



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
**Center for Lifelong  
Engineering Education**

2613 Speedway, Stop A2800 | Austin, TX 78712 | (512) 232-5550

**PRESS RELEASE**

Monday, September 12, 2011

**MEDIA CONTACT**

Trammie Anderson, Marketing Manager  
[trammie.anderson@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:trammie.anderson@austin.utexas.edu)

**UT Engineer: UT & Stanford To Teach Energy Executives How to Make Better Decisions**

"Decision Quality" is a process that is increasingly gaining traction among leading decision- and capital-intensive corporations throughout the world.

The University of Texas at Austin's Center for Lifelong Engineering Education (CLEE) and Stanford University's Center for Professional Development (SCPD) have collaborated to bring two short courses on the principles, tools, and processes of "Decision Quality" to Texas energy (and related industries) executives December 5-9, 2011. The courses are part of Stanford's certificate program in Strategic Decision and Risk Management (SDRM), a partnership of Stanford and management consulting firm Strategic Decisions Group.

The two 2½-day courses are being offered at the Federal Reserve Building in Houston. Discounts are available for those who register by October 17. For more information, please visit: [Decision Quality](#) and [Leading Strategic Decision Making](#) For questions, please contact Patty Harris at 1.866.234.3380, [scpd-sdrm@stanford.edu](mailto:scpd-sdrm@stanford.edu) or visit [www.strategicdecisions.stanford.edu/texas](http://www.strategicdecisions.stanford.edu/texas)

Dr. Eric Bickel, Professor at UT Austin's Cockrell School of Engineering and a Stanford graduate, worked with Stanford and SDG to make these two courses from the SDRM program more accessible to executives in Houston, where he has observed a strong demand among energy companies for a proven approach to ensuring high-quality strategic decision making. "Companies will invest hundreds of thousands of dollars to obtain just a few percentage points of improvement in their operations," Bickel said. "The payoff for a process to develop better strategic decisions is astronomical, because the investment is so small compared to the potential improvement in value."

Regarding the collaboration with SCPD, Bickel notes that "This program brings together two universities of the highest caliber. I am confident that program participants will find that practical solutions, backed by exceptional research, detailed in this course to be a tremendous value."

--more--

Bickel cited recent examples of energy companies that have adopted the Decision Quality process successfully. For example, one multinational oil and gas company used the process to redefine its liquefied natural gas strategy, while another redesigned its approach portfolio management. Both projects resulted in improved strategies that created hundreds of millions of dollars in value.

"When it comes to business strategy development and strategic choices, companies too often rely on the strongest advocate; that is, project teams lobby strongly for their project, while others try to shoot holes in their case," said Bickel. "The result is as predictable as it is disappointing. In order to present a strong position, teams focus on defending a single planning case, ignore uncertainty, and don't consider alternatives. This kind of "advocacy" decision process results in a measurable loss of quality and can destroy value."

### **About the Center for Lifelong Engineering Education**

The University of Texas at Austin's Cockrell School of Engineering is one of the Top 10 distinguished engineering schools in the country. Our professional development department, the Center for Lifelong Engineering Education, provides busy engineers with immediately applicable, real-world knowledge through individual courses, master's degrees and on-site custom courses.

What Starts Here Changes The World.

Learn more at [www.UTclee.org](http://www.UTclee.org)

### **About the The Stanford Center for Professional Development**

The Stanford Center for Professional Development connects working professionals worldwide to the research and teaching of Stanford University faculty in the School of Engineering and related academic departments. Qualified individuals may study for master's of science degrees on a part-time basis, pursue graduate and professional certificates, take individual graduate and professional courses, participate in workshops, view free online seminars and more. Courses are delivered on the Stanford campus in the heart of Silicon Valley, at the work site, and online certificate courses are also available at: [www.scpd.stanford.edu](http://www.scpd.stanford.edu)

###