Penn State shield logo with black text and blue shield

Unit Strategic Plan: College of Health and Human Development

2014/2015 through 2018/2019

A more detailed version of this plan can be found at:

<https://hhd.psu.edu/about/college-health-and-human-development-strategic-plans>

**College of Health and Human Development Strategic Plan 2014-2019**

Mission**:**

The College of Health and Human Development is a collaborative community of faculty, staff, students, and alumni seeking to improve human health, development, and the quality of life for all people through innovative education, interdisciplinary research, and effective outreach with a scope that encompasses “cells to society” and conception through old age.

Vision**:**

The College of Health and Human Development seeks to be a national and international leader in education, research, and outreach focused on improving human health, development, and quality of life across the life course.

The college seeks to maximize human potential by facilitating human, family and community resilience in the face of challenge and risk. This approach lends itself to a focus on prevention and health promotion—to finding effective, sustainable ways to help all individuals flourish and to strengthen the key relationships and contexts that shape human health and well-being, including families, schools, workplaces, hospitality settings, parks and protected environments, communities, health care systems, and diverse cultures.

Our mission can be best addressed in an interdisciplinary environment that combines the life sciences, social and behavioral sciences, and organization and management sciences. We seek to develop innovative solutions to complex problems that can be tackled at different levels and from different disciplinary perspectives. Themes include the complex interplay among biological processes, behavior, cognition, emotion, and context; the unfolding health of the developing organism; methodological innovation; and a commitment to inclusiveness and diversity that encourages attention to vulnerable populations, disparities, and disabilities.

No college can accomplish such lofty goals alone; we are highly collaborative. Community or industry partnerships are woven into many of our activities, and we seek to create and strengthen relationships between industry and the academy, seasoned alumni and students eager to learn about careers, and faculty members and students.

## Goal 1: Enhancing our Health and Well-Being

Because the college’s mission is to “improve human health, development, and the quality of life for all people,” the topic of health is woven through every section of this plan. Here we highlight some of our major health-related initiatives, but in a sense our entire plan could fit under this heading.

### Objective 1: To increase the college’s interdisciplinary, collaborative, externally-funded research portfolio.

*Strategies:*

1. Create a new college-wide research center to catalyze innovative, interdisciplinary research on individualized, adaptive interventions to improve health. This center will combine many of the college’s strengths to provide a holistic angle on personalized health as it plays out in everyday life and in real time. These strengths include preventive interventions; attention to biology, behavior, relationships, and subjective experience; real time assessment of health via intensive streams of data from sensors, accelerometers, mobile health monitoring devices, and other technology; and expertise in the analysis of complex, intensive data. The new center will be a site for interdisciplinary research, post-doctoral and pre-doctoral training, undergraduate student engagement, and outreach. Its focus provides an opportunity to connect with the Social Science Research Institute (SSRI), Penn State Institutes for Energy and the Environment, the Materials Research Institute (MRI), the Huck Institutes for the Life Sciences, the Institute for CyberScience, and the Colleges of Engineering, Information Sciences and Technology, Nursing, and Medicine.
2. Increase the number of tenure-track faculty in the college, with an emphasis onthe substantive areas listed below. The priority areas include:

* Aging and longevity, including faculty who bring expertise in the biological and life sciences, social and behavioral sciences, and management science
* Health and health care disparities, including the development, implementation and evaluation of effective programs and policies designed to reduce health disparities.
* Maternal and child health, including interventions that improve the health and well-being of both generations.
* Prevention science, including individualized, adaptive interventions; program evaluation; evidence-based approaches to increasing the scalability and dissemination of successful interventions; and economic approaches to evaluating the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
* Effective rehabilitation strategies, including individualized interventions to improve the functioning and quality of life of individuals already experiencing health challenges or disabilities.
* Workplace and organizational processes that enhance employee health, safety, and psychological well-being.
* Innovative research methods particularly for the analysis of intensive, complex data such as longitudinal data, genetics data, imaging data, medical records, business analytics, and large epidemiology data sets.

1. Create new mechanisms to pull dispersed faculty members together around three substantive domains that are important for the college’s sustained excellence in research, teaching, and outreach.

* Biological Bases of Human Health and Development. We have biomedical and life scientists in multiple units across the college. We will bring this diverse group together, identify their needs, implement changes that are feasible and likely to improve efficiency and productivity, and encourage ongoing interaction and collaboration.
* Global Health. HHD faculty members are conducting research in the area of global health, broadly defined, in many areas of the college and different parts of the world. We will create a Global Health Interest Group that will share research and teaching ideas; reach out to other units on campus interested in global health; dovetail with the Office of Global Programs to help fuel the progress of the emergent Global Engagement Network (GEN) in Global Health; and help chart the college’s directions in this area.
* Workplaces and Organizations. We have faculty across the college who are interested in leadership and management in organizations in the health care, human services, and hospitality industries, as well as researchers interested in workplace processes that are conducive to employee health and well-being. We will organize a faculty interest group to identify common interests and needs and encourage scholarly exchange and collaboration.

