

Department of Psychiatry

Strategic Plan 2020-2025

Updated January 2022



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Message from the Department Head



In 2020, the Department of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University developed a 5-year strategic plan for the department (2020-2025). The strategic plan was developed with the input of internal and external stakeholders through various methods (e.g., one-on-one interviews with partners, focus groups with faculty, and an online survey for all department members). The Executive Committee of the department guided the process and signed off on the final strategic plan in early 2020. Following the completion of the strategic plan, more detailed operational/action plans were developed that included specific actions or tasks about

how the strategic directions and associated objectives would be implemented. The department is now underway with the implementation of these operational/action plans. These include initiatives by various committees and working groups to advance the wellness of our faculty and staff in our department, as well as to consolidate the gains to our clinical, educational and research programs.

In the summer of 2021, I joined the department as the new Head and remain committed to supporting the implementation of the strategic plan. The strategic directions and associated objectives and high level actions lay out a plan to achieve our vision, mission and goals.

The strategic plan identified enablers for moving the objectives and associated actions within the strategic plan forward. For example, governance and leadership was identified as an important enabler to support implementation of the strategic plan. The need to ensure an effective, efficient and inclusive department organizational structure is a key objective within the governance and leadership section. One of my first tasks in joining the department has been to review department structures to identify current strengths, gaps and opportunities to strengthen effectiveness. I have shared my vision for restructuring the department and sought feedback from faculty and staff on the benefits and risks. Based on this input, I will work with the Executive Committee and implement the proposed structural changes of creating four additional clinical academic divisions by April 2022.

Another opportunity for the department that aligns with and supports many of the objectives and actions with the four strategic directions is the creation of a Global Mental Health Program to be housed in a Centre for Global Mental Health. A Global Mental Health Program will include supporting priority populations such as First Nations communities, African Nova Scotians, and Newcomers who have not traditionally been well served by our mental health and addiction service system. As well, the Centre for Global Mental Health will support capacity building in psychiatric care in the global community, helping to extend the department's reach and engagement with partners from around the world.

I am very excited to join the department and appreciate the warm welcome and the support for the strategic plan. I am looking forward to working with everyone in our pursuit of excellence and innovation in education, research, and psychiatric care. With a shared vision, each of us contributing our quota to the strategic plan and working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders, our department is set to become a world leader and supporting transformational change in the mental health and addiction service system in Nova Scotia, the Maritimes and beyond.



Dr. Vincent I.O. Agyapong

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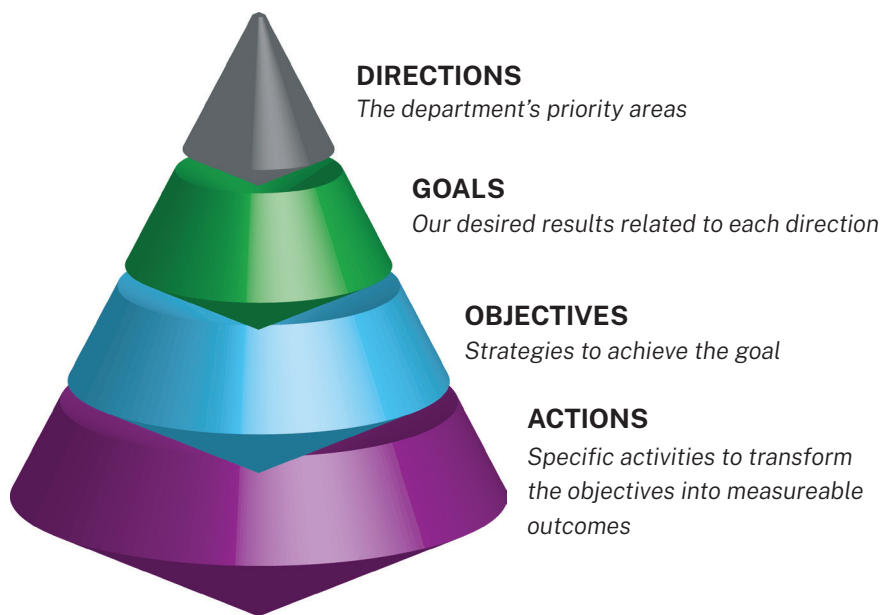
Background

The Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry is a clinical academic department within the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University. In the fall of 2018 a strategic planning process began, guided by the department's Executive Committee composed of the department head, directors of program areas (clinical, education, research, administration), and the division head of child and adolescent psychiatry. The strategic planning process will help to shape the department's direction for the coming years.

