empowers staff, and encourages service excellence.

**3. Planning Assumptions**

Throughout the planning process, we have tried to concentrate on three broad objectives:
1. The need to closely align CS plans with those of the University,
2. The need to broaden provision for and enhance services to students, and
3. The concern to continue to provide a broad range of programs and activities in the most cost-effective way.

The assumptions behind this plan were drawn from various SFU and Continuing Studies documents: Sommes-Nous Prêts? A Discussion Document for the Simon Fraser University Community, SFU’s Academic Vision, Outcomes & VPA Goals for 2013, previous University, VP (Academic) and Continuing Studies 3-year plans, the Report of the External Review Committee.

We have further assumed that the base budget funding we receive from the university will remain essentially static, except for targeted and special projects approved by the VP (Academic). All other costs will be met from student fees or other sources of program revenue.

4. Strategic Influences

4.1 Opportunities

- Economic uncertainty due to higher unemployment and lower job creation is leading adults to seek opportunities for business and professional training, second degrees, applied or professional graduate programs, and/or other programs that build upon their prior educational credentials and experience.
- Increasing demand by both for existing and prospective students for more flexible delivery methods such as online, distance and blended educational approaches.
- Growth in number of prospective students, especially among adult, aboriginal, immigrant, foreign and second language learners.
- The end of mandatory retirement could lead to more people needing educational upgrading to continue their personal and professional development.
- Increasing public awareness of social, environmental, health and human rights issues
- Increasing demands for university accountability.
- Growth in viral and social networking activities, interest in Internet, Web 2.0 and wired/wireless communication technologies (especially for educational purposes).
- Longer working hours, active lifestyle, and demands on limited spare time lead to desire for more innovative, responsive and flexible delivery educational methods and approaches.
- Growth and changes in immigration patterns, awareness of multi-cultural issues and interest in cross-cultural communication and education.
- Increased awareness of the needs and concerns of aboriginal peoples.
- Growth in suburban living and the need to provide local post-secondary educational facilities.

4.2 Threats

- Economy instability increases levels of uncertainty by all involved.
- Decrease in funding from all sources including government, non-governmental agencies, foundations and the University.
- Individuals have less disposable income.
- Increased competition between universities.
- "Face Book Generation" seeks interactivity, opportunities for two-way communication, streaming video, co-created content, and Web 2.0 standards.
- Increasing demand for e-learning for adult learners.
- Other institutions’ admissions policies, approaches to student services, flexible delivery methods and approaches to credentialing are more responsive to student needs.
• Other institutions have increased their range and amount of programming and marketing approaches.
• Potential saturation of provincial market due to creation of new regional universities and degree programs.

5. Self Assessment

5.1 Strengths
• Unique and diverse approaches to programming.
• Continuing Studies’ high reputation within the University (with faculty, staff, students and other units) and outside university (within communities and with donors, sponsors, suppliers, etc.).
• Presence and strong consultative and collaborative working relationships with other SFU units at all three campuses.
• Strong educational and professional background and expertise of the staff.
• Staff are very committed and loyal to their own program areas and units.
• Staff personal and professional development encouraged.
• Program Director promotion process encourages them to remain current and active in their areas of expertise and to contribute academically and professionally.
• Staff members sit on and are active in external boards and industry and professional associations.
• Each program successfully manages a wealth of partnerships with community groups and organizations.
• Strong record of activity in international academic and institutional partnerships and development of international programs.
• Demonstrated expertise in developing, implementing and managing development projects, programs and courses in online and distance continuing education.
• Centrally produced marketing communication materials and websites build on the University’s and CS’ reputation for quality and innovation.
• Enhanced commitment to strengthening marketing and web strategy and design to Web 2.0 standards.

