

Heersink School of Medicine (HSOM) Health Equity Research Focus Area (HERFA)

Progress Report: HSOM 2024 Research Retreat

HEALTH EQUITY (HE) EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH: SYSTEMATIC LANDSCAPE SURVEY:

- Established a protocol to conduct a foundational assessment of current extramural HE funding portfolio within the HSOM.
- HE grants will be stratified by thematic pillars: women's health across the lifespan, global and rural health, sexual and gender minority health, and health system and chronic diseases.
- HE grants will be mapped to NIMHD framework with additional classification by disease focus.
- Insights gained will guide strategic recruitment and investments, enhancing extramural funding and scholarship.
- Findings will serve as a baseline for future evaluation of growth of extramural HSOM HE funding portfolio.

STRATEGIC RECRUITMENT:

- Major strategic initiative to recruit up to 12 investigators, expanding the health equity research portfolio.
- Positions available for tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-earning faculty across 28 academic departments.
- Co-chairs Dr. Cherrington and Dr. Asif leading the Strategic Recruitment team.
- Active distribution of job postings by the HERFA leadership with 23 applications received to date.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- Prioritized strengthening relationships and collaborations among community focused research faculty and staff.
- Established Collaborative Health Equity Council (CHEC) to facilitate direct and indirect support to HERFA.
- Inaugurated the first Community Engagement Council (CEC) on November 29th, 2023. 20 participants spanning numerous HSOM departments, centers and institutes.
- Sponsored inaugural DRIVEN Academy and Global Health Symposium.

COMMUNICATIONS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PLAN:

- Launched promotional initiatives, incorporating photo and videography as well as voice recordings to convey the UAB story, showcasing our dedication and significant advancements in promoting HE. Notably, the collateral is currently in the process of being developed.
- Promotional/recruitment video featuring Mayor Randall Woodfin and HSOM leadership.
- Potential re-use for HSOM departments, divisions, centers, institutes, and other HSOM research focus groups.

HSOM HERFA SHORT TERM GOALS (next 12 months):

- Present finalized results of the HE Systematic Landscape Survey to CHEC on March 8, 2024, to inform priorities.
- Collate existing health equity training and pathway programs situated to educational arc; e.g., R25, T32.
- Monitor progress of strategic recruitment with updates from Co-Chairs; goal 4-6 faculty hires in CY 2024.
- Sponsor events promoting Health Equity, e.g., Dr. Timiya Nolan, Health Equity Conference in Birmingham, 2024.
- Formalize the Community Engagement Council as a high-level counterpart of the CHEC and finalize development of shared resources such as heat mapping with support from Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) Core.
- Develop and deploy promotional communications materials to convey the UAB story.
- Support identification of 2-3 large extramural HE funding opportunities and teams, e.g. ARPA-H HEROES.

HSOM HERFA LONG TERM GOALS (3-5 years):

- Increase CEC engagement by at least 30% through the consistent implementation of quarterly meetings.
- Utilize heat mapping resources to identify and prioritize community needs, resulting in at least 15% increase in the geographic reach and relevance of community programs.
- Establish measurable communication metrics, such as increased website traffic, social media engagement, and event attendance, with a target of 20% growth annually.
- Increase number of unique extramurally funded HSOM HE focused investigators by at least 20%.
- Increase total HSOM HE extramural research portfolio by at least 25%.
- Achieve a clinical meaningful improvement in at least 2-3 HE outcomes metric at a health system, community or population level.