ABSTRACT: 2017 ELAM Institutional Action Project Symposium

**Project Title:** Envisioning 2/2/22: Five-Year Strategic Planning for the Division of Epidemiology and Community Health

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**Collaborators:** Faculty Executive Committee (faculty and key administrators), Division faculty, Dean’s Office, University Leadership and Talent Team

**Background, Significance of project:** The Division of Epidemiology and Community Health is a large and productive unit with a long history of state-of-the art research, teaching, and service. I became Head of Epidemiology and Community Health under very challenging circumstances two years ago. There was a large budget deficit and, as a result, faculty morale was low. There was a clear need to re-ignite and engage faculty, to reduce the culture of negativity that was growing, and to create a culture of action, collaboration, empowerment, and hopefulness.

**Purpose/Objectives:**
The main purpose of this strategic planning process is to engage faculty in the development of a plan to guide our work over the next five years in terms of research, education, and impact.

**Methods/Approach:**
The approach includes: preparation, planning, and follow-through.

**Preparation:** Four extended faculty meetings to enhance faculty engagement.

**Planning:** Half-day retreat in which faculty work in small groups to determine what to “stop, start, and continue” to enhance our research, education, and societal impact. Faculty members make commitments to getting involved in at least one action item. Faculty members also complete surveys prior to and following the retreat.

**Follow-through:** Ideas gathered from faculty are synthesized to identify where we want to be by 2/2/22 and the specific actions that need to be taken to get there.

**Outcomes and Evaluation Strategy:**
**Faculty engagement:** Faculty attendance was high at the planning retreat; 87% (n=40) of the faculty were present. Faculty were actively engaged in the conversations, provided thoughtful suggestions for improving our research, education, and impact, and made personal commitments to get involved with action areas. Faculty engagement in follow-through activities has not yet been assessed, but participation in taskforces and other activities will be monitored.

**Process-related outputs:** Faculty responses indicated a desire for a work environment that incorporates: collaboration and support from colleagues, time to focus on intellectual and creative work, an atmosphere that promotes innovation, and an emphasis on having a meaningful impact. Key areas for action include:

1) **Innovation:** Provide an environment that promotes innovative in research and teaching through learning about innovation, cross-discipline collaboration, and adequate time allocation.
2) **Diversity:** Enhance diversity though a more diverse faculty/student composition, via community outreach, and in our curriculum.
3) **Outreach:** Greater outreach to various stakeholders (e.g., legislature, local industry) to ensure they know what we do and that our work is having an impact on populations in need.

**Longer-term outcomes:** Ultimately, the goal is to have a productive unit in which faculty are engaged in state-of-the-art research and teaching to improve the health of the public. Measures to be examined will include success with grant submissions, a budget that allows for this work, high quality and quantity of students, and faculty retention

**Conclusion:** This active process has led to a more engaged and empowered faculty and a more positive working culture. A plan is in process to develop a workplace that promotes collaboration, innovation, and impact.
BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE
The Division of Epidemiology and Community Health is a large and productive unit:

- 46 faculty members
- 400 staff members
- 350 graduate students
- Long history of state-of-the-art research, teaching, and service

However, the Division has been facing difficulties that need to be addressed:

Challenges:
- Low faculty morale
- Large budget deficit
- 400 staff members
- 46 faculty members
- 350 graduate students

Needs:
- Re-ignite and engage faculty
- Reduce the culture of negativity
- Create a culture of action, collaboration, empowerment, and hopefulness

PURPOSE
The main purpose of this strategic planning process is to engage faculty in the development of a plan to guide our work over the next five years in terms of research, education, and impact.

METHODS/APPROACH
Preparation: Four extended faculty meetings to enhance faculty engagement

Planning: Half-day planning retreat:
- small group work to determine what to “stop, start, and continue” in research, education, and societal impact
- commitments to one “start/action item
- surveys prior to and following retreat

Implementation: Ideas gathered from faculty are synthesized to identify where we want to be by 2/2/22 and the specific actions that need to be taken to get there

CONCLUSION
This active process has led to a more engaged and empowered faculty and a more positive working culture. A plan is in process to develop a workplace that promotes collaboration, innovation, and impact.

OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION STRATEGY
Faculty engagement:
- Faculty attendance high: 87% (n=40) at retreat
- Active participation: thoughtful suggestions for improving research, education, and impact
- Faculty made personal commitments to get involved
- Engagement in implementation activities has not yet been assessed but will be monitored

Process-related outputs:
Responses indicated a desire for a work environment that incorporates:
- collaboration and support from colleagues
- time to focus on intellectual and creative work
- an atmosphere that promotes innovation
- emphasis on having a meaningful impact

Key areas for action include:
1) Innovation: Provide an environment that promotes innovative research and teaching through learning about innovation, cross-discipline collaboration, and adequate time allocation
2) Diversity: Enhance diversity through a more diverse faculty/student composition, via community outreach, and in our curriculum
3) Outreach: Greater outreach to various stakeholders (e.g., legislature, local industry) to ensure they know what we do and the impact our work has on populations in need

Longer-term outcomes:
Long-term goal: A productive unit in which faculty are engaged in state-of-the-art research and teaching to improve the health of the public

Long-term measures of success:
- Grant submissions/successes
- Balanced budget with reserves
- High quality and quantity of students
- Faculty satisfaction and retention

Presented at the 2017 ELAM Leader’s Forum

Collaborators: Dean, Faculty Executive Committee, Division Faculty, University Leadership and Talent Team

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