



**Robert Stempel College
of Public Health
& Social Work**

Strategic Plan 2017-2020

Introduction

In 1972, Florida International University (FIU) opened its doors with two buildings on an abandoned airfield. On one of the buildings, three founding goals were etched into bronze: Education of Students, Service to the Community and Greater International Understanding. Shortly after, two of the college's programs (Dietetics and Nutrition and Social Work) were formed. An accredited School of Public Health took shape in 2006 to further support the University's commitment to the community. In 2017, the Academy for International Disaster Preparedness was integrated into Stempel College as the Department of Disaster Preparedness.

Today, the interdisciplinary structure of Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work (Stempel College) combines the five major disciplines of public health with Dietetics and Nutrition, Social Work, and Disaster Preparedness.

In 2014, Stempel College unveiled a new home, Academic Health Center 5 (AHC5), on the northeast corner of FIU's Modesto A. Maidique Campus. The building, with its wind sail-shaped courtyard, evokes the interconnectivity of the college's academics and offers flexible research and teaching areas within more than 121,000 square feet. It basks in Miami's energizing sunlight with an incremental building footprint, alternating sections of glass and molded concrete, and floating spaces. Dr. Tomás R. Guilarte arrived in January 2016 to serve as Dean, ushering in a new era in Stempel College's history.

Stempel College is a pioneering academic institution that inspires groundbreaking research, education, and policy action to strengthen our communities and empower our students to shape the future, while promoting public health and social welfare in our communities near and far.

This strategic plan is a framework for the actions we need to take to manifest Stempel College's vision and how we will gauge our success. The plan is consistent with FIU's strategic plan (*FIU Beyond Possible 2020*) and the State University System of Florida's performance metrics. We will use the plan to align our decisions and resources so that we strategically invest in our future.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Our Mission

To inspire groundbreaking research and education in public health, dietetics and nutrition and social welfare from within a nurturing academic environment that influences policy and promotes healthy lives—especially for the most underserved—in communities near and far.

Our Vision

We are shaping the future by integrating our academic disciplines for our students and sharing our innovative research and solutions to promote health and wellness around the world.

Our Values

We embrace the responsibility to be a force for good for our students and the diversity of our communities through ethical research and problem solving, while educating and serving with courage, integrity, fairness and respect.

Situation Analysis

Strategic Advantages

Stempel College is poised in many areas. The college has a robust, impactful and interdisciplinary educational and research portfolio in four synergistic disciplines—Public Health, Dietetics and Nutrition, Social Work, and Disaster Preparedness. We think across academic boundaries using a transdisciplinary approach and are lifelong learners from diverse backgrounds. The college explores the interconnectivity of social, biological, environmental and cultural elements of public health and wellness. This results in a broader understanding of the issues, and a robust set of solutions.

A pioneering spirit drives the college forward. We are focused on making discoveries—in the laboratory, the classroom and within the community. To maintain this momentum, we are evolving the way we teach, do research, and interrelate and tell the stories behind our findings.

Stempel College's diverse student body and faculty have a global reach while also demonstrating strong community connections through local expertise and partnerships. Our college is a kaleidoscope of scholars, staff and students from around the world. Our differences bring us closer together in the pursuit of discovery and making meaningful contributions to our communities.

The college is home to groundbreaking research programs and centers fueled by world-class faculty, staff and students who parse problems to find answers at an accelerated pace. Stempel College is also home to two of FIU's emerging preeminent programs—*Health Disparities* and *Brain, Behavior, and the Environment*.

Stempel College's people and programs exude a passion for service and social justice with a deep commitment to community. We research and teach to affect positive change in our communities through multidimensional interventions. Our research guides leaders, is translated into policy and processes, and ultimately, serves those who need the most support.

Stempel College is young and nimble, which allows us to seize opportunities for smart growth and trends. Stempel College is ready to:

- Showcase its untold stories about educational offerings, faculty expertise, and alumni achievements.
- Rise in national rankings, becoming a national and world leader.
- Expand reach through increased enrollment, educational offerings and research.
- Capitalize on our unique location, topically and geographically, given our proximity to the Caribbean and Latin America. (e.g., resiliency, aging population, tropical diseases, addiction, global health.)
- Expand and strengthen our financial base and our interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration.

Strategic Challenges

Stempel College faces notable strategic challenges. The school of public health at the college is not yet ranked and we need to expand its reputation at the national and international levels. Also, there are local and regional universities and programs that compete for top students and faculty, and a campaign to build a private college of public health is underway nearby, which would intensify competition.

While interdisciplinary opportunities abound, we are not maximizing them within the college and University.