To inform the development of the strategic plan, an environmental scan was completed including a review and analysis of key department documents, and interviews with external stakeholders. The purpose of the environmental scan was to help identify strengths and potential opportunities for the department over the next five years. The findings from the environmental scan were used by Executive to develop a draft vision, mission, strategic directions, goals, objectives, and actions (referred to as the strategic plan framework).

Ten consultation sessions were completed with department faculty to obtain their feedback into the draft strategic plan framework. There was high participation in the consultation sessions with 71 faculty contributing feedback. Based on the findings from the consultation, a second draft of the goals, objectives and actions was developed.

The final step in the process included an online survey where the draft strategic plan framework was shared and final feedback from faculty and staff was obtained. A total of 32 completed surveys were received and the majority (close to 90 per cent) agreed with the vision, mission, objectives and actions. Written responses to open-ended questions were reviewed by Executive with final changes made to the strategic plan. Some of the feedback provided will be incorporated within the next phase of the process –operational planning. The operational plan will identify specific tasks, timelines, accountability, responsibility and indicators of success for the objectives and actions.



Our Mission, Vision, and Values

MISSION

To improve the mental health of society and advance the field of psychiatry through education, research, advocacy, and psychiatric care.

VISION

Excellence and innovation in education, research, and psychiatric care.

VALUES

The figure below depicts the department's core values.



Environmental Scan and Consultations

Interviews were conducted with leaders in the health system from Departments of Health and Wellness in the three Maritime provinces, regional health authorities, the IWK Health Centre, and the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie to help inform the development of a draft strategic plan framework by Executive.

A total of 71 faculty were engaged through ten consultation sessions to gather their feedback on the draft strategic plan framework. Sessions were conducted with all clinical program areas including: forensics, operational stress injury, inpatients, mood disorders, early psychosis, eating disorders, reproductive mental health, Centre for Emotions and Health, seniors, sleep disorders, intellectual disabilities, day hospital, outpatients, recovery and integration, and child and adolescent mental health.

BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

The department has several strengths which provide a solid foundation on which to continue to expand the work and priorities of the department over the next five years.

Strengths	Description
Education and Training Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong academic program that contributes to undergraduate medical education, postgraduate education, as well as continuing professional development • Residents receive a high-quality education and are well prepared when they finish their training • Masters and PhD programs are a strength
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognized nationally and internationally for research and contributions in key areas of psychiatry • Several high caliber researchers • Building the capacity of learners (residents) to do research
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department head who is well respected and recognized as collaborative and open • Division heads who are strong leaders and respected

Strengths	Description
Clinical Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical work a strength • Provide good clinical service in complex domains of care • Cover the breadth of mental illness and conditions
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to engage with other organizations and providers • The department has a strong team that contribute to education, research and clinical programs and services

CAPITALIZING ON OPPORTUNITIES

In development of the department's plan, the Faculty of Medicine's strategic plan was reviewed to ensure alignment of key strategic areas. The Faculty of Medicine areas of focus include research, education, and serving and engaging society. The department is well-positioned to contribute to key priority initiatives of the Faculty of Medicine such as supporting system change, advancing policy initiatives and partnering to improve health outcomes.

In addition to alignment with the Faculty of Medicine's strategies and priorities, it is also important to understand potential trends within the macro environment such as health system trends and population health needs so that the department can contribute to advancing the priorities and aims of our partners including health authorities, departments of health and wellness, and national bodies. Opportunities to contribute to the discipline of psychiatry and system priorities include:

- Partnerships and collaboration with health authorities, departments of health and wellness, and national organizations
- Connecting and building partnerships with other disciplines
- Supporting health system research and aligning priorities
- Distributed education and building relationships outside of Halifax
- Inter-disciplinary team and workforce development
- Patient and community engagement

The department continues to monitor and understand trends within the macro environment (e.g. health system trends, population needs). With the hiring of a new department head and in recognition of the opportunity for the department to continue to contribute to the discipline of psychiatry and system priorities, a Centre for Global

Mental Health will be created in 2022 to help extend the reach of the department. The Centre for Global Mental Health will include supporting mental health and treatment for substance use at home for vulnerable populations who experience higher rates of mental illness and/or substance use issues and who have not traditionally been well served by our mental health and addiction service system. As well, the Centre for Global Mental Health will support capacity building in mental health and addictions in the global community. To reflect these opportunities, actions have been added within the Education section (e.g., 1d, 3f, 3g, 5e, 5f, 6c) Research section (e.g., 3g) and the Clinical Care section (e.g., 2f).

