

Designing Your Life Certificate Program

I: Abstract

California State University, Stanislaus, is requesting a development grant to help us develop a new and unique career-focused certificate program based on Stanford University's Design Your Life courses. Situated deep in the Central Valley, coupled with the highest percentage of first-generation students in the CSU, our students and community need a focused and long-lasting toolkit to help them manage the pathway from college to career and beyond.

We have chosen to model our program on Stanford University's emphasis on design thinking, an innovative team-based approach to help tame "wicked" problems, like what to do with the rest of your life. Indeed, through the Stanford Life Design Labs, students are finding that examining opportunities ahead of them using the design thinking method can relieve many post-college anxieties.

Two of our experienced and distinguished psychology professors attended the inaugural Stanford University's "Life Design Studio for University Educators" during summer 2017. They are now leading a group of faculty and staff in developing a spring 2018 pilot program.

We want to develop programs for four targeted participants: (1) juniors, seniors, and graduate students exploring career opportunities, (2) freshmen and sophomores finalizing a choice of major, (3) alumni and community members wanting to explore alternative career and life choices, and (4) high school students exploring their higher education options. In addition to a certification of completion, the continuing education units awarded will emphasize the importance of life-long learning. Robust and longitudinal metrics will be collected and evaluated to help us make continuous process improvements.

II. Student and Community Needs

With over 10,000 students, Stan State ranks 17th among the CSU campuses in terms of enrollment. Yet, we are ranked at the top in terms of first generation students at 74 percent. Over 50 percent of undergraduates self-identify as Hispanic and 60 percent are Pell-eligible. A career opportunity gap often exists for students who are underrepresented minorities and/or first-generation due to challenges they experience in gaining role salience (belief that professional roles are accessible and meaningful) for degree-appropriate careers, or due to limited career preparation.

While Stan State is located in an agriculturally-rich area, unemployment rates continue to remain high. The two largest counties we serve, Stanislaus and San Joaquin, have unemployment rates of 6.8 and 6.6 percent respectively, which is significantly higher than California's unemployment rate of 4.9 and the U.S. rate of 4.1.

Thus, there is a demonstrated need for a program of this nature. In particular, one of our focus areas is on students with a high unit count, who have yet to declare a major. The number of undeclared majors has increased by 221 students (43%) this past year (see Table 1).

Table 1: Undeclared Students

<i>Metric</i>	<i>Spring 2017</i>	<i>Spring 2018</i>	<i># Change</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Undeclared Major	510	731	221	43%
% of Total Headcount who are Undeclared	5.60%	7.73%	2.13 percentage points	38%

Life-long learning is a tenet of Stan State's mission and an important focus of University Extended Education (UEE). UEE is poised to offer these programs and will award continuing education units (CEUs) to each participant. According to an article in the *Economist*, "Lifelong learning is becoming an economic imperative," an argument is made to have stronger and more continuous connections between education and employment (Palmer 2017). Indeed, our proposed program is key to bridging the path from college to career and beyond.

Meets Needs of A New Framework for Action:

Creatively Develop New Programs – This is a creative joint effort between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. UEE has not developed a new certificate program in over five years. Several

universities are offering the DYL content in workshops or academic class; however, this is the first extended education program that we are aware of providing the design thinking concept.

Meet California’s Economic and Workforce Development Needs – Opportunities for participants to identify their career goals will be core content of the program. Once the programs for our students have been established, we plan to reach out to our workforce development partners to get their input for programs targeted to our community.

Develop Personal and Lifelong Learning Opportunities – This program embraces the concept of lifelong learning because the design thinking method can be applied at any time in one’s professional career and encourages continued personal and lifelong reflection. The CEUs awarded will remain on their transcript as a permanent record of their commitment to lifelong learning.

Meets Needs of Graduation Initiative 2025:

The program meets several GI2025 areas of focus including enrollment management, student engagement and well-being, and data-driven decision making. Our goal is for this high-impact practice (HIPs) program to have a positive impact on several measures deemed important to our graduation rates. HIPs result in considerable education benefits and contribute strongly to student success, engagement, and graduation (Kuh 2015). For example, this program may directly reduce the number of undeclared majors which is likely to lead to higher retention rates and improved graduation rates, particularly for 4-year freshmen, 6-year freshmen, underrepresented minority gap, and Pell gap rates.

The program supports retention and graduation by helping diverse students build role salience. When students understand the meaning of a college degree to their initial career/life plans, they will develop greater motivation for persistence and graduation (Noel Levitz 2015).

III: Description

We are currently developing a pilot/prototype. A taskforce was recently created, bringing together a core-planning group to develop a design thinking certificate program, ***Designing Your Tomorrow***. The prototype consists of seven, two-hour sessions beginning March 2018. Topics include learning the value of networking and how to reduce career anxiety. Participants will receive the *New York Times* bestseller, ***Designing Your Life***, a certificate, and earn 1.5 CEUs. This is a non-credit bearing certificate program. The support of this innovation grant will help make it possible to increase the reach of this development program.

