Feedback to finalists – Centres for Excellence in Education (SFU) 2019

The Expert Panel's overall feedback to finalists

The panel assessed the applications against the criteria as outlined in the initial "*Call for proposals*" and selected finalists. Subsequent site visits to finalists explored the key critical notion outlined in this paper – 'likelihood of success'. The report which follows summarises the key findings garnered from applications and site visits, with a particular focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches presented across the seven site visits.

Key findings across applications and site visits

The panel assessed many excellent initiatives which were built on the quality of the existing education at applicant institutions. Many illustrated exceptionally innovative approaches to education – a number of which came with their own challenges and complexities. One particular challenge which all grappled with was the commitment to meet the needs of both graduates and society in general. For example, what attributes of graduates were employers seeking, and how could these attributes be embedded in university programmes? How best to 'bridge' this disconnection remained a challenge for many applicants.

In terms of conceptually addressing this gap and other complex issues related to excellence in education, it was clear that the proposed centres were at different points of a continuum. A number of applicants were at the beginning stage (thus premature in terms of awarding SFU funding), whilst others were at a more mature stage of their development, and had started piloting certain approaches for example the development of a community of practice within the proposed centre (staff and students collectively) combined with agreeing (even if only in broad terms) on a theory of change. Those who had already collectively determined infrastructures to address the complexity of their proposals – spanning a five year period - were in a much stronger position to be able to meet the criteria for the awarding of SFU status, to include the requirement in the Call for Proposals to lead '*innovation and quality enhancement in education, not just within the centres but also at institutional, national and international level'.*

Further to the guidance provided to SFU applicants, all proposed Centres were required to consider how they would deliver 'great impact to the overall society as well as the academic society'. As such, the panel probed, throughout the site visits, how this ambition would be realised. Particularly noteworthy across those deemed to offer the greatest likelihood of success were factors as below:

- a clear vision of what success would look like in terms of proposed Centre outcomes and impact;
- strong Centre and distributed leadership, a collegial approach, with engagement and ownership of the goals across all those involved in the centre proposal;
- horizon scanning, to include global and national benchmarking and learning from existing practice which informed the centre plan;
- a clear theory of change, to include description of the pedagogical vision;
- locating the centre in a supportive eco-system, particularly at Faculty and Institutional level.

The panel would strongly encourage all centres – irrespective of the outcome of the SFU judging process - to continue to strive for improvement within all aspects as highlighted above.

In the following, the panel will address mainly observations related to the finalists for SFU in 2019, as relayed through proposals and site visits.

Co-creation of a shared vision equals success

The panel was impressed by how the successful centres not only provided a **clearly articulated vision, purpose and goals**, but additionally provided a clear sense of purpose as to why the different work strands (and accompanying projects) were being proposed. However, a key challenge for a number of applicants was the bridging between internal (student's needs) and external drivers (employer needs).

The panel noted varying notions of **'co-creation'**. Where this worked well, students, academics, and other support staff all had an equal voice in determining firstly, the centre's goals and secondly, how they could be realised. The panel was most impressed by the effort and engagement shown by so many committed staff, students, and stakeholders willing to put in much effort to develop and enhance quality education.

Site visits also demonstrated that all centres wished to explore and take advantage of technological and digital advances, with some at the cutting edge, and others still maturing. Successful centres saw this potential as a means of greatly enhancing the quality of education and the delivery of desired learning outcomes. Technology was seen as a facilitator and accelerator, to support new and innovative practices in teaching, learning and assessment thereby bringing about constructive alignment with desired learning outcomes.

Defining, measuring and communicating success is challenging

Three areas continued to challenge applicants. These were the requirement for an evaluation and impact framework, a dissemination plan, and a clear theory of change. This has also been the case in previous rounds of selection of Centres of excellence in education.

