Strategic Plan for Advancing Research 2021-2025
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The University of Washington Department of Rehabilitation Medicine is committed to research, clinical care, and teaching programs aimed at enhancing the health, function and quality of life of the communities we serve.

Research drives innovation and is integral to our departmental mission. Therefore, we developed a comprehensive strategic plan focused on conducting the highest quality and most impactful rehabilitation research. Advancing the key focus areas of this strategic plan will enable our department not only to enhance our research program, but also serve as a potential template to strengthen our clinical and teaching programs as well.

To ensure the strategic plan reflects the perspectives of the entire department, a diverse group of faculty, staff, and trainee stakeholders from across departmental divisions were engaged throughout the strategic planning process.

Through our process of discovery, we have learned not just about our many strengths, but areas where we need to build. We envision a future with a diverse, collaborative and innovative research culture that allows us to have the greatest possible impact on the community that we serve. Our strategic plan is a roadmap to realize this vision.

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Overview of Research
Strategic Planning Process
Overview of Research Strategic Planning Process

1. Assess Current State
We reflected on the current state of the department to inform our research vision and strategies.

2. Envision Future
We imagined a compelling future state of research within our department.

3. Develop and Refine Goals, Strategies and Tactics
We created a strategic pathway to realize our vision.

4. Complete Strategic Plan
We finalized and adopted the comprehensive strategic plan.

5. Implement, Evaluate and Recalibrate
We will execute and continuously assess and adjust the strategies and tactics.

Photo courtesy of IMPACT Collaboratory and our co-researcher/s pictured here (with permission)
Assessment Methodology
Assessment Domains

To assess our current state, we created and refined questions that mapped to the following domains:

- Infrastructure
- Funding
- Visibility
- Research Priority Areas
- Collaboration and Networking
- Recruitment, Retention and Satisfaction
- Training and Mentorship

Assessment Mechanisms for Each Stakeholder Group:

- Surveys (Quantitative and Qualitative): Faculty, Staff, Trainees
- Qualitative Interviews via Telephone or Zoom: External Stakeholders
- Data Pulls, Grant Proposal Submissions - Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW): Faculty
Guiding Principles of the Strategic Plan
A major component of the strategic planning process was to identify deeply held beliefs or principles we believe should drive our thinking, actions, and interactions. These principles, developed by the Research Steering Committee, were used to help guide the development and refinement of the strategic plan goals, strategies and tactics to ensure we remain true to our values and beliefs in the years to come.

**Guiding Principles of the Strategic Plan**

**Mission**  
Aligning with our departmental mission integrates our research with our clinical and educational programs.

**Infrastructure**  
Creating robust processes and systems helps all of us do our best work.

**Quality**  
Striving for excellence in everything we do strengthens our impact on the communities we serve.

**Workplace Experience**  
Prioritizing workplace experience enables all of us to thrive.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)**  
Elevating DEI values in policies and practices unites us and enriches our organizational culture.
Our Plan
Focus Area 1: Roles and Expectations

Research personnel are committed, passionate, and dedicated to achieving excellence in their respective disciplines. We seek to achieve our fullest potential by providing additional structure and clarity. Our intent is to further develop a key attribute of high performing teams: a shared understanding of respective roles and expectations.

Overall Goal
Bolster job satisfaction and departmental success by clarifying roles and expectations for all faculty and staff engaged in research.

Strategy 1
Create clear, equitable, and flexible management processes for faculty that define prioritized roles, responsibilities, expectations, and incentives involved in research while addressing the barriers of limited time and resources.

Strategy 2
Define and strengthen flexible management processes to ensure both the professional responsibilities and the individual goals of research staff are understood and met.

Intended Outcomes
1. Well-articulated departmental priorities with respect to clinical, research and educational responsibilities
2. Clear and realistic roles & responsibilities for staff, faculty & trainees that align with available time and resources
3. Improved job satisfaction and productivity
4. Increased supervisory effectiveness
Focus Area 2: Impactful Research

Research productivity and excellence are critical to the department’s success. We will elevate, resource, and broadcast our departmental research to achieve our premier level of potential and impact.

