



Cummings 2015

Strategic Plan
Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at
Tufts University

January 2, 2012

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I. Executive Summary

The Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University developed the Cummings 2015: Strategic Plan to identify areas of focus, goals, and strategic directions for the coming five years. Reflecting input from internal and external stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, university leadership, and leaders in the field, this plan outlines the vision, mission, and strategic directions of the school.

Nine Strategic Directions were derived from stakeholder input, and for each direction, a set of actionable Key Goals are identified in this document. The plan's nine Strategic Directions are:

- 1: *Promote a culture of excellence that attracts highly motivated, well-qualified students, faculty, and staff with diverse life experiences.*
- 2: *Foster continuous improvement of the curriculum and student educational experience.*
- 3: *Demonstrate excellence in clinical service that improves animal health and human well-being.*
- 4: *Commit to excellence in basic, translational and clinical research.*
- 5: *Establish an effective school operating model that maintains academic excellence and ensures financial sustainability.*
- 6: *Value the contributions of every member of the community, treat each other with respect, and create a culture of open and effective communication.*
- 7: *Become a recognized leader in global health and One Health.*
- 8: *Advance a tradition of active citizenship that cuts across all of our endeavors.*
- 9: *Provide value to Tufts University through collaborative contributions in the areas of animal and human health.*

These nine Strategic Directions will serve as a road map for the Cummings School through 2015. As a next step, Cummings leadership will appoint individuals or groups of individuals to plan and manage progress for each Strategic Direction in this plan. This plan is intended as a living document, which may require updating, revision or addenda throughout the plan period.

II. Introduction

The purpose of this strategic plan is to serve as a guide for the Cummings School over the ensuing five years, with the goal of achieving nine key Strategic Directions which support the school's vision and mission statements.

The strategic planning process was designed with the intention of listening to what students, faculty, staff and alumni had to say. The plan represents the best thinking and input from all stakeholders within the school and is not a single person's or specific group's vision. The process was efficient, broad-based and inclusive, with guidance from many.

The veterinary profession is facing significant challenges, as outlined in the recent [*RoadMap for Veterinary Medical Education in the 21st Century: Responsive, Collaborative, Flexible*](#), a report published by the North American Veterinary Medical Education Consortium. State and federal funding have been reduced and tuition, class size and student debt have all increased. A profession-wide focus on innovation, flexibility and action is needed to assure continued veterinary medical educational quality and student achievement of core veterinary medical competencies.

Given these realities, it is important for the Cummings School to have a sense of where we are now in order to determine where we want to be in relationship to Tufts University, our colleagues in veterinary medical education, and the global community.

The purpose of creating a strategic plan at this time was to:

- Calibrate and prioritize our current mission and goals for continued relevance.
- Ensure that our mission and goals are clear.
- Identify areas for improvement. Generate renewed interest, commitment and momentum in achieving our goals.
- Align our work to address desired outcomes.

Through the development of this strategic plan, we achieved this and more. But this document, with all of the time and thinking put into creating it, is just a starting point. The real work lies ahead in achieving our Strategic Directions and key goals; living up to our vision and accomplishing our mission.

III. Strategic Planning Process

The main goal in the strategic planning process was inclusiveness; that is, to hear from any stakeholder who was interested in providing input. The process consisted of several components:

1. Steering Committee

Chaired by Dr. Phyllis Mann, the Steering Committee was charged with processing all of the input provided from students, faculty, staff, alumni and stakeholders, and advising the Dean's Group on those data and input which should be a focal point of the Cummings School Strategic Plan.

2. Faculty and Staff

Six half-day retreats were available for faculty and staff members who wished to participate in the strategic planning process and make their opinions heard. The retreats were facilitated by Tufts Human Resources and an external consultant, and took place in May and June, 2011.

Participants were asked to share their vision for the Cummings School, conduct SWOT analyses (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), and create Affinity Diagrams that specified priorities to reach the vision.

Input was also obtained through a facilitated conversation held between Dean Kochevar and overnight staff in the hospital.