Throughout the application process and the panel's site visits it was clear that the applicants struggled to formulate a clear framework for evaluation and assessment of impact and outcomes as an embedded entity, rather than an 'add on'. This was rather less the case with the dissemination plan, but over-reliance on methods used for the dissemination of research – *i.e.*, journal publications – typically was the norm.

Adopting a system-based approach to measure key performance indicators and their impact should assist with the development of a meaningful dissemination plan. To disseminate findings and spread best practice across the institution, the nation, and ultimately, globally, the centres need to determine the means by which they will assess the impact of their interventions on the student learner journey – both throughout higher education, and beyond, into employment.

Both evaluation and impact, and dissemination, need to focus on the new pedagogical approaches being proposed to better deliver student outcomes – *i.e.*, an emphasis on 'what works'. Grounding the 'what works' in the broader literature will ensure that centres are able to benchmark globally the extent and impact of their innovation.

In those centres which had a clear theory of change, this was borne out of on-going collective discussion, with all players having a clear sense of where their practice was at present, where they wanted to get to (the vision), and a sense of how they would get there (*i.e.*, the 'gap analysis' leading to proposed work strand activities).

Points to consider

Further to consideration of all applications and subsequent site visits, certain factors were identified as being key to 'likelihood of success.' These are listed, and expanded on, below:

(i) Leadership: coherent, distributed, and connected

The Call for Proposals of SFU states that 'The centre must have clearly defined academic leadership with relevant competence and experience, and an organizational structure with clearly articulated management responsibilities.' A number of proposed centres presented excellent leadership in terms of the centre leader (critical to the successful roll out of the project plan), accompanied by a set of capabilities. These included the capability to offer a clear vision of what the Centre aimed to achieve, great passion for delivery of the project plan, and an engaged style which empowered others to step up to the challenges. Alongside their own leadership capabilities, it was clear that an effective centre leader ensured connected leadership throughout the full range of stakeholders (external and internal), with a particular focus on work strand leaders (both staff and students). Clear accountabilities and responsibilities were the hallmark of a well thought through centre plan.

(ii) Diversity and Inclusivity

With its strong emphasis on student engagement, centres need to be mindful of the diversity of the student body, and how best to ensure an inclusive approach to ensure student success is adopted. Ensuring appropriate diverse role models – for example, female teaching staff in traditionally male dominated professions – would assist in the encouragement of a diverse student body.

(iii) Governance

Underpinned by principles of diversity and inclusivity, clear governance arrangements (including transparency) are essential to the effective roll-out of any change management process. In the case of the SFUs, thinking through appropriate representation on the various boards and advisory groups requires careful consideration. Being mindful of the SFU requirements, to include 'relate to international developments in HE', successful Centres ensured that there was an appropriate hierarchy of governance infrastructure and included global representation at the top level of governance.

(iv) Internal and external drivers: bridging the two

SFUs are to 'contribute to stronger interaction between higher education and relevant societal and professional fields.' (Diku, 2019). Most proposed centres were, by and large, clear as to what the internal drivers for change were. However, through discussion with external stakeholders ('relevant societal and professional representatives'), it became apparent that what external stakeholders deemed to be the key drivers did not always resonate with internal perceptions of key drivers for change. Panellists looked for consonance in this area: *e.g.*, in the area of professional practice, externals highlighted the skills sets they required from graduate recruits. Therefore, the challenge for the proposed SFU was to articulate how to 'bridge' the gap. 'Bridging this gap' required a clear theory of change which informed the construction of a change programme ('feasibility of the plan'). Change programmes which were deemed to be in a 'feasible' position to deliver the vision were those which adopted a 'systems approach' embedded in a clear centre plan.

(v) Literature reviews

The Call makes clear that SFUs 'must (…) relate to international developments in higher education', alongside 'offer[ing] excellent research and development-based education'. However, the number of proposed centres that had undertaken a literature search to find out what, if anything, had been done in the area where they claimed to be 'innovative' was limited. There is a wealth of existing applied research readily available to assist the different disciplines both locate their proposed

innovation, and to consider how best to move their practice forward to the next level. Additionally, there are many global communities of practice exploring, and contributing, to this literature. For example, there are a range of international networks looking at particular issues (*e.g.*, employability; reflective practice; learning portfolios; effective use of simulations) across the different disciplines.