Our Strategic Directions

As depicted in the figure below, our strategic plan includes four strategic directions and associated goals: education, research, clinical care, and social policy and advocacy. In addition to a goal, each strategic direction includes several objectives and associated high-level actions.





Education

GOAL

High caliber psychiatry education across the professional continuum.

Undergraduate Education

Objective	Actions
1. Provide education to undergraduates (UG) to ensure they have the foundational knowledge to deliver services that support psychiatric care	<p>1a) Ensure adequate exposure to psychiatry in the UG curriculum</p> <p>1b) Advocate for and enhance curricular content in psychiatry and medical students' exposure to the discipline of psychiatry through training</p> <p>1c) Align with the shift to competency based medical education</p> <p>1d) Develop and implement an international elective exchange program for medical students</p>
2. Foster interest in psychiatry among UG students to encourage a residency in psychiatry	<p>2a) Enhance support for the medical student interest group in psychiatry</p> <p>2b) Plan and implement summer institute in psychiatry for medical students</p> <p>2c) Identify and actively recruit high caliber medical students with an interest in psychiatry</p>

Postgraduate Education

Objective	Actions
3. Develop competence and strive for excellence in postgraduate (PG) education and scholarly activity that support psychiatric care	<p>3a) Successfully transition to a Competency by Design (CBD) framework</p> <p>3b) Develop highly skilled psychiatrists with expertise in consultation, assessment, formulation, collaboration and treatment</p> <p>3c) Continue to support the role of resident as teacher</p> <p>3d) Support and strengthen training in scholarly inquiry and activity including critical appraisal, research, continuous quality improvement (CQI) and other related scholarly work</p> <p>3e) Encourage rural community electives among residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop opportunities for residents to train and work in rural and underserved areas and with vulnerable populations • Develop training capacity in these areas <p>3f) Develop and implement International Fellowship Programs</p> <p>3g) Develop and implement an international elective exchange program for residents</p>
4. Continue to promote and support sub-specialty residency and fellowship programs	<p>4a) Advocate for provincial funding for sub-specialty training programs</p> <p>4b) Evaluate current sub-specialty programs and identify priority areas for future training</p> <p>4c) Develop fellowship programs for non sub-specialty service areas</p>

Graduate Programs

Objective	Actions
5. Support the development and implementation of Graduate programs in Psychiatry	<p>5a) Implement PhD program and allocate resources accordingly</p> <p>5b) Develop a recruitment strategy for equity seeking participants for graduate programs</p> <p>5c) Ensure adequate space and infrastructure for expanded graduate programs</p> <p>5d) Ensure adequate funding for expanded graduate programs</p> <p>5e) Develop and implement an International Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry</p> <p>5f) Develop and implement a Masters in Global Mental Health Policy, Services and Development</p>

Continuing Professional Development (includes faculty development and Continuing Medical Education)

Objective	Actions
6. Support continuing professional development (CPD) of members within the department	<p>6a) Offer high quality education activities including those that promote competency based CPD</p> <p>6b) Develop and implement faculty development in partnership with UG and PG</p> <p>6c) Develop and implement a global mental health guest lecture series</p>

Objective	Actions
7. Enhance career development within the department	<p>7a) Strengthen mentorship opportunities including providing and supporting mentorship for junior faculty, succession planning, leadership development, and other measures</p> <p>7b) Continue to incorporate mentorship within Individual Practice Profiles (IPP) to promote and encourage mentorship</p> <p>7c) Recognize and celebrate the practice of mentorship within the department</p> <p>7d) Promote career development opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the IPP to build awareness about career development

All Education

Objective	Actions
8. Build capacity and support innovation in medical education	<p>8a) Further develop the department's ability to deliver quality education and clinical training throughout the region</p> <p>8b) Develop and support a community of practice/community of educators</p> <p>8c) Strengthen faculty engagement in education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen recognition of achievements in medical education • Develop and implement strategies to increase buy-in and commitment among faculty to medical education
9. Develop and support scholarship in medical education	<p>9a) Develop and implement continuous quality improvement for education</p> <p>9b) Allocate resources to further develop scholarship in medical education</p> <p>9c) Encourage faculty to participate in medical education scholarship</p>



Research

GOAL

Excellence in research with local, regional, national and international impact.