Overall Goal
Elevate the health, functioning, and quality of life of the communities we support by conducting and disseminating the highest quality and most impactful rehabilitation research.

Strategy 1
Determine and develop multidisciplinary research focus areas based on our strengths, opportunities, and the department’s values and mission.

Strategy 2
Enhance and develop research infrastructure/resources to empower all departmental researchers to thrive.

Strategy 3
Enhance knowledge translation and clinical implementation to maximize the positive impact of our research.

Intended Outcomes
1. Amplified national and international leadership role in rehabilitation research
2. Increased impact of our research activities on the communities we serve
Focus Area 3: Collaborative and Inclusive Culture

A research culture grounded in and driven by shared values and goals is imperative. By articulating our values and implementing specific methods and tools, we will create a more collaborative and inclusive workplace in which all researchers thrive.

Overall Goal
Foster and practice a collaborative and inclusive culture that empowers all researchers to thrive.

Strategy 1
Ensure research activities within the department align with the departmental mission, vision, and shared values to promote a culture of growth, creativity, and innovation.

Strategy 2
Develop and implement a sustainable research plan which enhances communication and promotes the culture of inclusivity and cohesion.

Strategy 3
Develop and promote structures and mechanisms to foster collaboration at all stages of research, both within and beyond the department.

Intended Outcomes
1. Increased pride in departmental research endeavors and shared values
2. Heightened sense of purpose and belonging
3. Enhanced recognition and celebration of collaboration, creativity and innovation
Focus Area 4: Mentorship, Training and Professional Development

Research mentorship, training and professional development are essential to building capacity among departmental researchers. Augmenting and prioritizing resources and structures that strengthen professional development will enhance both growth and satisfaction among our departmental researchers.

Overall Goal
Build upon departmental success by cultivating the growth and development of research faculty, staff and trainees.

Strategy 1
Invest in and expand the existing mentorship program to maximize its impact on faculty, staff and trainees.

Strategy 2
Develop, promote and utilize both new and existing professional development resources.

Strategy 3
Prioritize and incentivize mentorship and training.

Intended Outcomes
1. Elevated departmental support for and valuation of research mentorship and training
2. Amplified reputation of the department as an exemplar of learning and improvement
Focus Area 5: Grant Writing Success

Grant funding is the financial engine that propels research. We will increase accessibility to grant writing resources, provide the time necessary for writing high quality grants, and expand grant proposal infrastructure to ensure the success of our junior and senior researchers.

Overall Goal
Expand departmental grant funding to foster innovation and boost impact.

Strategy 1
Develop grant writing skills of departmental staff, trainees, and faculty across all experience levels.

Strategy 2
Develop departmental resources and infrastructure to facilitate high quality research proposals.

Strategy 3
Develop innovative approaches that enable faculty to have the time needed to prepare high quality research proposals.

Intended Outcomes
1. Increased satisfaction and confidence in the grant writing and funding processes among department faculty
2. Successful recruitment and retention of quality researchers
3. Amplified departmental reputation among external stakeholders
Focus Area 6: Reputational Impact

External communications, branding, and awareness-building are essential to bolster our stature locally, nationally, and internationally. Celebrating and sharing our many research strengths will enhance recruitment, fundraising, and collaborations.

Overall Goal
Amplify the reputation of our department's research program to spark interest and engagement in our work among our peers and the public.

Strategy 1
Develop an external relations assessment to identify the research assets, accomplishments, and aspirations we want to promote, and the respective audiences we would like to target.

Strategy 2
Develop and maintain a robust communications plan that amplifies our research assets, accomplishments, and aspirations.

Strategy 3
Strengthen and incentivize the ability and culture to engage in promoting research and fundraising at a departmental and individual level.

Intended Outcomes
1. Enhanced awareness and interest in research activities among public and peers
2. Increased involvement in our research across all stakeholders (donors, subjects, faculty, community partners)
3. Elevated confidence among faculty in promoting research activities
4. Increased fundraising activities among departmental researchers
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