Overall summary

Following this fourth round of SFU funding, there will be about a dozen SFU centres across Norway. The theory of change adopted by NOKUT and now Diku is to grow incrementally, learning from each of the rounds of the SFUs, so as to build capacity and capability on solid foundations. The theory of change is that of 'appreciative enquiry' – identifying what has worked well and building on successes – and 'communities of practice'. As the first eight SFUs have built their own communities of practice, it seems timely, with the awarding of the recent additional centres, to create a pan-Norway community of practice of Centre leaders. It will be interesting to see which Centre leader, or leaders, step up to this challenge!

Feedback to Finalists

COAST - Centre of Excellence in Maritime Simulator Training and Assessment

Aim and vision

The vision of COAST is to "be the world's leading provider of simulator training and assessment for maritime education", and its mission is to "promote student-centred learning by innovative simulator-based education." It is envisaged that virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality approaches will be used to simulate complex and challenging maritime environments during the training of seafarers so that they are better prepared for when they face such conditions at sea.

Structure of the Centre

The Centre will build upon existing strengths in simulator training and assessment at the University of South-Eastern Norway and its partner institutions (HVL, NTNU and UiT). The consortium is well-established (as part of the MARCOM2020 project) and has proposed a clear rationale for the establishment of the Centre, and the work that is scheduled to be undertaken. The panel felt that the Centre leadership was strong and that this was supported by the respective institutions. The assessment panel came to the conclusion that the consortium partners already work together well, and, with their complimentary knowledge and expertise, they will continue to add a significant value to students' learning experience at each of the consortium member organisations.

Strengths and weaknesses

The panel were enormously impressed by the ways in which simulation technology has been, and will continue to be, integrated with student self-reflection to aid and assist the learning process. The panel were particularly pleased with the efforts made to maximise learning opportunities through the briefing and debriefing sessions that occurred prior and subsequent to the use of the simulators themselves.

The combination of technology and reflection appeared to be truly innovative, and worthy of additional support and investment. Whilst the simulators being used at USN are clearly 'state-of-the-art', the standardisation of both equipment, simulations and curricula across the consortium partners is likely to benefit a significant number of students. The Centre leadership, teaching staff and levels of institutional support were all seen as being particularly strong and connected.

Students are clearly at the heart of the development of the Centre as co-creators of both content and ideas. The students were part of the creation of the application, and their experiences are of being listened to, and appreciate by, their teachers. The panel were impressed by the plans for student movement across the different institutions in the consortium (not just linking up simulators in different places) and see that this will add significant value.

The Centre leadership should reflect on who they considered to be their stakeholders, and how best to engage them in the work of the Centre moving forward. Beyond the manufacturers of simulators, greater efforts should be made to engage with, and understand, employers of graduates from the programmes to ensure that their needs continue to be met.

The panel felt that the weakest part of the application was the dissemination plan. This was not described well in the original application and was only briefly expanded upon during the site visit itself. The panel were concerned that the lessons learned, particularly in relation to promoting and enhancing student self-reflection, are likely to be applicable to a broad range of other disciplines in higher education. Some obvious candidates for this include other areas where simulation is common practice (e.g., the medical professions, aviation, etc.) but the panel would also have liked to have seen a more detailed description of how some of the lessons learned from this work could be transmitted to more disparate areas.

The panel recognised that students being drawn into maritime programmes are likely to be male dominated. However, the panel would like to express its desire that inclusivity, in particular gender balance, be addressed as part of the Centre plan moving forward.

