

Strategic Plan of the Division of Research,
Grants, and Information Systems
to Support Research and
Scholarship at ATSU 2015 - 2020

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Executive Summary

This document, “Strategic Plan to Support Research and Scholarship at ATSU 2015 – 2020”, is an update to the “Strategic Plan to Support Research and Scholarship at ATSU 2012 – 2015” from the Division of Research, Grants and Information Systems Office (RGIS) and is based on activities and successes achieved under the original plan. It supports the vision of the University to be the pre-eminent institution for health professions and is the result of discussions with faculty and pertinent committees. It continues and re-enforces the earlier plan.

The overarching aim of RGIS is to promote excellence in health care and education research and scholarship and thereby be recognized as a pre-eminent institution for health care and education research and scholarship.

The strategic priorities of RGIS remain to:

1. Develop an effective, University-wide, integrated and integral research and scholarship governance structure.
2. Build academic and scholarship capacity in the health professions (that includes all forms of scholarship).
3. Further develop and enable individual research and scholarship activity and specifically develop interdisciplinary and translational research.

This Strategic Plan includes operational and implementation recommendations for each of the strategic priorities to help describe and define the path toward success in research and scholarship. Key elements of the plan include: a committee of Senior Administrators and Researchers to oversee the integration of research within the educational and clinical practice in a University-wide manner; the Development of a “Center for Scholarship Development”; and, the identification and development of core research areas and inter-professional translational research teams.

Introduction

This update to the previous 2012 - 2015 vision and planning document for research and scholarship supports, and indeed advances the current vision, mission, and strategic directions of the Board of Trustees and A.T. Still University (ATSU) to ensure ***pre-eminence in the health professions*** and to help support the University in its production of pioneering contributions to health care knowledge, education, and practice.

It fosters a rigorous and innovative support for all forms of scholarship as well as interdisciplinary team-based research, and translation of knowledge into meaningful, effective, and evidence-based education and clinical practice. It also promotes and fosters the development of faculty and student research and scholarship to build academic capacity for a sustainable and relevant future.

In short, the updated plan strengthens the roadmap developed in the last strategic plan toward the externally validated and laudable goal of rigorous interdisciplinary health research and scholarship that is pre-requisite to evidence-based pre-eminence in health professions training and health care delivery.

Strategic Plan – Status Report

Mission, Vision, Goals, and Strategic Priorities

The fundamental principles for the Division of Research, Grants, and Information systems are expressed in the following:

Mission

The **mission** of the Division of Research, Grants, and Information Systems is to advance whole person health care and wellness through development and support of innovative and rigorous health-related research including discovery, translation, delivery, and health professional education and scholarship.

Vision

The **vision** of the Division of Research, Grants, and Information Systems is to *promote excellence in health related research and scholarship.*

Overarching Goals

This vision is supported by our pursuit of the following **goals**:

- To be a pre-eminent institution for health professions based upon sound research/scholarship, and best research-based education and clinical practice.
- To become an internationally acknowledged leader in a few key research/scholarly areas.
- To develop integrated and interdisciplinary whole person oriented health and health care research/scholarship that informs integrated and interdisciplinary evidence-based education, clinical practice, and the policies that govern and guide health care delivery and health professions training.

- To be a leader in innovative, science-based health care training, scholarship, and development that builds academic capacity in the health professions for a sustainable future.
- To develop and translate research to guide education, clinical practice, and health policy in an iterative and multidirectional manner.
- To integrate the foundation pieces of health research/scholarship in the interests of innovation for the benefit of all.

Strategic Plan

The first ***strategic priority area is to recognize the University-wide Interdisciplinary Research Committee (IRC) as the effective, University-wide, integrated and integral research and scholarship governance structure.*** Having research and scholarship integrated within the University cultures, and having a research administrative structure that is integrated, aligned with, and supported by the educational and service responsibilities and expectations of the University as a whole is important to maintaining the research infrastructure. Research and scholarship must be integral to the University. Additionally, the mission of the University must influence and drive the research/ scholarship agenda, faculty recruitment, workload distribution and expectation, and resource acquisition and allocation. Efficiencies can be gained through the emphasis on interdisciplinary and translational research and will require collaborative approaches at all levels of the University including with partner organizations to implement it effectively.

A second priority area is fundamental to progress and to sustainability of a health professions university and that is the need to build ***academic and scholarship capacity in the health professions.*** The vision of pre-eminence for ATSU and the expectation of research and scholarship can be set by the leaders of ATSU. However, the realization of the vision will only occur and be sustained through a critical mass of faculty, staff, and students who have a similar vision, and have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes, coupled with the required physical infrastructure and effective administrative governance to work toward this vision. Thus, a key component of this research and scholarship plan is the development of mentorship and training for current faculty, a recruitment and retention strategy for academically prepared and productive faculty scholars, and the potential development of graduate research programs.

Both interdisciplinary and translational research are research focus areas that are in line with contemporary understandings of health and health management. Interdisciplinary research is an expectation of major funding agencies and translational research is a priority area.