5.2 Weaknesses
• Availability and cost of office and classroom space and technical facilities (particularly at SFU Vancouver)
• University policies and procedures do not reflect or accommodate nature and context of university continuing education
• Staff knowledge and expertise is not universally recognised or utilised across the University
• Increasing competition for resources within the University can lead to other units replicating CS activities
• Decreasing financial support for Continuing Studies activities
• Lack of a model or coordinated institutional support for developing lifelong learning
• Inconsistent support, championing, and leadership for non-credit program issues and concerns.
• Insufficient resources for professional development, succession planning, and leadership development
• Uneven supervisory, strategic planning and management skills and approaches
• Inconsistent job descriptions and recruitment, selection, promotion and performance evaluation processes
• Comparatively low staff allegiance to CS as a unit
• Inter-program and departmental competition for limited resources
• High turnover in senior leadership and the differing perspectives of different Deans lead to ambiguities and inconsistencies in strategic direction and operational implementation.
• Organizational vision, mission and strategic direction is inconsistently understood and/or supported throughout the unit
• Continuing transition in organizational change and restructuring
• Organizational culture of diversity and autonomy of programs discourages centralization approaches to administrative systems and business processes and increases costs
• Strategic planning and management is not fully realised
• Lack of availability of comprehensive, accurate, factual, and timely information systems constrains decision-making and limits progress toward achievement of objectives
• Systems and processes are often duplicated, complex, redundant and time-consuming
• General lack of awareness of increased competitive environment or inability to view situations in ways that do not agree with pre-established ideas and/or outdated way of providing educational opportunities for adult learners
• Inconsistent quality and effectiveness of service to existing and prospective adult learners
• Inconsistent knowledge and understanding of financial planning, analysis, management and reporting approaches
• Program marketing planning and approaches are uncoordinated and do not promote efficient use of resources or create greater awareness
• Program directors feel overwhelmed with administrative duties and budget concerns to determinant of program development
• Inconsistency among Program Advisory Committee construction and charges

6. Objectives

1. Foster the university’s provision of adult and lifelong learning opportunities and enhance support for adult learners.

a) Ensure that the range of CS programs and activities are responsive to changing demographic trends and attract learners from a variety of under-represented groups.
b) Seek to develop “quick admit” and “university prep” systems for prospective adult and other “non-traditional” students.
c) Enhance awareness of and explore ways to develop SFU’s provision of experiential learning.
d) Increase international student enrolment and expand services for international students.
e) Explore how various credit certificates, programs and courses might also be offered on a non-credit basis and how certain non-credit courses and programs might be more closely integrated with credit programming.
2. **Coordinate and extend the university’s provision of online and distance education and identify, plan, develop and deploy courses and programs for delivery using online, mixed-mode, and/or new and emerging technologies.**

   a) Develop online and/or mixed mode non-credit courses and program offerings.
   b) In conjunction with other SFU units, develop a model (or models) for the development of online graduate programs at SFU.
   c) Explore opportunities for the use of mobile devices for course and program delivery.

3. **Foster and extend the university’s community outreach and engagement activities locally, nationally and internationally.**

   a) In conjunction with other SFU units and external organisations, seek to develop a "Centre for University/Community Engagement" that would connect community organizations and university resources and personnel to promote and deliver applied research, learning and knowledge exchange to address community-relevant issues.
   b) In conjunction with other SFU units and external organisations, seek to develop a strategic plan, programs and services to address the needs of immigrant and trans-national communities.
   c) Develop community-driven language and cultural bridging programs for youth in ethnic communities.
   d) Develop integrated programs that include a public health education component to promote resilient and healthy communities.

4. **Streamline administrative and programming systems and structures in order to maximize efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility and strengthen CS’ financial position.**

   a) Enhance financial and budget planning, assessment, management and measurement strategies in order to better determine performance.
   b) Develop an enhanced and integrated marketing strategy and augment our abilities to communicate with adult learners.
   c) Develop a flexible, Internet-based, student-centered, administrative information system that is responsive to our diverse and complex programming goals.
   d) Improve systems of recruitment, retention and professional development for all levels of staff.
   e) Develop, integrate and execute cross-functional strategies for programs and units to achieve the goals set out above.

7. **Three Year Growth Scenarios**

   Growth in Continuing Studies is largely predicated upon market conditions. For non-credit activities growth is determined at the program or unit level; growth in credit activity is contingent upon decisions made outside of Continuing Studies at the VP or Faculty level.

8. **Worst Case Scenario for 2010/11**
A 10% cut in base budget allocation will require us to:

- Decrease service to the University through limiting credit activities (CODE and Extension Credit)
- Reduce unit-wide administrative support
- Cut programs and staff

9. Financial Plan

10. Communication

Continuing Studies has long benefitted from an ongoing process of consultation and staff involvement. For this specific process, each program and programmatic cluster determined its own objectives and strategies and contributed to the overall SWOT analysis. These were compiled and further refined at a Management Committee retreat where the four unit-wide objectives were derived. These objectives (and the accompanying goals and activities) were then presented to and discussed at a meeting of all CS program directors and unit heads. Finally, a draft copy of this document was prepared by the CS Administrative Group and distributed to all staff for comment and suggestions.