In summary, the panel saw that this was a strong, and well thought-through application. The panel unanimously felt, following the site visit, that funding was warranted. The Centre should be encouraged, however, to address the points outlined above as it develops.

SHE Centre for Sustainable Healthcare Education

Aim and vision

The Centre for Sustainable Healthcare Education (SHE) proposes to develop, implement and disseminate educational strategies providing students with knowledge and skills needed to incorporate global Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) principles into medical decisions. The aim of SHE is to add the UN Sustainable Development Goals as the new dimension of the EBM model and to use the UNESCO eight key competencies framework to develop the appropriate pedagogical platform.

Structure of the centre

The centre will be based within the Medical Faculty of University of Oslo. The centre Management Board will be responsible for the centre budget, policy and strategy, while the Centre Executive Team will ensure the coordination and timely implementation of the project. All activities of SHE will be organized in eight work packages (WPs) covering development of innovative educational strategies, promoting students' and teachers' engagement, research, dissemination, communication and networking, and management of SHE.

Strength and weaknesses

The project key message is very clear and important: SHE will educate students to become change agents for the sustainable health care in both the global and local contexts, and will provide them with EBM-based decision-making competencies. The project team sees the significant role of networking and sharing experiences and sees their strength in cooperation booth with the local

community and global stakeholders, including relations with industry and NGOs, to provide the balance between the global and local needs. The centre leader seems to be strong, involved and has the clear vision of the project, moreover is also perceived as a perfect leader by the students and stakeholders. The top level management seems to already work effectively as a team.
The composition of the stakeholders group reflected well the collaborative approach to centre activities. Moreover, the stakeholders were clearly committed to support the development and implementation of this project.

The teachers' group was composed rather of WPs leaders than the frontline educators. While the project documentation includes multiple references to current trends in HP education, the translation of those trends into particular educational strategies implemented in the well-planned core and elective curriculum presented during the meeting with teachers was not yet complete. Also, the visions of WPs leaders regarding the first steps of their package's implementations require further development. The panel felt that the middle level project management forms the currently weakest element of the team, and therefore should be carefully considered.

It was clear for the panel that students are partners and co-creators of the project. Moreover, the managers and leaders of the SHE see the importance of students' key role in development and implementation of assessment and dissemination strategies. While the students are passionate and active from the start, their enthusiasm should be supplemented with the appropriate qualifications provided via training in teaching methodology.

The panel acknowledges the existing high commitment to the project from leaders, students and stakeholders. Moreover, while the design of the implementation process may seem linear, the SHE team understands the complexities of the project. Summarising, the panel felt that this was a strong, and well thought through application. Consequently, the panel believes that the proposed SFU should be funded. However, to achieve the centre success, the points outlined above should be appropriately addressed.

CELL - Centre for Experiential Legal Learning

Aim and vision

The vision of CELL is for "the education of future lawyers who are better equipped for the workforce and have a deeper, relevant and critical understanding of law and its place in society." By utilising, greater levels of experiential learning, some of the issues relating to the challenges of grade pressure, student competition, exam re-takes, and lack of contact with the Faculty's social science students will be addressed. CELL plans to (1) integrate experiential learning across the entire curriculum with a skills ladder; (2) create a digital courtroom for advocacy, negotiation and auto-feedback; and (3) scale-up clinical legal and teaching clinics.

Structure of the Centre

The Centre will be based predominately within the Law School of the University of Oslo, but will also connect with equivalent departments at the universities of Bergen and Tromsø. The site visit clarified that these latter institutions were an integral component necessary for the success of the Centre. Centre leadership appears to be strong and the willingness to embrace change extends to both staff and students.

Strengths and weaknesses

The greatest strength of the CELL Centre bid is in the way it addresses very traditional approaches to education. In addition, the Centre will enable students to be put at the heart of the developmental process of their education. Whilst the proposals may not necessarily be considered as innovative in

themselves - especially in the context of higher education elsewhere - the panel recognised the value of what was being proposed for the teaching of law at the University of Oslo and the other partner institutions. The practice of law is changing, and a clear case has been made for altering the teaching of law to shift the emphasis away from the learning of 'black letter law' and ensuring that graduates possess the skills that are more relevant to both employers and clients.