3. Alumni and Students

In the same way that information was gathered from faculty and staff, a half-day workshop was held to garner alumni input.

A facilitated conversation was held between Assistant Dean of Student Affairs Barbara Berman and a representative group of veterinary professional students.

4. Online Survey

An online survey was sent to the members of the Cummings School community who had not previously participated in a workshop session. Responses from 198 students, faculty, staff, and alumni were gathered. Responses were a combination of quantitative and qualitative input.

5. Literature Review and Benchmarking

A literature review was completed by the Steering Committee and facilitated by the Cummings School Director of Library Sciences and Information Technology. The mission statements from veterinary schools across the U.S. were reviewed, and benchmarking data from several sources were considered.

6. Key External Stakeholder

Members of the Dean's Group conducted one-on-one interviews with university leadership and members of the Cummings School Board of Overseers to identify strengths and weaknesses, and areas of importance from the university perspective.

The data from these information gathering methodologies were then collected and collated for Steering Committee review.

IV. Vision and Mission

In establishing a Vision for the Cummings School, we created an aspirational statement which clearly identifies the organization that we seek to become in the future. We then streamlined our existing Mission to support the Vision and take into account the Strategic Directions in this plan.

Vision

The Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University is a respected institution of higher education, research, and clinical service with a strong sense of community that is positioned at the forefront of veterinary medicine and global One Health.

Mission

The Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University seeks to improve the health and well-being of animals, people, and the environment in which they live. We do this through excellence and innovation in education, clinical service, and research. Our major objectives are to:

- Promote a culture of excellence that attracts highly motivated, well-qualified students, faculty and staff with diverse life experiences;
- Educate students to become leaders in veterinary medicine and biomedical sciences through programs that are forward-looking, dynamic, and comprehensive;
- Provide veterinary healthcare that is progressive, compassionate, and evidence-based;
- Conduct the highest quality basic, clinical, and translational research to advance our understanding of health and disease; and
- Advance the health of animals, people, and ecosystems worldwide through applying One Health principles and encouraging active citizenship.

V. Strategic Directions and Key Goals

We identified nine Strategic Directions deemed critical to achieving our vision and carrying out our mission. Each Strategic Direction represents a unique aspect of the school and, for each, priorities and goals were set.

#1: *Promote a culture of excellence that attracts highly motivated, well-qualified students, faculty, and staff with diverse life experiences.*

We believe that the quality of our people determines the quality of our academic program, and ultimately, the value of a degree from the Cummings School. Human capital is our most valuable resource, and by seeking contributors with diverse life experiences, the academic experience is enriched. We recognize that there is competition for the best students, faculty, and staff, and we strive to become the school of choice and employer of choice in the region.

Key Goals:

To attract faculty and staff:

1. Clearly articulate expectations for performance excellence and align these expectations with the university performance review process.
2. Enhance and facilitate professional development opportunities for faculty and reward faculty who excel at clinical service, research, or improved learning.
3. Enhance and facilitate development and advancement opportunities for staff in order for the Cummings School to remain an “employer of choice” in the region. Create an optimized workforce, qualified to do the job well.

To attract students:

4. Pursue additional sources of student financial aid to decrease student debt and strengthen the likelihood that admitted students will matriculate.
5. Strategically market the Cummings School’s distinctive programs to health professions advisors in undergraduate schools and to students outside the northeast and mid-Atlantic states.
6. Develop specific strategies to attract students from underrepresented groups.

#2: *Foster continuous improvement of the curriculum and student educational experience.*

Faculty members strive to keep the curriculum current with our evolving profession and the increasing knowledge base. They regularly adapt our curriculum to new technologies and scientific evidence, and acknowledge differences in the way people learn. A curriculum that is responsive to assessment and evidence ensures that students and faculty are engaged, motivated, continuous learners.