### OBJECTIVE 2: To play a greater, more visible, and more impactful role in promoting the health of Penn State students, faculty, and staff.

*Strategies:*

1. Expand on-campus health-related offerings that also provide exciting opportunities for student engagement. Activities include increasing the capacity and use of Kinesiology’s Center for Fitness and Wellness to provide users with personalized data on their health and fitness; promoting the annual fall “Exercise is Medicine” program, Kinesiology’s campus-wide public health initiative; extending the public health campaign concept to other academic units in the college, and collaborating with the College of Nursing on their proposed wellness clinic.

## Goal 2: Expanding Diversity and Inclusiveness

Our society is characterized by striking inequalities in health, development, and well-being, a pattern that is evident in many cultures around the world. Finding effective ways to prevent problems and to promote healthy living in culturally sensitive ways is at the core of many of our research and educational activities. This focus on inequality and disparity also dovetails with ethics and social justice.

### Objective 1: To increase the college’s expertise in the field of health disparities, a field that represents the intersection of culture, diversity, and inequality.

*Strategies:*

1. Increase the College’s substantive focus and expertise not only on understanding health disparities, but on the development, implementation and evaluation of effective programs and policies designed to reduce disparities by making a strategic faculty cluster hire in the area of health disparities.
2. Create a new annual “Distinguished Health Disparities Scholar in Residence Program.” Each year a distinguished scholar will spend up to a week on campus sharing his or her knowledge on health disparities, consulting with researchers working on proposals in the area, meeting with student groups, and giving a public talk. Securing funding for this initiative will be a development priority.
3. Work with the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost to bring together relevant constituencies from across the University to create a group to collaborate with the CIC on its initiative in the area of health disparities.

### Objective 2: To strengthen the college’s curricular coverage at the intersection of health, culture, and ethics.

*Strategies:*

1. Recruit two ethics faculty members in BBH and Kinesiology as part of a University-wide cluster hire coordinated by the Rock Ethics Institute. These additions will complement the effort to build expertise in health disparities.
2. Work with academic units to strengthen their undergraduate curricula with regard to the inclusion of culture, ethics, and their intersection. Some of the most egregious lapses in ethical conduct of health research have occurred in studies of vulnerable, underrepresented groups. Moreover, workforce and patient/client/customer diversity in the services fields makes this a priority for students headed into management and leadership roles.

### Objective 3: To increase the extent to which the college is perceived as a welcoming environment for men and women from diverse backgrounds, disciplines, scientific traditions, and cultures.

*Strategies:*

1. Update and disseminate our shared, inclusive definition of diversity and enhance our rich programming in diversity events, including creating an annual tradition in the college that involves recognizing and celebrating our cultures.
2. Examine recent data related to climate (e.g., the University’s recent survey on values, recent HR surveys); give consideration to repeating the College’s Climate Survey, which was administered in 2008; and assess opportunities for improving our climate through better diversity planning, communication and monitoring progress.
3. Ensure every HHD faculty or staff search applies best practices in diversity recruitment.

## Goal 3: Transforming Education and Access

Providing an excellent experience for students, inside and outside the classroom, is a core mission of HHD. In line with the collaborative ethos underscored in our mission statement, our strategic initiatives that involve transforming education involve partnerships—with Outreach, the Schreyer Honors College, the campuses, and an array of organizations that are “living laboratories” for student engagement.

### Objective 1: Improve the quantity and quality of HHD’s offerings on the World Campus

*Strategies:*

1. Add one or two new degree programs per year over the next five years. The next three programs are likely to be bachelor’s degrees in HPA and BBH and a master’s degree in Nutritional Sciences.
2. Integrate more gaming media, simulations, social media/apps, and problem-based learning into our online courses; expand the use of Google Analytics and other analytic strategies to improve quality of instruction, assessment, and course design; strengthen the HHD community of online faculty by offering learning opportunities and ways to connect with each other; and enhance student engagement by offering extracurricular content online.

### Objective 2: Improve the quality of HHD resident instruction.

*Strategies:*

1. Encourage faculty to borrow successful online teaching strategies to use in resident instruction by hiring an additional instructional designer, part of whose assignment will be to work with faculty to help them make innovative changes in resident instruction.
2. Enhance undergraduate students’ career exploration by developing collaborative programs with Penn State Career Services, the HHD Alumni Society Board’s Careers Committee, the HHD Internships and Careers Committee, and the Center for Healthy Aging; creating a major/career exploration website; and, selecting an online system for matching alumni and organizations offering job shadowing and internships with interested students.
3. Increase the number of Schreyer Honors College students who enter HHD as first-year students by 100% in the next five years, including the number of HHD honors students from under-represented groups.
4. Expand the number of honors courses available in the college with the aim of having HHD honors students take at least 50% of their HHD honors credits in formal courses (not honors options).
5. Enhance undergraduate and graduate students’ quantitative thinking and digital communication and literacy skills through curricular changes.