The panel recognised the strength of the Centre leader in acting as a catalyst both for and of change. In addition, the willingness to embrace novel teaching methodologies and processes appears to have permeated more widely into a larger number of junior staff. The panel felt that this boded well for the success of the Centre in bringing about real, lasting and beneficial change. The panel felt that the teaching/management team are in possession of the capabilities required to carry out their plan to change law education in Oslo and Norway.

The precise purpose of the skills ladder remains somewhat obscure to the panel, and would benefit from a clear statement of the skills that the Centre want to help students to develop.

The Centre team need to consider, and provide, a plan for the evaluation and dissemination of the findings obtained during the work of the Centre. The site visit provided some reassurance that these issues had begun to be considered, but the panel felt that these had not yet been fully explored yet. It was not clear what will be assessed, or how success factors will be used to determinate impact. The Centre will require a framework for evaluation to measure success factors and impact value to be able to further disseminate their model to other law schools or different academic disciplines.

The experience of the students, as set out in the site visit, indicated that the new teaching methods would have a positive influence on them. The panel suggested that students could become more proactive and provocative in demanding changes to the education they receive. The promotion of independent thought through co-creation of content and from students being partners in the education process will likely benefit both future generations of students and prospective employers.

The panel felt that the application from CELL is novel and innovative for Law education in Norway. Law education is, however, a long way behind other subjects in higher education in terms of its modernisation. CELL does appear to be a genuine attempt to begin the process of reformation, and the panel recommends that funding is awarded.

iEarth – Centre for Integrated Earth System Science Education

Aim and vision:

iEarth will create a student-centred, innovative learning environment for future Earth system scientists and citizens to meet complex societal challenges and opportunities. This will be done by promoting active learning and real-world problem-solving through a nationally integrated Earth system science (ESS) education with a global perspective.

In iEarth, students and instructors will join forces with public and private stakeholders to build an educational system that connects many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals with renewed Earth System Science education goals, such as tackling climate change and working to preserve the land and oceans.

Through a national consortium, iEarth will: 1) transform national Earth science curricula through a competence-oriented curriculum redesign; 2) create an effective learning environment by engaging students as partners in the educational process; 3) build a collaborative, innovative, research-based culture for teaching and learning among students and staff; 4) enhance student learning in the field

by systematically investigating the effectiveness of field-based learning activities; and 5) develop internship practices and alumni networks as natural interfaces between students and future employers.

Structure of the Centre:

iEarth, hosted by the Department of Earth Science at the University of Bergen (UiB), combines the effort of four key national institutions (forming the consortium) engaged in ESS education in Norway: the Department of Earth Science and the Geophysical Institute at UiB, the Department of Geosciences at the University of Oslo (UiO), the Department of Geosciences at The Arctic University of Norway (UiT), and the Departments of Arctic Geology and Arctic Geophysics at the University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS).

These institutions are an integral component of the consortium. Centre leadership appears to be strong, and the willingness to embrace change extends to both staff and students.

Strengths and weaknesses:

The greatest strength of the iEarth centre bid is in the way it introduces a strong element of ESS into education.

The panel recognises the strength of field-based teaching as it allows students to be fully engaged in their own learning, as a contrast to the traditional in-classroom teaching. The site visit demonstrated the Centre's willingness to learn from existing SFUs, and to identify resources useful for its purposes (e.g., MERlin).

iEarth has, since 2016, managed to engage teachers in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and has created an emergent community of practice with a focus on student learning. This was emphasised by teachers' ability to identify and work on learning thresholds that potentially can make students' learning difficult. In relation to this emergent community of practice, the panel identified a need for a shared language between, for example, teachers and students to advanced conversations not only about student learning but also about curriculum development.