IIIA - Objectives

Over the two-year grant period, we will accomplish the following:

- (1) Develop quality program curriculum for four career-focused certificate programs based on Stanford University's DYL.
- (2) Introduce the design thinking model to interested faculty and staff; implement "train the trainer" with students who have completed the programs. Estimated number participating: 25-50 faculty/staff and 25-50 students.
- (3) Roll out two programs targeted toward our current students, while also planning the launch of the programs focused on our community. The current programs will be offered 6 times per year, with an estimated 360 students.
- (4) Collect, analyze, and report on program metrics.
- (5) Reduce number of undeclared majors.

The proposed programs target different segments:

1. Freshmen/Sophomore (Designing Your Future)
2. Junior/Senior (Designing Your Tomorrow)
3. Professional/Alumni community (Designing Your Professional)
4. High School Juniors/Seniors (Designing Your College)

IIIB - Outcomes

There is strong interest among those involved to carefully measure, analyze, discuss, and present a diverse portfolio of metrics. Evaluation and improvement of the program will be based on pre- and post- survey assessments of the prototype participants. Metrics include:

- Number/percent of undeclared majors.
- Progress toward degree completion and retention (mean unit load, units completed, time to completion, enrollment in summer/winter sessions, GPA, participation in HIPs).
- Demographics (age/gender/level/underrepresented/Pell eligible/major).
- Skillsets (job search/networking confidence).
- Program Satisfaction.

The project team plans to share the results with other CSUs and universities through conference presentations and peer-reviewed journals.

IV: Implementation Plan

Table 2 outlines the activities and timeline for the development and implementation of the certificate program. Campus stakeholders will meet as needed to ensure that the programs are running smoothly and outcome measures are being collected. Updates will be presented to university committees, including our GI2025 steering committee.

Table 2: Implementation Plan

Activities	Year 1			Year 2		
	Sum18	Fall18	Spr19	Sum19	Fall19	Spr20
Debrief prototype program; review feedback; revise curriculum						
Develop/revise course curriculum						
Train facilitators						
Run <i>Designing Your Tomorrow</i>						
Run <i>Designing Your Future</i>						
Analyze/report data outcomes						
Plan programming, marketing, registration						
Submit grant report to Commission						
Develop <i>Designing Your Professional and Designing Your College</i>						

V: Sustainability

After the program has begun and with more students enrolled, financial sustainability will be insured through ongoing fees and costs covered by students and community members who enroll in the program. The fee is \$50, with opportunities for need-based students to apply for fee waivers. We are not looking at this program as a revenue generator; our goal is to break-even. We have discussed requiring this program for students who have earned a large number of units without a declared major. If approved, base funding would be considered.

Based on student and community needs, ongoing course curriculum development and facilitator training will enable us to expand program offerings. This includes exploring alternate delivery models such as online or weekends. Most importantly, campus leadership is fully committed.

VI: Administration

Julie Sedlemeyer, PI, is a seasoned career development professional with 18 years in the CSU system, and currently serves as the Director of the Career & Professional Development Center at Stan State. Her experience includes developing and overseeing programming for diversified student groups to support graduation and retention goals. As PI, Ms. Sedlemeyer will be responsible for the oversight of the program, including the analysis and reporting of student outcomes.

Dr. Bruce Hesse, Professor of Psychology, has been a faculty member for over 30 years and directs the Psychology graduate program. He is a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst and a Licensed Psychologist. His research is focused on behavior analysis and exploring different teaching methods. Dr. Hesse attended the inaugural Stanford University's Life Design Studio and will be the lead faculty member responsible for developing the program curriculum, training faculty and staff on the methods of design thinking, and teaching and facilitating the course sessions.

Dr. Harold Stanislaw, Professor of Psychology, has also been a faculty member for over 30 years and is the coordinator for the undergraduate program. He teaches a variety of courses including statistics, research design, and a "careers" course to help psychology majors prepare for their postgraduate lives. He has more than 50 peer-reviewed publications and is currently the evaluator of a \$5.8 million Department of Education STEM grant. Dr. Stanislaw also attended the inaugural Life Design Studio and will assist in coordinating the program curriculum and outcome measures.

Dr. Helene Caudill has been the Dean of UEE since July 2015. She has held other administrative positions including department chair, MBA director, and campus dean. In addition, she has been a management faculty member for over 20 years, teaching predominately non-traditional adult students. Dr. Caudill will be responsible for overseeing the marketing of the program, registration, verification of CEU units, budgeting, and program scheduling.

References

Kuh, G. (2017). *Key Features of High-Impact Practices*. Published on October 23, 2017 by Center for Engaged Learner.

Levitz, Noel. (2015). 2015 Student Retention & College Completion Practices Benchmark Report, p. 10.

Palmer, Andrew (January 12, 2017). Lifelong learning is becoming an economic imperative. Economist. Retrieved on December 18, 2017: <https://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21714169-technological-change-demands-stronger-and-more-continuous-connections-between-education>.