### Objective 3: Increase the number of HHD undergraduate students participating in engaged scholarship.

*Strategies:*

1. Increase the number of HHD undergraduate students who are participating in research laboratories and projects on an academic credit, paid, or volunteer basis.
2. Increase incentives for faculty to integrate undergraduates into their research labs/projects, to mentor undergraduate thesis work, to provide engaged field-based learning opportunities (including international experiences), and to advise student clubs and organizations.
3. Expand opportunities within selected courses for undergraduates to participate in team assignments and teach students to negotiate roles within a team, especially in teams that cut across disciplines.
4. Add faculty and internship site capacity to the undergraduate Minor in Global Health so that more students can participate.

### Objective 4: Enhance the diversity of the college’s faculty, staff, and students.

*Strategies:*

1. Conduct an evaluation of the structure, functions, and resources of the Diversity Enhancement Office to assess the office’s ability to meet college diversity goals and implement changes recommended.
2. Develop programs and resources to focus on working with at-risk students in HHD, collaborating with Student Services, unit advisors, and University resources to improve retention, increase the percentage graduating in 4 years, and enhance student success.
3. Improve the Diversity Enhancement Office communications by creating and maintaining an active web presence, developing improved print materials, and creating an overall communications plan for the office.
4. Expand efforts to celebrate culture, diversity, and heritage in HHD.
5. Assist academic units with infusing diversity topics in existing courses and developing new courses and co-curricular activities that foster U.S. and international cultural competencies, developing an integrated approach to undergraduate education in diversity, and assessing graduate curricula for diversity content.
6. Expand on the success of our annual “Healthy People Penn State” recruitment conference to enhance underrepresented graduate student recruitment and retention, and improve recruitment and retention of underrepresented undergraduate students, faculty, and staff.
7. Assess the growing diversity of our student population and the growing “diversity within our diversity” (e.g., increased Latino, international, LGBTQ, and persons with disability representation) and develop approaches to ensure a welcoming climate for these individuals.
8. Outline and implement a leadership development program focused on ensuring that faculty and staff representing diverse perspectives have the foundational experiences needed to advance into department, center, college, and University leadership roles.

### Objective 5: Bolster graduate student recruitment efforts in order to improve the quantity and quality of the applicants as well as yield rates.

*Strategies:*

1. Work with the College of the Liberal Arts to create a dual degree doctoral program in Social and Behavioral Neuroscience.
2. Work with the Graduate School, the College of Agricultural Sciences, and other stakeholders to build and strengthen the dual-degree program in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment.
3. Explore options for developing professional master’s degrees in Athletic Training and Physical Therapy, the latter in coordination with the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation in the College of Medicine.
4. Coordinate efforts among our academic units to make sure that all doctoral students who have passed the ESL exam have the opportunity to serve as teaching assistants and/or instructors in resident instruction and/or through the World Campus and receive mentoring about teaching.
5. Conduct a thorough examination of the competitiveness of our graduate assistantship stipend levels and an analysis of how academic units have been using their assistantships.

## GOAL 4: Managing and Stewarding Our Resources

Faculty and staff are the central resource of the University. This part of our plan involves practicing what we preach—applying our knowledge of health and healthy work environments to the HHD community in order to sustain our most important resource—our people. Some of our goals involve efforts to improve health that will in turn help the University conserve financial resources, and other goals involve efforts to improve the climate of the college as experienced by faculty and staff.

### Objective 1: To lend our expertise to the University in efforts designed to improve faculty and staff health and to make the most efficient use of the University’s health care coverage dollars.

*Strategies:*

1. Make available substantive expertise from HPA, the Center for Health Care and Policy Research, and other relevant parts of the college to leaders in HR, University Health Services, and Finance and Business charged with making health insurance decisions.
2. Collaborate with the College of Nursing on a new wellness clinic for faculty and staff.

### Objective 2: To improve the climate and quality of work life for faculty and staff.

*Strategies:*

1. Address HHD faculty members’ sense of stress and pressure at a time when external research dollars have become difficult to attain and undergraduate numbers have swelled by introducing a set of policies, resources, and internal mechanisms designed to free up time, reward engagement with students, and incentivize grant-getting.
2. Encourage staff to participate in such health-related efforts as Exercise is Medicine, the College of Nursing’s Proposed Wellness Clinic and the Center for Fitness and Wellness, as well as colloquia and presentations taking place throughout the college and to put such activities into their annual professional development plans
3. Create a task force of academic leaders and staff to identify and implement administrative efficiencies that may involve sharing staff across units for certain activities that require specialized expertise and developing college-specific professional development programs.
4. Provide support (e.g., pilot funding, facilitating connections) for faculty interested in tech transfer.

