

Office of Research: Five-Year Strategic Plan (2025–2030)

Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine (MSOM) is committed to developing physicians who are professionally accomplished, socially responsible, and community oriented. This commitment drives the research trajectory for the newest medical school in the Eastern United States, the only osteopathic school in Maryland, and the first medical school in the state in over a century.

Our 2030 bold goals for research align with those of our parent healthcare system, not only in timeline, but also in mission and vision. During the next five years, the Meritus School of Osteopathic Medicine will establish itself as a center of academic scholarship and research excellence within Maryland and the nation.

Mission

Driving research and innovation to meet real-world needs and promote health, equity, and well-being for all.

Approach

The development of the research strategic plan is a multi-divisional, collaborative process with input and feedback from a wide net of stakeholders including MSOM faculty, staff, and administration. Additional consideration and input was included from the Meritus Office of Graduate Medical Education, and stakeholders from Meritus Health: Meritus Medical Center, Meritus Medical Group, and Brook Lane.

Research Pillars

The MSOM Research Strategic Plan threads four broad themes (MSOM research pillars) longitudinally throughout five strategic priority areas;

RESEARCH PILLARS

- **Education-based:** Undergraduate Medical and Graduate Medical Research Education
- **Discovery-driven:** Data Analytics, Basic, Translational, and Clinical Research
- **Community-focused:** Population Health, Health Equity, and Social Determinants of Health
- **Outcome-oriented:** Impactful research with real-world health benefits and results



Strategic Priority 1: Student, Faculty, and Investigator Support

Goal: Empower faculty and students with resources, training, and infrastructure to engage in high-impact research.

Sub-Aim 1: Build foundational research infrastructure and policies

Action items

- Establish and amend research policies
- Embed research into the pre-clinical curriculum and measure progress and outcomes
- Create mentoring programs for student research
- Create longitudinal student research tracks
- Establish a research seminar and workshop series for faculty, staff, students

Sub-Aim 2: Build research budgets and faculty development pipeline

Action items

- Establish intramural grant program
- Incentivize interdisciplinary research
- Establish additional faculty development
- PI development for clinical trials
- Annual research symposium

Sub-Aim 3: Establish physical infrastructure for clinical, basic, translational, and data research

- Establish BSL-2 Research laboratory
- Establish dedicated clinical research space
- Establish a center for excellence in data analytics

Sub-Aim 4: Grow clinical research footprint

- Increase provider interest
- Increase portfolio and departments
- Establish avenues for provider and MSOM-initiated clinical research

Strategic Priority 2: Infrastructure, compliance, and governance

Goal: Build robust administrative and compliance systems to support the highest caliber research

Sub-aim 1: Build core infrastructure for research activity and tracking

Action items

- Establish project tracking processes
- Build Office of Research process and outcome analytics dashboards
- Establish collaboration and MOU tracking processes
- Scholarly activity reporting processes

Sub-aim 2: Build upon core OHSR and IRB infrastructure

Action items

- Review and amend IRB policies
- Implement Cayuse, e-IRB system

Sub-aim 3: Build core IBC infrastructure

Action items

- Establish Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)
- Develop internal IBC processes

Sub-aim 4: Build core data analytics infrastructure

Action items

- Secure dedicated REDCap server
- Develop secure REDCap/database systems
- Create data sharing and security policies

Sub-aim 5: Audits, assurances, and accreditation

Action items

- Implement processes for compliance and data management
- Create protocols for internal audits – IRB, Clinical Research, IBC
- COCA standard 8
- CoC standard 9.1
- Federal Wide Assurance
- Conduct internal audit/reviews of compliance and workflows and timelines

Strategic Priority 3: Data-Driven Insights

Goal: Leverage data to inform, improve, and drive research

Action items

Sub-Aim 1: Establish access pipelines

- Secure Epic data protocols for researchers
- Partner with Public Health Department and others for local, regional datasets
- Create de-identified datasets or data warehouse with EPIC, QI, and public data
- Establish training and development in artificial intelligence (AI) models and machine learning
- Collaborate with Meritus health on dashboards to identify community health trends

Sub-Aim-2: Expand analytical capacity; Grow personnel and capabilities

Sub-Aim 3: Design and support procedures, training, infrastructure to take observational research findings to practice or experimental studies

Strategic Priority 4: Translating Research into Action

Goal: Ensure that research leads to tangible (health) outcomes.

Sub-aim 1: Build pipeline of community and applied research

Action items

- Link mobile clinic activities to research opportunities
- Pilot volunteer-led survey projects

Sub-aim 2: Develop outreach-to-research pathways***Action items***

- Create protocols for transitioning outreach to research
- Establish support systems for sustained research in mobile clinics
- Develop community trust for mobile clinics (and research)
- Build community and trust through MSOM-sponsored research events/ youth development
 - District Science Fair (Washington Co. does not have a district science fair for Maryland state science fair)
 - Science camps or school outreach

Sub-aim 3: Evaluate outcomes of research-derived interventions**Sub-aim 4: Engage and inform community*****Action items***

- Establish quarterly research newsletter
- Public events regarding research

Strategic Priority 5: Research Collaborations, Funding, and Sustainability

Goal: Strengthen internal and external research partnerships and funding opportunities to expand capacity, and establish a diversified portfolio of extramural funding

Sub-Aim 1: Map existing assets and establish working database of agreements***Action items***

- Create partnership inventory
- Establish and grow working relationship with Meritus community health workers, nursing residency, and others
- Establish student/resident matchmaking portal
- Build partnerships through research MOUs
- Co-develop curriculum or dual-degree programs with local universities

Sub-Aim 2: Position MSOM as regional research hub***Action items***

- Host annual regional research conference by growing Scholar-Con
- Offer CME and CE for M*SPARC and Scholar-Con
- Join or create external research consortia focused similar goals

- Establish newsletter for internal and external stakeholders

Sub-Aim 3: Build grant-readiness infrastructure

Action items

- Establish sponsored programs personnel (research grant coordinator)
- Develop research grant pre- and post-award, indirect cost allocation, and other policies
- Establish living research grants database and maintain deadlines
- Establish MSOM Federal and state registrations for research funding and FOA
- Develop standard templates for biosketches, budgets, etc.
- Staff and faculty development

Sub-Aim 4: Submit foundational grants and establish sustainability plan