Building academic capacity is also recognized as an urgent need and, as such, is a federal funding priority area. Indeed, transforming the training of health professionals is identified as fundamental to reducing the current magnitude of the “*Health Care Quality Chasm*” and developing a ***learning health care system*** (*Institute of Medicine, 2007*).

The third and final strategic priority area includes the need for further ***development of individual research and scholarship activity and the development of interdisciplinary and translational research***. To date, there are some examples of research excellence from individuals and research teams within traditional disciplinary boundaries. It is vital to continue to support these efforts. However, with few exceptions, pockets of good research activity have not broadened across disciplinary, divisional, or campus boundaries to develop interdisciplinary team-based research. Likewise, and again with few exceptions, the strengths within basic sciences and clinical sciences have not yet been leveraged to develop strengths or capacity in translational science.

Finally, this plan lays out the foundation for a continued discussion involving all constituents of the research enterprise. Just as research itself is an evolving activity, so too is the development of a plan for research and scholarly activity. As the various priorities discussed in the current plan are implemented, they will lead to discussions which strengthen and broaden the implementation of research and scholarly activity at the University.

The following tables contain the proposed outline of the priorities and activities of the strategic plan for research and scholarly activity and are meant to detail only the most significant steps involved. The development of this outline has involved, and continues to involve, individuals from all divisions of the University and represents the best hope for increasing research and scholarly activity within ATSU. The outline is presented to stimulate discussion among the upper administration and to make evident the administrative and structural roadblocks which must be overcome in order to truly develop a culture of interprofessional research and scholarly activity at the University. Discussions around each step will inevitably lead to expansion of the activities and targets to be reached. It is hoped

that open discussion of this topic will lead to collaborative solutions which will in turn allow scholarly activity to grow at the University.

Priority 1: Recognize the University-wide Interdisciplinary Research Committee (IRC) as the Effective, University-wide, Integrated and Integral Research and Scholarship Governance Structure.

Activities	Recommended Target Outcomes 2020	Status
1. Submit the IRC to the Deans Council as the overall governing structure for research/scholarship at ATSU.	Activities reviewed and supported by Deans Council.	On-going
2. Expand Role of Still Research Institute (SRI) and Center Process in overall University Program of Research and Scholarship.	Guidelines for new center development established and implemented.	On-going
3. Allocate Sufficient Resources to Support Research Activities at the University.	University-wide financial plan for funding research in place and operating.	On-going
4. Establish Research Training and Development Committee.	Faculty development and training programs in place and successful.	On-going at SRI level.
5. Establish Research Resources Committee.	Committee producing annual report on needed research resources.	To be Completed
6. Establish Research Core Committee.	Committee determined specific research areas for University support.	To be Completed
7. Establish Research Database Committee	University-wide database containing research related activities developed and in use.	Being implemented with Digital Measures software.
8. Establish Research Training and Development Committee.	Faculty development and training programs in place and successful.	On-going at SRI level.

Priority 1: Recognize the University-wide Interdisciplinary Research Committee (IRC) as the Effective, University-wide, Integrated and Integral Research and Scholarship Governance Structure, (Contd.)

Activities	Recommended Target Outcomes 2020	Status
9. Establish Research Resources Committee.	Committee producing annual report on needed research resources.	To be Completed
10. Establish Research Core Committee.	Committee determined specific research areas for University support.	To be Completed
11. Establish Research Database Committee	University-wide database containing research related activities developed and in use.	Being implemented with Digital Measures software.

Priority 2: Develop Academic and Scholarship Capacity in the Health Professions.

Activities	Recommended Target Outcomes 2020	Status
1. Develop Policies/ Procedures Promoting Research Training/ Mentorship, and Collaboration.	Policies/procedures are in place and functioning well detailing strategies for training, development, and collaboration.	To be Completed
2. Allocate Sufficient Resources to Support Training.	Expanded financial support of research training efforts.	On-going
3. Develop Needs Assessment and Feasibility of Graduate Programs.	Business plans for potential graduate training programs developed.	To be Completed
4. Increase Student Knowledge and Involvement in Research.	Multiple student research elective courses and projects in place and on-going.	On-going with CDRP and Bio-med Symposium plus Research Day events.
5. Support a Center for Faculty Development for Research and Scholarship.	Faculty development and mentoring activities specific for research developed and on-going presentations.	To be Completed

Priority 3: Support Individual Research and Scholarship Activity while Promoting Interdisciplinary and Translational Research.

