

ABSTRACT: 2018 ELAM Institutional Action Project

Project Title: A strategic plan for greater research impact at the Yale School of Public Health

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Topic Category: Research

Background, Significance of project: There are increasing and diverse public health challenges that require innovative research and leadership that improves public health worldwide. The Yale School of Public Health (YSPH) is committed to being a global leader in paradigm-shifting research that promotes collaboration, innovation and impact.

Purpose/Objectives: The goal of this Institutional Action Project (IAP) was to conduct a strategic plan at the YSPH for greater research impact. The objectives were to: (1) prioritize areas for investment that capitalize on YSPH's strengths and opportunities; (2) support and provide opportunities for research collaborations that broaden and deepen YSPH research engagement across the Yale campus and with external partners; (3) ensure YSPH has the infrastructure and resources needed to succeed; and (4) bring the YSPH community together around a shared research vision and mission.

Methods/Approach/Evaluation Strategy: We created a YSPH Research Advisory Committee (RAC) that included a faculty member from each of the six departments within YSPH and Melinda Irwin as committee chair. Monthly RAC meetings occurred from October 2017 through April 2018. The RAC also met with faculty at each of the six departmental faculty meetings to gather information on current research strengths and unmet needs. Additionally, key stakeholder interviews with Research Deans across Yale University were conducted to identify university-wide resources and approaches to increasing collaborations. The RAC completed a SWOT analysis to define YSPH's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and identified metrics/benchmarks of research success.

Outcomes/Results: A summary of key findings and recommendations will be presented to the YSPH Dean in May 2018 for consideration. Some preliminary recommendations include: (1) centralized shared research staff for assistance on e.g., IRB-related work, blood processing/storage/analyses, data collection and analyses; (2) linking financial accountants by research content area rather than department to increase collaborative opportunities; (3) establishment of a faculty peer-review grant process; (4) funding for pilot projects that include new collaborations; (5) recruitment of faculty and pre-doctoral students that bridge departments; (6) creation of a faculty lounge/meeting space to enhance interactions and collaborations; and (7) development of a large-scale public health initiative of high relevance to the community that brings our expertise together. Additional faculty meetings and stakeholder interviews will occur throughout April 2018, with recommendations disseminated to the Dean and the School in May 2018.

Discussion/Conclusion with Statement of Impact/Potential Impact: By conducting a strategic plan that culminates in recommendations for increasing research impact, YSPH will be able to better support and enhance research across the school and propel its standing as a global leader in public health research, education and practice.