In addition, iEarth could benefit from a clearer, and more concise, long-term vision for the Centre. Such a conceptualisation would benefit the Centre, especially considering the challenge to coordinate a consortium consisting of four different institutions.

During the site visit, it became clear to the panel that although students are very engaged, they were also hesitant in contributing more to the work of the Centre. For this reason the panel would like to see that the student body becomes more engaged in co-creation and thereby gains a stronger position to influence and impact the future direction of the project.

Moreover, during the site visit, it became evident how much the stakeholders supported the centre idea and wanted to participate in promoting SDG competences in future earth science graduates. They viewed the centre as a huge potential for them to participate in the shaping of a future curriculum.

In summary, the felt that iEarth was novel and innovative in its inclusion of an ESS approach. Furthermore, it was clear that iEarth already has started its journey towards achieving its goals. The panel was impressed by the work being done, and felt that iEarth, through an SFU-award status, will continue and further accelerate this development.

OAS-HIS The Oslo Academy for Studies in International History

Aim and vision

OAS-HIS aims to understand how history students learn via workplace-related activities and to teach students to think as historians in a rounded way in the workplace. The vision of the proposed SFU is to overcome the divide separating humanities education from extra-mural working life by creating an oasis of learning where students and professors cross paths with employers and alumni, and where history teachers join forces with education researchers. The main idea of the project is to provide a series of meeting places for students and employees via the Learning Lab through internships, workplace related events on campus as well as case-based course development based on problem-based learning. Other meeting places outside campus - so called hot spots include conferences and other events as well as digital meeting places. This project is envisaged as a test lab, in which ideas and practices of partnership between international history teachers and employers is proposed to be tried out in a safe environment before introducing the methods that prove successful for the rest of the history discipline as well as to similar humanities and social science disciplines.

Structure of the centre

OAS-HIS will be hosted by the University of Olso. The steering committee will consist of the consortium partners and students and will be chaired by the Dean of Education at the Faculty of Humanities. The Academy will have associated partners serving in an Advisory Council, including business, government and NGO representatives.

Strength and weaknesses

The proposed Centre's leadership is built on collegiality and high commitment. The feasibility of the plan is high even though the panel would have wished for a clearer plan for evaluation and dissemination of the project outcomes. The panel observed that the management of the project would have benefited from a stronger emphasis on coordination, planning and systems thinking.

The panel observed a highly engaged, bright and determined set of teachers and students during the site visit. Their passion in sharing innovative practices of the past is commendable, and this will be the key driver for changing the curriculum. However, for this to happen stronger ownership of the vision and goals of the project as well as the development of the common language between students, teachers and managers needs to be in place. The enhancement of teaching competences of academic staff, including innovative teaching, learning and assessment methods as well as their engagement in the scholarship of teaching and learning would be helpful in this regard.

The main strength of the proposal lies in the notion of bringing history students in close proximity to potential employers. The Centre should decide whether its main focus is to enhance student retention or improving the quality of history education to enhance employability. The panel were surprised that no reference to pertinent literature on scholarship of teaching and learning has been cited, nor good practices internationally that would have helped to develop sharper focus of the project.

The proposed Centre takes into account student voice in multiple ways engaging students from the start of writing the project proposal. The students met during the site visit were enthusiastic, engaged and committed to the goals of the project as they see the need for more practice-orientation in their study programme. However, the awareness of skills needed to be further developed for the labour market was rather low.
Employers and alumni were generally supportive and interested in being engaged in the proposed Centre's activities. They were contacted during the project development phase but, given the objectives of the proposed Centre, more consultation and engagement would have been expected