Activities	Recommended Target Outcomes 2020	Status
1. Determine Core Research Areas.	Established group determining core research activities.	On-going
2. Determine Level of Faculty and Student Participation in Research and Scholarship.	Developed realistic outcomes and percent improvement in scholarship based on current status.	On-going
3. Describe a Recruitment Strategy for Research and Scholarship.	Recruit and retain highly qualified productive health researchers and role models.	To be Completed
4. Develop and Publish Research Guidelines for Faculty Advancement and Accountability.	Established clear and consistent guidelines for faculty advancement and accountability based on University database. Determine mechanism for tracking appropriate acknowledgement of publications, presentations, etc. as a function of ATSU employment.	On-going with new Faculty Promotion and Tenure Policy and new Digital Measures software.
5. University Database of Faculty Research and Scholarship Activity.	Database in place, populated, and updated regularly.	Being implemented with Digital Measures software.
6. Promote Interprofessional Teams for Collaborative Research Efforts.	Selected interprofessional teams are in place and collaborating on projects.	On-going

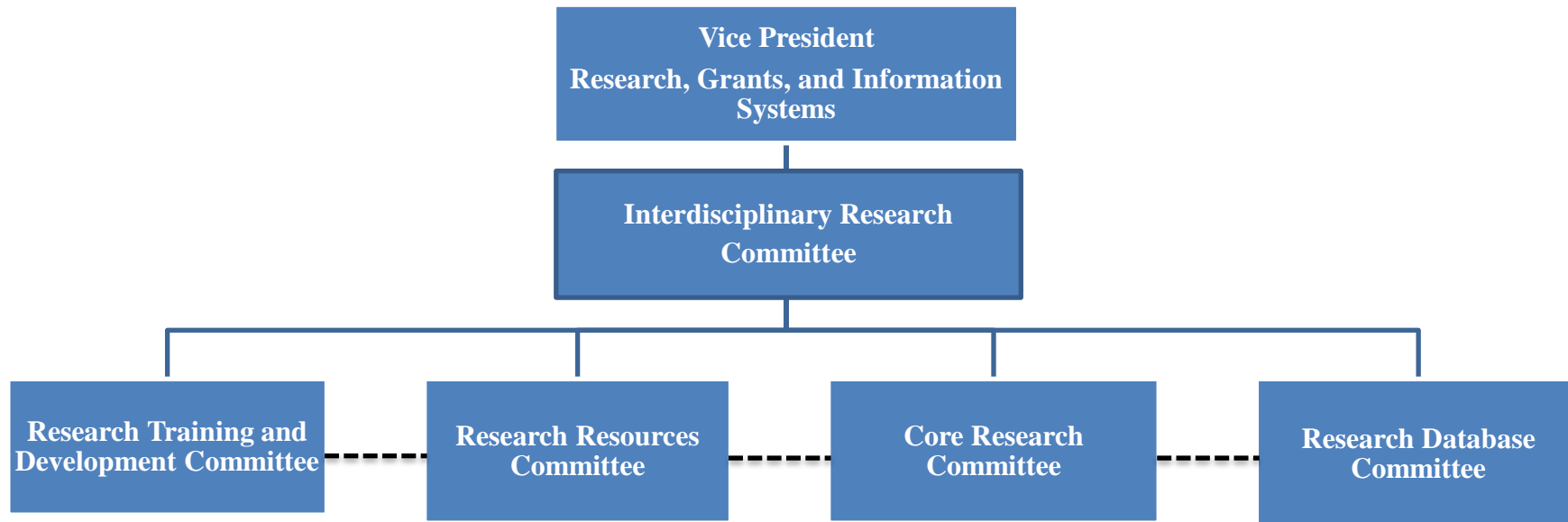
Priority 3: Support Individual Research and Scholarship Activity while Promoting Interdisciplinary and Transitional Research.
(Continued)

Activities	Recommended Target Outcomes 2020	Status
7. Evaluate and Recommend Facility Needs for Developing Research Space.	Long-term space allocation plan under development.	On-going
8. Increase Student Knowledge and Involvement in Research.	Multiple student research elective courses in place and on-going.	On-going with CDRP and Biomed Symposium plus Research Day events.

The basic structure of the plan consists of the formation of a series of committees all of which are inter-disciplinary and interact with each other to produce a University-wide representation of faculty scholarship interests.

Currently, the Interdisciplinary Research Committee (IRC) is already a fully formed and functioning University-wide committee. Each campus has its own IRC composed of faculty staff which meets on a regular basis. Each quarter, the two committees meet as a committee of the whole representing the overall research infrastructure of the University. Issues of common interest are discussed as well as the annual reviewing of proposals submitted for internal funding.

The following diagram depicts the committees to be structured under this plan and their relationship with each other as well as with the IRC.



The chair of each committee will be a member of the IRC. In this manner, all committees report directly to the highest level of the University on matters of research/scholarship. Additionally, all of the committees are interrelated and are required to function as a group in order to provide the most beneficial environment for scholarship.

In particular, the Core Research Committee has the function of defining those areas of research/scholarship which have the most likelihood of success due to the strategic importance of the topics together with a sufficient number of researchers to form a significant team involved in a particular area.

Based on these themes, the Research Resources Committee is tasked with developing the resources, both internally and externally, which are required to support the core activities of the University.

The Research Training and Development Committee is then required to provide the faculty development and mentorship activities which will help support the core areas of scholarship.

Finally, the Research Database Committee will house those activities which need to be tracked to provide statistical information regarding the research activities of the University. Publications, presentations, grants, etc. will be tracked by this group and provided to both researchers and administrators to provide a snapshot of the scholarship activities of the University.

With all groups reporting directly to the IRC, this University-wide committee will be in a better position to provide the upper administration not only with the needs of the research/scholarship enterprise, but with its successes and outcomes as well.