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Title

Engage, Discover, Change: Putting a Research Strategic Plan into Action

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Research Capacity Building

Presenters

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Abstract

CONTEXT: Our Department of Family Medicine (DoFM) completed a research strategic planning process in 2019. Four research strategic goals were identified, to: build research capacity; demonstrate impact; make research meaningful to the practice of family medicine; and build meaningful engagement. Arising from these goals, eight strategic objectives were developed. An operational plan was needed to put the strategic objectives into action. OBJECTIVE: To develop a plan to operationalize the research strategic objectives. DESIGN: Participatory action approach. PARTICIPANTS/ SETTING: Faculty and staff in the DoFM, University of Alberta. INTERVENTION/ INSTRUMENT: From January 2020 to March 2021, the DOFM implemented an initiative to facilitate engagement necessary to operationalize the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the research strategic plan. A Research Leadership Team was formed and a Special Projects Coordinator was hired to guide the process. The process involved the establishment of five Working Groups: Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH); Research Engagement; Research Knowledge & Skills; Foster a Research Culture; and Work Smarter. Working Groups met to develop a set of actions for the respective strategic objectives. OUTCOMES/RESULTS: The main deliverables of the Working Groups included: PCMH - identified the need to further develop the data infrastructure to better inform practice, including data resources for research and quality improvement; Research Engagement - identified opportunities to engage stakeholders, residents, patients, and community family physicians in research; Research Knowledge & Skills - prioritized staff professional development training to build capacity and strengthen the core skills needed for research/scholarship; Foster a Research Culture - identified opportunities to build collegiality and share ideas that foster research curiosity; Work Smarter - implemented a department-wide survey to identify efficiencies and streamline processes, and established a Finance Working Group and a HR Working Group to streamline operations. CONCLUSION: A strategic plan requires an action plan to operationalize the strategic objectives. A leadership team and a coordinator are essential to put the plan into action. The process strengthened the research agenda and cultivated a culture of collaboration and engagement. While the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily disrupted momentum, the plan remains robust and relevant to continue forward.