with employers and alumni in development of the SFU proposal. The employers identified the skills gap in history graduates – in particular highlighting teamwork, writing skills and statistical skills.
The workflow of the six work packages was clarified during the site visit. Bringing historians as valuable professionals into the labour market is an important aspect of contribution to innovation in education. The evaluation framework needs to be developed where assessment is clearly linked with the new learning approaches developed in the project.
The panel acknowledged the department's award-winning website disseminating student co-written research papers and also the inclusion of the media consultant in the work plan of the project. The digital dissemination channels and formats however warrant further development.
The proposed Centre has committed leadership, staff and students. Feasibility of the project depends on bridging the internal factors for change with external factors. To enhance the likelihood of success the Centre needs to sharpen its focus and find a common language between different actors that would allow for stronger ownership between different parties involved, including employers and alumni. The likelihood of success would be strongly enhanced by the development of a clear and structured dissemination plan as well as evaluation framework thoroughly grounded in the literature and good practice examples internationally.
The panel felt the commitment and enthusiasm of management, staff, students, employers and alumni in creating novel interfaces between history education and employers. The panel advises to better ground the proposed project approach and activities in engaging with stakeholders and future employers. This will also help to balance the internal and external factors when developing the dissemination and evaluation framework of the project.

IPEX - Centre for Excellence in Interprofessional Education

Aim and vision

Interprofessional education (IPE) in health professions should form foundations for interprofessional practice to ensure high quality of care and to meet the challenges of the increasing complexity of healthcare, including the ageing of the population, and a shortage in health professionals. The goal of IPEX is to develop an interprofessional trajectory over the study programmes for all students, with the collaboration of the clinical institutions as partners. The centre aims to serve as a leading actor for bringing IPE to the wider higher education community, nationally and internationally. The conceptual framework for IPE curriculum is based on situated, social, cultural and practice-oriented perspectives on learning.

Structure of the centre

IPEX is proposed to be organised at the Faculty of Health Sciences, in the Centre for Faculty Development. The structure of IPEX would include the Steering Board and the Reference Board, supported by the Study Lead Advisory Board, the Student Innovation Team and the International Advisory Board. IPEX would be organised in five work packages (WPs) with their leaders and the centre manager constituting the Centre Team. The proposed WPs include: management and leadership of IPEX, interprofessional teaching and learning, interprofessional students as change agents, evaluation framework and development, and dissemination.

Strength and weaknesses

The aims and objectives of the SFU include fixing the power imbalance in the current interprofessional practice. Also, IPEX aims to prepare students to become effective change agents in healthcare provision. While the importance of IPE has been sufficiently explained, the added value of IPEX at the national and international level remained unclear to the panel. Furthermore, the extent of curriculum change and structure of the new curriculum including the teaching and learning methods, assessment and the expected students' learning outcomes, as well as the dissemination

plan were not sufficiently clarified. Moreover, the vision of cooperation and project transferability between the sites was not sufficiently clear.

The panel was impressed with the engagement of the teachers and supporting staff attending the meeting, passionate, committed to and skilled in their current educational roles. Nonetheless, while this group has already been active in the bottom-up IPE development, they had no clear vision of the project's success measures. The teachers appear to be individuals joined by an interest and passion but not coordinated sufficiently by the project leader and not operating on the basis of any change theory. Currently, staff's expertise is based mostly on own experience and not on formal IPE training. While the proposed SFU would involve all highly committed teachers and administration, the approach to developing skills and increasing ownership of the process of those reluctant to join was not explained.

The panel could see a lot of students' passion and engagement, necessary for the SFU success. While students emphasised the need for the development of IPE, they didn't know any examples of the good IPE practice and their interactions with the external stakeholders were significantly limited. The students' IPEX working group seems not to exist or work sufficiently yet as the majority of students didn't know each other. It was unclear why the WP 3 is not student but academic led.
The panel feels that while the project stakeholders were aware of the weaknesses of the current health care systems, they didn't present a convincing vision how to overcome them via the IPEX activities. At the same time, the stakeholders' will to become actively involved in the project was clear and might form a strong element of the SFU.