Prior to the arrival of Dean Tomás Guilarte in 2016, performance, productivity and accountability lagged because of leadership instability, and operations have room for increased efficiencies. Despite recent success in increasing NIH research funds, the college has a limited base of resources with a reliance on state and federal dollars. With public dollars becoming increasingly competitive and variable, the College is under great pressure to increase and diversify its revenue streams.

Strategic Initiatives: A Bridge to the Future

To achieve our mission and vision, we must strengthen our work in the following three categories:

- Student and Faculty Success
- Research Preeminence
- Operations, Communications and Revenue

These categories reflect *FIU Beyond Possible 2020* and the State University System of Florida's performance metrics. For each category, we have delineated goals, strategies, and actions.

Strategic Initiative 1: Student and Faculty Success

Goal 1: Grow enrollment consistent with FIU's strategic enrollment goals and objectives.

- A. Increase the volume of the applicant pool and the breadth of the applicant profile by enhancing the college's on- and off-campus visibility through strategic marketing, outreach and recruitment efforts.
 - i. Establish strategic partnerships with academic units across the University (4+1 and/or pipelines) and with other universities.

- ii. Strengthen existing partnerships and build outreach to student groups in critical areas on campus, with a focus on underrepresented minority groups.
- iii. Strengthen presence at international, national, state and local events and organizations, with a focus on the under-represented minority community.
- iv. Establish strategic local, national and global partnerships to develop or redesign program curricula that address workforce needs.
- v. Expand online program delivery options to broaden our student market.
- vi. Establish online presence and brand with the launching of a new website.
- vii. Expand our digital customer relationship management communication campaign for systematic messaging to prospective students.

B. Increase student-program pre- and post-enrollment engagement and the admitted-to enrolled yield.

- i. Establish early communication with applicants to help ease the transition.
- ii. Strengthen communication with prospective students and applicants, with a focus on application completion.
- iii. Leverage programs' faculty/graduate program directors (GPD's), advisors and student ambassadors to establish one-on-one communication and engage with admitted students.
- iv. Build early programming to meet with newly admitted students in the pre-enrollment stage (new admit visiting day, etc.).
- v. Track student commitment to enrolling in the program ("save your spot" approach).

C. Operationalize best practices in admissions procedures.

- i. Establish monthly and quarterly meetings with the units to discuss admissions processes, best practices and challenges.
- ii. Identify and implement solutions and efficiencies to possible bottlenecks and challenges in the admissions processes.
- iii. Adopt applicable best practices in admissions for the entire college.

D. Strengthen the college's student success and retention efforts.

- i. Identify points of high attrition in program curricula.
- ii. Meet with first semester and first-year students to identify possible challenges for program completion.
- iii. Leverage student associations and organizations for peer mentorship opportunities (increase engagement).
- iv. Increase student-advisor engagement to ensure retention from one semester to the next (may include call campaigns and email outreach).

Goal 2: Support and strengthen student success efforts.

- A. Support and strengthen student engagement in student organizations, college-led community initiatives, and faculty research:

- i. Provide administrative support and coordination to enhance college-wide cross-disciplinary student engagement opportunities both on and off campus.
 - ii. Provide overall support to enhance communication, event publicity and collaboration across student organizations, departments and the college.
 - iii. Develop a student ambassador program to assist newly admitted graduate and undergraduate students in their first-year transition and retention.
 - iv. Work closely with faculty to identify and match faculty-led research and community initiatives with students based on interest, academic performance and career goals.
- B. Identify and establish early, routine funding/financial literacy workshops and communication to ensure that students are successful in focusing on their academic and professional advancement.
- C. Continue to strengthen academic advising efforts, monitoring student progress, identifying necessary points of intervention and ensuring successful and timely degree completion.
- D. Establish close communications between students, faculty and staff to identify possible barriers in graduate student retention.
- E. Work with doctoral students and faculty mentors to enhance mentor-mentee engagement, while increasing research productivity and student publications in peer reviewed journals.

Goal 3: Prepare students at the undergraduate, masters, doctoral, and post-doctoral levels for successful career transition.

- A. Conduct local, national and global surveys of skill requirements for careers in public health, dietetics and nutrition and social work.
- B. Leverage the college's faculty, alumni and community partners to build a stronger professional network for career development by asking them to:
 - i. Attend job preparation talks and practicum/capstone presentations.
 - ii. Serve as mentors to current students.
 - iii. Join our network of practicum and internship preceptors and field instructors.
 - iv. Provide the college with input and guidance on workforce skills required for modern-day scholars, practitioners and leaders.
- C. Enhance targeted educational/professional activities and workshops that support seamless career integration for all students.
- D. Expand the college's network of community agencies and partners to provide more practicum and internship sites to students.

Goal 4: Support and advance quality instruction and a teaching environment that facilitates optimal learning.

