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**Project Title:** Purdue Food Science Online Academy

**Project Overview:**

This project aims to develop a comprehensive online stacking model for Food Science education, consisting of six distinct certificate programs. Each certificate will be structured into three modules, with each module carrying credit equivalence. This flexible and progressive education model is designed to cater to a wide range of learners, from industry professionals seeking specific skills to students aiming for advanced academic qualifications.

**Objectives:**

- **Expand Access to Food Science Education:** Provide a flexible, online learning platform that accommodates the schedules of working professionals and global students.
- **Modular Learning with Credit Recognition:** Each module completed within the certificate programs will carry recognized academic credits that contribute towards higher qualifications.
- **Pathway to Advanced Degrees:** Enable students who complete four out of the six certificates and possess a Bachelor of Science degree to qualify for a professional Master of Science in Food Science.

**Program Structure:**

**Modules:** Each certificate program will consist of three modules, designed to provide in-depth knowledge and practical skills pertaining to the certificate's focus area.

**Credit Equivalence:** Each module will be designed to equate to a specific number of academic credits, facilitating seamless integration into further educational pursuits.

**Completion Pathway:** Learners who complete any four certificate programs and hold a BS degree will be eligible to enroll in the professional MS in Food Science program.

**Implementation Phases:**

**Curriculum Development:** Collaborate with industry experts and academic professionals to design curriculum that meets educational and professional standards.

**Platform Development:** Build an intuitive online platform that supports interactive learning, assessments, and student engagement.

**Pilot Testing:** Launch a pilot program for one of the certificate courses to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments.

**Full Roll-out:** Gradually introduce all six certificates, monitoring student progress and satisfaction to ensure program efficacy.

**Evaluation and Success Metrics:**

**Enrollment Numbers:** Track the number of enrollments per certificate and the completion rates.

Student Feedback: Regularly collect feedback from students regarding course content, delivery, and overall satisfaction.

Academic Performance: Analyze grades and completion rates to assess learning outcomes.

Post-Completion Success: Monitor the professional or academic advancements of graduates from the program.

### **Budget Overview:**

Detailed budget planning will be necessary to cover curriculum development, platform hosting, marketing, and administrative costs.

### **Timeline:**

The project will be phased over two years, starting with the development phase and culminating in the full roll-out of all six certificate programs.

### **Status Update:**

Developing online programs from the ground up was a significant challenge for our department, particularly when it came to creating a sustainable business model and establishing incentives for existing faculty to participate. Recognizing both the potential and the hurdles, I took a proactive approach by proposing the creation of a 100% teaching-focused, non-tenure track clinical faculty position specifically dedicated to leading and developing online programming in food science.

With support from the administration, we successfully established this new role, and Dr. Hanyu Chen was hired to serve in this capacity. Under her leadership, we launched the Purdue Food Science Online Academy, which has become a cornerstone of our department's digital education strategy.

Since then, we have introduced fully online certificate programs that offer accessible, high-quality content to professionals and students alike. We are now in the final stages of seeking approval for a fully online Master's degree in Food Science and Industry Leadership, which will further expand our reach and impact in preparing future leaders in the food sector.

This effort not only represents a strategic shift in how we deliver education but also reflects our commitment to innovation, access, and academic excellence.

### **Conclusion:**

This project represents a strategic initiative to modernize and expand educational offerings in Food Science, making advanced education more accessible and adaptable to the needs of a diverse student body. By leveraging online education technologies, this stacking model aims to nurture a skilled workforce that contributes innovatively to the food industry and academia.

### **Final Comments about FSLI:**

My experience with the Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI) has been truly transformative for my professional and personal growth as a leader. FSLI provided a structured yet deeply reflective environment where I was able to assess and expand my leadership capabilities within the broader

context of the food system. One of the most valuable aspects of the program was the opportunity to engage with my cohort colleagues—an inspiring and diverse group of professionals, each bringing unique perspectives, experiences, and strengths. The peer learning and support within this group were incredibly enriching.

Equally impactful were the site visits and interactions with faculty leaders across academia, government, and industry. Hearing their stories and leadership philosophies challenged me to think more broadly and strategically about how I lead, not only within my institution but across the food system. These sessions were eye-opening and often sparked new ways of thinking about innovation, resilience, and legacy.

In direct relation to my FSLI project—the development of the **Purdue Food Science Online Academy**—the experience reinforced the importance of staying focused, being persistent, and believing in the value of one’s vision. FSLI helped me sharpen my goals, refine my strategy, and navigate challenges with greater confidence. It instilled in me a renewed sense of purpose and determination to create something that has lasting impact. Through this initiative, I hope to leave behind a meaningful legacy—one that expands access to food science education and reflects the values of leadership, innovation, and service that FSLI promotes.