Key Goals:

1. Develop a comprehensive Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) curriculum that provides progressive training in non-technical skills such as communication, financial management, personnel management, ethics, leadership and teamwork.
2. Implement the planned System Coordinator program for continuous DVM curriculum monitoring and improvement. Develop a model to recognize System Coordinators that ensures interest and participation among faculty.
3. Identify space and funding for a clinical skills training venue for DVM students, interns and residents. Develop clinical skills learning objectives for trainees at various levels.
4. Enhance primary care learning opportunities to better prepare DVM students for entry-level practice.
5. Maintain and enhance the combined degree and certificate programs to enrich the DVM professional program and provide unique educational training opportunities.

#3: *Demonstrate excellence in clinical service that improves animal health and human well-being.*

Our hospital meets the needs of animals, clients, and referring veterinarians. Clinical service is a key element of our teaching mission, and is essential to student education. We strive to become, within a sustainable model, the preferred specialty hospital and a center of excellence for veterinary care in the region.

Key Goals:

1. Define excellence and ensure that there is understanding, alignment, and support among faculty and staff.
2. Create expectations and accountability for superior animal care and client service.
3. Establish mechanisms for feedback from stakeholders such as clients, referring veterinarians, students, and co-workers.
4. Measure achievement by students, faculty, and staff in their use of interpersonal communications to enhance clinical service.
5. Assess the quantity and quality of the current space, and begin planning to ensure additional hospital space. Plans should include funding, location, and organization for new space.
6. Facilitate clinical research in the teaching hospital.

#4: *Commit to excellence in basic, translational, and clinical research*

Scientific research is important to gain new knowledge in the areas of prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases, as well as to address public health needs. Significant research outcomes make an important impact in society and attract high caliber students, faculty, and staff. In developing our research agenda, we strive to advance the knowledge of animal, human, and ecosystem health.

Key Goals:

1. Facilitate faculty research initiatives in preparing, submitting and obtaining extramural research funding.
2. Enhance current research programs and initiate new programs by collaborating with investigators at other Tufts schools, other universities, and life sciences companies.
3. Establish robust mentoring programs for junior faculty to attract extramural support for their research.
4. Maintain and improve the current student research program.
5. Work with faculty to develop strategies to better manage research related costs.

#5: *Establish an effective school operating model that maintains academic excellence and ensures financial sustainability.*

We strive to maintain financial models that grow and sustain excellence in our programs and enhance educational value for our students and graduates. We seek to reduce our deficit, maintain strength, contribute to the university, and reinvest in the school.

Key Goals:

1. Continue to stabilize and secure external revenue sources.
2. Preserve and enhance the caseloads and net revenue of the teaching hospitals by improving service, quality, and competitiveness.
3. Be nimble, resourceful, and collaborative in our research efforts, taking advantage of opportunities in an evolving research funding environment.
4. Explore creative, programmatic opportunities that generate net revenue, including the continuing education model, developing new degrees, and increasing partnerships.
5. Review and prioritize the school's programs, operating methods, and budget expenditures to align our costs with available resources.
6. Engage in the university's environmental sustainability efforts and implement those initiatives that will also reduce school operating costs.
7. Examine the school's cost of education and tuition pricing models to address student educational debt.

#6: *Value the contributions of every member of the Cummings School community, treat each other with respect, and create a culture of open and effective communication.*

We seek to create an academic environment that recognizes that the success of the institution depends on the full contribution of each of its members. We believe that a community that values open and effective communication can better achieve its full potential.

Key Goals:

1. Create clear expectations for, and recognition of, success in open and effective communication.
2. Optimize methods for regular information sharing at all levels of the organization.
3. Acknowledge productive teams that foster a cooperative work environment.

#7: *Become a recognized leader in global health and One Health.*

Educating students who appreciate the needs of the world, scientifically, medically, and culturally, will enhance our leadership in global health and One Health. We seek to contribute towards the Tufts University priority of internationalism, which aligns with our mission of improving the health and well-being of animals, people, and the environments in which they live.

Key Goals:

1. Develop key global health initiatives that align with school and university aspirations to advance One Health.
2. Enhance cross-school opportunities for excellence in global health education.
3. Recruit a faculty leader with proven scholarly success in global health to advance our academic and research programs.
4. Align the existing international medicine post-graduate certificate program, graduate programs and veterinary professional curriculum with the university's global health initiatives.