- A. Provide adequate resources in the form of TAs and administrative support based on course load and student enrollment.
- B. Maintain a faculty/student ratio that allows for effective student engagement and learning.
- C. Promote effective and engaging teaching methods.
- D. Offer teaching opportunities to faculty aligned with their research priorities and interests.

- E. Increase online and hybrid course offerings to meet FIU's metrics.
- F. Support adaptive instructional technologies for better student learning outcomes.
- G. Develop and offer strategic online classes for public health, social welfare, and dietetics and nutrition professionals to learn and advance their careers.
- H. Support and encourage faculty to incorporate experiential learning through community centric activities in their courses.
- I. Create a learning environment that supports diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence.

Goal 5: Develop administrative strategies and structures to grow, recognize and reward faculty success in teaching, research, and community engagement.

- A. Promote collegiality and collaboration:
 - i. Create and promote opportunities within the college to encourage interaction, idea sharing and collaboration amongst units and other FIU colleges.
 - ii. Develop an interdisciplinary work environment centered on research priorities.
 - iii. Stimulate interest in faculty cooperation in research and professional development.
 - iv. Create and host informal gatherings (e.g. coffee hour) to facilitate exchanges and promote collegiality.
 - v. Enhance communication of professional activities and achievements.
 - vi. Maximize existing resources and infrastructure through continuous improvement and streamlining of activities.
- B. Incentivize excellent teaching, research and service.
 - i. Provide incentives to attend course design workshops and develop new courses.
 - ii. Develop transparent, equitable and comprehensive systems to evaluate faculty success, including teaching performance, mentoring results, publication productivity, funding received and community service engagement/impact.
 - iii. Develop and implement faculty and staff reward system to incentivize excellence.
 - iv. Develop and implement improvement plans for those who need the support.
 - v. Develop procedures for promoting clinical faculty in the college's programs.
 - vi. Explore conversions of high performing adjuncts who are qualified for instructor positions.
 - vii. Offer teaching opportunities to postdoctoral fellows in the college.

Strategic Initiative 2: Research Preeminence.

Goal 1: Sustain and expand research leadership in health disparities to improve health equity and treatment.

- A. Leverage emerging preeminent program status and NIH health disparity endowment to grow student, postdoctoral, staff and faculty participation in health disparities research.

- B. Leverage existing and developing relationships to build and expand interdisciplinary research groups to pursue and receive extramural funding to support research in health disparities.

Goal 2: Establish research leadership in brain, behavior, and environment, an emerging preeminent program based at Stempel College and supported by FIU.

- A. Leverage and broaden emerging preeminent program status to recruit and retain students, postdoctoral fellows, staff and faculty whose research focuses on brain, behavior and the environment.
- B. Expand participation in the program through engagement of additional collaborators at the University.
- C. Develop interdisciplinary working groups to pursue and receive extramural funding to support research on brain, behavior and the environment.

Goal 3: Increase number and diversity of doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows and junior faculty dedicated to research-focused careers.

- A. Develop strategies to increase funding available to increase the number of doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows and junior faculty.
- B. Establish a pipeline from FIU undergraduate programs to doctoral programs in Stempel College.
- C. Partner with College, University and external groups to enhance the ability to recruit diverse students, postdoctoral fellows and faculty.

Goal 4: Increase number of submitted and awarded extramural research proposals and contracts submitted and awarded.

- A. Develop and expand interdisciplinary research interest groups within and outside the college that will lead to enhanced collaborations resulting in increased peer-reviewed articles, external funding, training opportunities and additional emerging preeminent program labels.
- B. Establish a pilot grant program to advance the objectives listed in A.
- C. Strengthen grant proposal development success through workshops and creation of a research mentoring committee.
- D. Reorganize and streamline proposal and contract submission procedures to increase efficiency and decrease administrative burden.
- E. Reorganize and streamline grants management process to increase efficiency and decrease administrative burden.
- F. Create new and revise existing grant policies and procedures.

Goal 5: Increase number of patents, startups and licensing income.

- A. Develop and implement initiatives to energize the enterprise culture and creativity of the college.
 - i. Establish a College Enterprise Strategy, Policy and Performance Committee.
 - ii. Develop workshops and collaborative relationships with internal and external partners to engage and educate faculty on intellectual property opportunities.

Strategic Initiative 3: Operations, Communications and Revenue Strength.

Goal 1: Engage in continuous quality assurance to streamline the financial base

through organizational efficiencies within all units and at the college level.

