

## ABSTRACT: 2018 ELAM Institutional Action Project

**Project:** The Inauguration of the Buehler Center for Health Policy & Economics

**Name/Institution:** Lori Ann Post-Northwestern Buehler Center for Health Policy & Economics

**Collaborators/Mentors:** Dean Neilson, Dr. Adams, Dr. Cella, Dr. Ackermann

**Category:** Administration

**Background:** The Buehler family, located in Chicago, Illinois, endowed a professorship and a center at the Feinberg School of Medicine more than two decades ago. The Center and endowed chair were focused on aging and geriatric medicine. Over the years, the leadership changed, membership declined or became inactive, and the Center focus was limited to two lines of training/clinical awards on palliative care. While aging and palliative care are relevant to pressing healthcare needs, the Buehler Center's mission and focus were expanded to Health Policy and Economics. Dr. Post was recruited as the inaugural director of the new Buehler Center.

**Purpose:** This *Institutional Action Plan* aims to reboot the Buehler Center as a world class center for research, training, and outreach with health policy and economic implications. The objectives include: differentiating the Center from other health economic and policy initiatives at Northwestern and beyond; increasing membership; developing university-wide research themes; increasing extramural funding; meeting the health policy and economic research needs of faculty; and, providing quality mentorship.

**Methods:** Dr. Post has reviewed every department, institute, and research center related to health policy and/or health economics nationally to assess characteristics, missions, and focus. She met with every faculty and administrator at Northwestern University with a health policy and/or economic focus and conducted an internet based survey of Northwestern faculty interested in health policy and/or economics to assess the need, interest, and the unique footprint of Buehler. She hosted a Buehler Center strategic planning retreat to further understand faculty needs in regards to health policy and economics.

**Outcomes:** The majority of health policy and economic faculty at a national level are located in the Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities, Business, Public Health, Communication Science, and Law Schools/Colleges. In fact, very few are located in a medical schools. Furthermore, the majority of these faculty work in silos on their specific research concentration. There is a stark contrast between what exists nationally and at Northwestern in specific and what are the needs of Northwestern faculty.

**Impact:** Northwestern is a tier-one research university with a large portfolio of research. Extramural research funding requires transdisciplinary teams including health economists and policy analysts to be competitive. Existing health economists and policy analysts are overcommitted or focused on their own research programs. There is a significant need by non-economists and policy analysts for economic and policy expertise. The Buehler Center faculty will not only conduct independent research but will also provide economic, policy and evaluation research team scientists. These findings frame the recruiting strategy, research services Buehler will provide such as research clinics including health economists, policy analysts, and evaluation researchers for grant applicants, a seminar series on moving from training to independence, and intense mentoring for junior faculty making the jump to independent researcher.