#8: *Advance a tradition of active citizenship that cuts across all of our endeavors*

We seek to support the goals of Tufts University and engage our students to become lifelong learners and active citizens. Doing so expands the impact of our programs while enhancing the contributions and self-fulfillment of students, faculty, and staff.

Key Goals:

1. Develop the Center for Animals and Public Policy as a driver for active citizenship and animal welfare initiatives.
2. Strengthen communication and develop partnerships with Tisch College.
3. Recognize students, faculty, and staff for incorporating examples of active citizenship into their endeavors.
4. Encourage participation in K – 12 STEM outreach programs that build on One Health principles.
5. Sustain internal resources to encourage active citizenship projects initiated by students, faculty, and staff.
6. Continue to make student and school active citizenship opportunities and engagement a differentiating strength of the school.

#9: Provide value to Tufts University through collaborative contributions in animal and human health.

Tufts University and the Cummings School are stronger and more competitive when we collaborate across school and disciplinary boundaries. We seek to identify and highlight opportunities to work together for the benefit of animal and human health.

Key Goals:

1. Commit to engagement in existing and emerging opportunities for education and research collaborations within Tufts, as outlined in the Provost's *Collaboration at Tufts Spring 2011* white paper.
2. Deliver a veterinary school's unique capabilities in life science and One Health to Tufts' larger teaching and research efforts.
3. Actively engage in and contribute to university initiatives to improve quality and gain efficiencies by working together on administrative and educational systems and processes.

VI. Way Forward

Metrics will be employed to ensure progress, and ultimately success of the Strategic Plan. The Dean's Group will assign individuals or groups responsible for setting directions and milestones, and monitoring achievements related to each Strategic Direction and Key Goals. Responsible individuals will have progress towards assigned Key Goals incorporated as a part of their annual performance evaluations. Additionally, this plan will be reviewed annually or biannually by existing committees that have purview over relevant Strategic Directions.

The annual State of the School presentation will apprise the community of progress towards Strategic Directions and Key Goals and continued relevance of the plan to the school's aspirations.

VII. Appendix A: Key Personnel

Please accept our thanks to all those who participated in this process. Membership on this committee intentionally included representatives from Faculty Council, Senior Staff, and Administrative Council.

Strategic Planning Steering Committee:

Phyllis Mann, Steering Committee Chair, Associate Professor, Biomedical Sciences

John Berg, Steering Committee past Chair, Professor, Clinical Sciences

Joseph McManus, Executive Associate Dean

Shelley Rodman, Senior Director of Development and Alumni Relations

Denise Sheldon, Senior Veterinary Technician, Foster Hospital for Small Animals

Patrick Skelly, Associate Professor, Biomedical Sciences

Elizabeth Torello, Hospital Services Manager, Hospital for Large Animals

Flo Tseng, Assistant Professor, Environmental and Population Health

Lois Wetmore, Assistant Professor, Clinical Sciences

Dean's Group:

Deborah Kochevar, Dean

Joe McManus, Executive Associate Dean

Sawkat Anwer, Associate Dean for Research

Angie Warner, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Dean's Council Contributors:

George Saperstein, Chair, Department of Environmental and Population Health

Arthur Donohue-Rolfe, Chair, Department of Biomedical Sciences

Nicholas Frank, Chair, Department of Clinical Sciences

Virginia Rentko, Medical Director, Foster Hospital for Small Animals and Hospital for Large Animals

Steve Rowell, Hospital Director, Tufts VETS

Facilitators:

Regina Corrao, Director of Human Resources/ Organizational Development and Training, Tufts University

Lisa Prior, Prior Consulting

Professional writer: *Tinabeth Burton*

Administrative support: *Nancy Meyer*

VIII. Appendix B: Workshop Attendees

Please accept our thanks to all those who participated in this process. If a name was inadvertently omitted from these lists please notify us so that it may be corrected.