- A. Foster and nurture a culture of collaboration and accountability:
 - i. Recognize areas for collaboration and establish expectations for teams to perform at those levels.
 - ii. Establish clear expectations for individual employee performance metrics.
 - iii. Motivate and recognize high-performing employees.
- B. Strengthen processes to increase efficiencies and customer service to all stakeholders:
 - i. Hire a senior-level manager to oversee the administrative operations of the college.
 - ii. Analyze key administrative jobs to identify synergies and challenges in operational processes.
 - iii. Redefine and clarify administrative processes and workflows to improve efficiencies and customer service.

Goal 2: Strengthen college branding, promotion, and communication.

- A. Elevate the Stempel College brand to top-tier status through marketing and public relations.
- B. Utilize the College's new website and marketing materials to grow student enrollment.
- C. Tell the college's story in innovative ways through social media and dynamic digital platforms.
- D. Spotlight pioneering research initiatives to attract more funding and students.

Goal 3: Increase and diversify revenue streams for the college.

- A. Develop an **advancement** strategy with financial targets to expand philanthropic revenue:
 - i. Hire a development officer who will lead the efforts in strategy and execution.
 - ii. Engage and train faculty in fundraising.
- B. Develop an **auxiliary revenue** strategy to identify funding resources, activities and programs to increase this stream in the budget:
 - i. Develop continuing and professional education (CPE) programs responsive to existing and emerging local and global professional community needs, with an emphasis on Latin American and the Caribbean.
 - ii. Develop and expand online offerings including an online MPH degree program.
 - iii. Nurture the expansion of patent, startup, and other business opportunities resulting from the college's enterprise strategy.
 - iv. Develop revenue-sharing policies between college and departments/school.
 - v. Develop incentives for faculty and departments/schools to engage in auxiliary revenue activities.

Implementation

This Strategic Plan provides a framework for pursuing the college's goals, strategies and, in some cases, proposed actions. Next steps include action planning and operationalization. Many initiatives are already underway, including strategic enrollment planning, enterprise committee, operations improvements, communications and marketing

planning, along with the fully online MPH degree program. The college is conducting searches for vacant and new leadership positions, who will accelerate implementation once in place.

Timeline and measuring progress

This plan will be implemented, executed and measured with assigned accountability and targets through 2020. Progress will be assessed at regular intervals under the direction of the Executive Director of Operations in concert with the Dean's Executive Committee.

Summary

The community is our partner, and Stempel College's unique location—at the intersection of the Americas—drives us to solve the complicated public health and social welfare issues burdening neighbors near and far. Our robust research portfolio and initiatives, as well as our emerging preeminent programs, bring students to the forefront of their fields. Together, with the University's support and through innovative methods, we can all contribute in a meaningful way. Together we are poised for greatness. Together for the greater good.

Appendix:
Strategic Research Plan for Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work

Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work's (Stempel College) strategic research plan builds on the current research strengths of the college and the University (<https://beyondpossible.fiu.edu/index.html>), while recognizing and addressing important social, economic and political factors associated with the climate of health—near and far. The research plan encourages Stempel College to recognize the importance of collaboration with other colleges and centers at FIU, as well as with external academic institutions and community partners beyond our Miami campus.

The plan reflects the integration of ideas from all units within Stempel College by way of our strategic research planning committee. This committee comprises members from all units who reached a consensus.

The committee will present the final plan to Stempel College's faculty for endorsement.

Stempel College strategically seeks to increase invention and innovation in the following research areas:

Sustain research leadership in health disparities and improving health equity

Establish research leadership in environmental exposure, neurotoxicology, neuroscience, and healthy and pathological aging.

Develop innovative approaches that are patentable, which is a goal that aligns with the FIU *Beyond Possible 2020* strategic plan (increase patents per year from 2 to 20).

Reducing Health Disparities and Improving Health Equity

Stempel College is developing a multidisciplinary community-based and participatory health disparity program that will involve the training of doctoral students, postdoctoral scholars, faculty members and community stakeholders in an effort to understand and reduce the impact of HIV, substance abuse and obesity issues among Latinos, African Americans, Haitians and other underserved populations living in South Florida and the Caribbean. This research program of research will be established and implemented in partnership with other colleges and centers within FIU, other academic institutions and community-based organizations. Stempel College's ongoing relationships with the FIU Health Network, Banyan Health Care Systems, Care Resources, GHESKIO in Haiti and the Hospital Metropolitano de Santiago in the Dominican Republic are central to the program. These organizations will enable us to perform culturally relevant evidence-based interventions.

Environmental Exposure, Aging, Neurotoxicology and Neuroscience

We can maximize our expertise in basic research labs (i.e., mechanism-based neurotoxicology/neuroscience, cancer, and human genomics for molecular diagnosis and prevention) and data analytics labs by aggregating our personnel resources within Stempel College. Our researchers are eager to use cutting-edge techniques to study the causes, treatments and prevention of infectious and chronic public health conditions, such as neurodegenerative diseases, cancer, and cardiovascular disease.