

Executive Summary

The Saint Louis University School of Medicine (hereinafter “SLU SOM”) was established in 1836 to educate future professionals to practice and advance knowledge in medicine and the sciences relevant to medicine. Today, SLU SOM offers students and researchers the core facilities and services necessary to generate sufficient data for their projects and to strengthen their applications for grant funding.

Although these types of services are necessary to further research and attract individuals to SLU SOM, there are challenges in operating these facilities that not only affect SLU SOM but other research-focused universities nation-wide. Cost-efficiency and management of core facilities is an increasing problem in the university academic setting. Funding and awareness of services, as well as internal challenges, are additional issues facing SLU SOM.

Competition comes from both the private sector and other universities. Academically, Washington University in St. Louis is SLU SOM’s major competitor. It has nationally recognized research programs, as well as the ability to consistently receive external government funding to support such programs.

The current customer base using SLU SOM research core facilities and services consists of internal users from within the Saint Louis University (hereinafter “SLU”) community and external researchers from private businesses and other universities. However, the number of current users does not generate the necessary revenue to offset the expenses required to operate these facilities.

Leveraging business knowledge and expertise at the Saint Louis University John Cook School of Business, the Research Cores Marketing Proposal Team of MBA graduate students developed an initial marketing plan to implement activities to increase the awareness and usage of SLU SOM research core services to help replace – part or all of – the subsidies required to operate such services. Based on comments on the original draft from Drs. Joel Eissenberg, Jan Ryerse, and Michael Green, as well as Mr. Michael Meyer and Ms. Barbara Nagel, this final strategic marketing plan has two main goals to be accomplished over the next five-year period:

1. Core specific – Position SLU SOM as the location of choice for researchers when such services are needed, and
2. SLU SOM specific – Increase the amount of grant funding received from federal institutions.

In order to reach these goals, SLU SOM needs to offer both marketing aid and grant funding administrative support. Short-term and long-term objectives offer measurable ways to analyze the impact of implementing different recommended and alternative marketing tactics.