The panel's impression is that while all the interviewed groups recognise the need for significant change, the directions for change, the change indicators and the methods to achieve them have not yet been identified and agreed; consequently, it was impossible to design the appropriate evaluation strategy. The panel was unsatisfied with the leaders' understandings of what should be monitored regarding the impact of the centre on learners, patients and all society at the local, national and international levels.

The panel acknowledges the multidimensional complexity of the project, including the necessary cooperation between the diverse professions with their own cultures, the need for aligning curricula and to implement interprofessional clinical education at various locations. While the submitted documentation and the meeting with the centre team clearly presented this complexity, there is no sufficient explanation how this issue could be successfully approached. There is a clear need to further develop the systemic vision of the locally applicable theory of change, develop the evaluation towards the higher level of the Kirkpatrick model and focus on coherent and detailed dissemination plans coordinated with deep understanding of the prospective centre outcomes.
In summary, the panel identified multiple factors affecting the feasibility of the project, including lack of a particular vision of the IPE curricula, lack of strategy to influence cultural change, linear vision of the change process and unsatisfactory dissemination and evaluation plans.
Highly committed teachers, students and stakeholders might form the crucially important asset of the SFU if the strong and experienced leadership could be provided to achieve the dynamic synergy of their roles. The panel wishes to encourage the consortium to work with the above-mentioned aspects, if they want to move this interesting project forward.

SIMeLEARN Centre of Excellent Simulation and eLearning

Aim and vision

SIMeLEARN will provide excellent, innovative learning methods to educate and prepare healthcare personnel for professional practice, lifelong learning and continuous quality improvement. SIMeLEARN will achieve this by focusing on the following objectives: 1. Develop and globally implement innovative simulation and e-learning methods in collaboration with students, faculty and the professional practice field. 2. Prepare students for the transition from education to professional practice by using simulation and e-learning to expose them to realistic professional and clinical challenges, thereby equipping them with lifelong learning skills. 3. Use simulation and e-learning to implement quality improvement in clinical practice, thereby enhancing the students' learning experiences.

SIMeLEARN will focus on 4 areas:

Focus Area 1 Simulation and e-learning as Learning Methods
Focus Area 2 Collaborative Learning between Students and Professionals
Focus Area 3 Quality Improvement Methodology
Focus Area 4 Sharing and Diversity – Locally and Globally.

Structure of the Centre

The consortium of SIMeLEARN consists of the Faculty of Health Sciences at University of Stavanger, Laerdal Medical and Stavanger University Hospital.

Strengths and weaknesses

The application for SIMeLEARN provides a strong rationale for how healthcare services must change to meet the future needs of the sector. The panel finds it laudable that SIMeLEARN aims to formalize a framework to foster lifelong learning. All the proposed actions in the application seem highly relevant and ambitious.

However, at the site visit, the panel did not experience a shared vision among the different stakeholders they met. It appeared fragmented, as if there were several interests competing in the bid: the teacher culture focusing on students and processes of learning, the technology that is evolving and being advocated by the firms developing them, and the management of hospital and university who want to fuel a change in practices and status. All of these interests are relevant in their own right, but the SIMeLEARN project would be stronger if these three were balanced and also included a strong student voice in a shared vision.

Furthermore, the panel did not experience a clear leadership structure at the visit. The way panel questions were answered, and by whom, did not give a clear impression of leadership nor a clear division of roles in the consortium either. The proposed Centre Leader did not take the lead in answering the panel's questions. The project would benefit from a clearer leadership structure.

Finally, the panel felt that SIMeLEARN lacked a mutual educational language in the consortium: a unified language for talking about the curriculum, how to assess student performance, how to link educators and partners to each other. This language also needs to be shared with students so that staff and students can work together to drive the changes that will be required.

The panel acknowledges that clarifying and realizing the vision for SIMeLEARN is a task of great complexity and wishes to encourage the consortium to work with the above-mentioned aspects, if they want to move the project forward.