### Objective 3: To increase our expertise in those aspects of prevention science that pertain to sustainability and the efficient use of resources.

*Strategies:*

1. Develop greater research and teaching expertise on assessing the cost-effectiveness of interventions by making at least one strategic faculty hire in the area of economic approaches to assessing intervention effects.
2. Increase the number of pre- and post-doctoral trainees who are exposed to coursework on the methodologies to assess the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
3. Focus on the dissemination and scalability of research-initiated, evidence-based, preventive interventions so that programs continue to endure—and thrive—long after the research funding for them has ended. This will help us extend the value and impact of scarce external research dollars and increase the effect of interventions by impacting more people over time.

### Objective 4: Help the University make the most of its resources by building and strengthening partnerships with different parts of the University.

*Strategies:*

1. Strengthen collaboration between the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management and Outreach’s Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center by co-hiring a faculty leader in outdoor education.
2. Share HHD’s degree programs with selected campuses to improve their sustainability and help the University address its land grant mission.
3. Develop stronger ties with the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and the College of Medicine (CoM), including its regional campus in State College, to increase research collaboration, grow the grant portfolio in both units, and attract and retain faculty interested in biomedical research.

## Goal 5: Leveraging Our Digital Assets

Like the world, the college is moving in a digital direction. Our teaching, research, and outreach goals require that we deepen our expertise in the collection and analysis of complex digital data, prepare students to work and live in a digital world, and interface more effectively with our many constituencies via the Web.

### OBJECTIVE 1: Position the college to be better able to leverage digital assets.

*Strategies****:***

1. Increase expertise within the college in the gathering, managing, and analysis of complex, intensive data by adding faculty members with relevant methodological expertise and creating a new research center that harnesses the power of intensive streams of real-time health data to develop and refine personalized, adaptive interventions.
2. Improve the college’s understanding of students’ career outcomes by coordinating an integrated effort between units, the college, and the University’s Career Services Center to collect consistent and actionable data on job and graduate school placement and other relevant outcomes on for graduating seniors/recent alumni.
3. Work within the college to take better advantage of digital media by building a comprehensive and dynamic web and social media presence for the college in order to enhance collaboration with new campus-based RI programs, WC students, and faculty and to improve opportunities for academic units, research centers, and the college to connect with prospective students and their families, current students, alumni, donors, and other constituencies.
4. Train staff, dean’s office administrators, and academic unit and research center administrators in iTwo to enable more effective, data-driven college and unit decision making.

METRICS**:**

We see the plans and actions described above as working in concert to move the college forward. Five years from now, if the collective efforts represented by this strategic plan have been successful, we will have:

* Increased the diversity of HHD’s faculty and staff. Currently 8% of our academic employees and 9% of our staff are from underrepresented groups. The goal is to attain at least 12 % for both groups.
* Grown the number of diversity-related courses in the college from 40 to 45 (approximately one new course per year).
* Increased the diversity of HHD’s undergraduate enrollment from 13% underrepresented students (African American—7%; Hispanic—6%) to 18% and increased the proportion of international undergraduates in the college from 3% to 6%.
* Increased the number of undergraduate students who come into HHD as first year students by 25% (using the official fall census in Week 6 as our measurement point). In fall 2013, the college had 358 first-year students and in summer 2013, we had 157 first-year students.
* Doubled the number of first-year Schreyer Honors students in HHD from the 2009-2013 average of 5, increased the overall number of Schreyer Honors students in HHD by 33%, and have every graduating Schreyer Honors student get at least 50% of their HHD honors courses in formal courses.
* Maintained or modestly increased the overall size of the college’s undergraduate student body (as measured by University Park majors) consistent with increased resources.
* Improved the 6-year graduation rate from 77.2% for all HHD students at UP to 82%, and from 71% to 79% for HHD’s underrepresented students (African American, Hispanic or multiracial).
* Grown from two full degree programs on the World Campus to at least 7 full degree programs online and doubled our gross revenue.
* Maintained or increased the current number of doctoral students in the face of shrinking federal grant dollars.
* Increased the proportion of graduate students from underrepresented groups from 11.7% to 16% (this includes World Campus students).
* Continued to increase the proportion of all full-time faculty members who are tenured/tenure-track faculty (our goal is to continue a reversal that has barely gotten traction).
* Increased the dollar amount of research awards by at least 20% over the next five years (see chart on page 19).
* Continued to prioritize development goals aimed at faculty recruitment and retention (i.e., faculty endowments), student recruitment and retention (e.g., scholarships, program endowments), and research productivity (e.g., research center program support, faculty endowments, strategic foundation grants).