Student Session, May 10, 2011

*Alison Borek
Jennifer Boyd
Monika Burns
Hillary Feldmann
Anne Fleming
Suzannah Gottlieb
Falon Gray
Gillian Kruskall
Dawn Lenihan
Lily Nieh
Keiko Petrosky
Kristin Smith
Carolyn Sumner*

Alumni Workshop, June 1, 2011

*Lori Feldman
Cindy Fuhs
Barb Fuller
Jennifer Hall
Scott Handler
John Hurley
Barbara Korry
Josh Kramer
Karyn O'Connell
Mark Pokras
Martha Smith-Blackmore
Andrea Sullivan*

Staff Workshops, May 18, 27 and June 7, 2011

*Deb Adams
Kathy Allaire
Leslie Anderson
Kristen Antoon
Ellen Baker
Kate Beckett
Ian Bedford
Shelby Bennett
Barbara Berman
Barbara Bianco
Laurie Black
Susan Brogan
Jonathan Burton
Katie Callichio
Lois Colburn
Steph Cote
Nancy Cronin
Michelle Damon
Dotti Dawson
Shira DuLong*

*Jen Ebert
Diane Fleming
Michelle Fleming
Jenn Ford
Jill Franko
Deb Gibbs
Kimberly Gonyea
Lucia Hackett
Rich Harding
Trena Haroutunian
Lauren Heintz
Tom Keppeler
Valerie Larose
Shirley Leclair
Cynthia Malone
Sue Marino
Lesli Matloff
Dawn Meola
Sheila Moffat
Amy Navin*

*Florence Niklewski
Bonnie Picard
Jean Poteete
Genevieve Rajewski
Karen Reagan
Kelly Reed
Tina Rice
Donna Roberts
Shelley Rodman
Rebecca Russo
Geraldyn (Lyn) Schad
Linette Scibelli
Rosemary (Rose) Shaughnessy
Michael Skolnick
Robin Soriano
Carla Stem
Amanda Sullivan-Barrows
Beth Timlege
Carol-Ann Uhlman
Stephanie Underwood
Gail Zamarchi*

Faculty Workshops, June 3,7 and 14, 2011

<i>Joe Alroy</i>	<i>Emily McCobb</i>
<i>Sandy Ayres</i>	<i>Joe McManus</i>
<i>Lisa Barber</i>	<i>Ben Nephew</i>
<i>Daniela Bedenice</i>	<i>Mary Rose Paradis</i>
<i>Cheryl Blaze</i>	<i>Julia Paxson</i>
<i>Bob Bridges</i>	<i>Dominique Penninck</i>
<i>Kristine Burgess</i>	<i>Rachel Peters</i>
<i>Barbara Davis</i>	<i>Stefano Pizzirani</i>
<i>Armelle de Laforcade</i>	<i>Ginny Rentko</i>
<i>Art Donohue-Rolfe</i>	<i>Linda Ross</i>
<i>Julie Ellis</i>	<i>Steven Rowell</i>
<i>Lisa Freeman</i>	<i>Liz Rozanski</i>
<i>Andy Hoffman</i>	<i>Allen Rutberg</i>
<i>John Hurley</i>	<i>George Saperstein</i>
<i>Alicia Karas</i>	<i>Amy Sato</i>
<i>Carl Kirker-Head</i>	<i>Chris Schonhoff</i>
<i>Joyce Knoll</i>	<i>Claire Sharp</i>
<i>Ray Kudej</i>	<i>Chuck Shoemaker</i>
<i>Mary Labato</i>	<i>Patrick Skelly</i>
<i>George Lathrop</i>	<i>Mauricio Solano</i>
<i>Cyndie Leveille-Webster</i>	<i>James Sutherland-Smith</i>
<i>Joann Lindenmayer</i>	<i>Olivier Taeymans</i>
<i>Orla Mahoney</i>	<i>Gene White</i>
<i>Melissa Mazan</i>	<i>Quanshun Zhang</i>