Objective	Actions
1. Support and build capacity of current departmental researchers	<p>1a) Ensure clinical researchers have sufficient dedicated research time with a focus on early career clinicians</p> <p>1b) Foster/support mentorship opportunities for new researchers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential mentors and connect with mentees as required <p>1c) Continue to review and identify research priorities for the department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the capacity for mental health outcomes research within the department <p>1d) Provide supports for grant applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an application process for matching fund programs <p>1e) Continue to implement the Department of Psychiatry Research Fund (DPRF) for project initiation including a regular review process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to recommendations from reviews conducted

Objective	Actions
2. Strategically recruit new researchers	<p>2a) Recruit and maximize the number of Chairs in the department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and recruit the next Sun Life Chair in Adolescent Mental Health • Form a working group to develop a proposal for a Canada Research Chair in health services research <p>2b) Coordinate the recruitment of new researchers with existing research strength in the department and identify new areas needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather data/information on factors such as demand, capacity, to help inform recruitment decisions <p>2c) Explore enhancing resident involvement in research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support resident involvement in research through the clinician investigator program and departmental graduate programs • Review the goals of resident involvement in research given changing curriculum

Objective	Actions
3. Build partnerships to support and enhance department research activities	<p>3a) Continue to encourage collaboration and facilitate engagement of faculty and partners in research provincially, nationally and internationally</p> <p>3b) Strengthen research collaborations between the department and health authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Nova Scotia Health Authority to identify barriers for collaborative research <p>3c) Support and enhance the development of partnerships with individuals with lived experience</p> <p>3d) Partner with institutions to meet future space and infrastructure needs of researchers and trainees</p> <p>3e) Develop a strategy for research fund raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor risks posed by changes in funding mechanisms and develop strategies to address the risk and/or seek alternate funding sources <p>3f) Develop partnerships for and encourage health services and population health research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit a chair for this area of research <p>3g) Develop global partnerships for and encourage global mental health research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit a new faculty member for this area of research
4. Support knowledge translation	<p>4a) Develop mechanisms for translating department research into improvements in psychiatric care and health and social policy</p> <p>4b) Develop a communication plan to share research with various audiences</p>



Clinical Care

GOAL

The highest quality evidence informed psychiatric care.

Objective	Actions
1. Incorporate quality improvement within psychiatric care	<div>1a) Develop and implement quality assurance strategies to help ensure the delivery of evidence informed psychiatric care</div> <div>1b) Support the development and implementation of care pathways to enhance psychiatric care and transitions in care</div> <div>1c) Strengthen the performance management process for faculty</div> <div>1d) Create academic networks to support quality evidence informed psychiatric care</div>



Objective	Actions
2. Collaborate with health system partners to support and improve mental health and addictions (MHA) care delivery	<p>2a) Provide best practice clinical leadership to provincial planning for MHA programs and services</p> <p>2b) Strengthen relationships with primary health care to support collaborative MHA care delivery</p> <p>2c) Strengthen communication and collaboration with other medical specialties to enhance patient care</p> <p>2d) Engage in co-leadership at all levels of the health authorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support faculty to participate in training to build knowledge and skills in co-leadership <p>2e) Identify gaps in services and develop strategies to build capacity in identified areas</p> <p>2f) Work with operational leaders of Mental Health and Addiction Program at Nova Scotia Health to develop new programs to address service gaps including a transcultural mental health program, a home-based treatment program, and a mental health access consultation and stabilization program</p>
3. Collaborate to build capacity for sub-specialty services to have local, regional, national and interational impact	<p>3a) Recognize and encourage use of innovative technology to build capacity and support psychiatric care</p> <p>3b) Support regional care delivery through consultation</p> <p>3c) Provide training in evidence informed psychiatric care</p> <p>3d) Lead and support networks and partnerships to enhance regional sub-specialty psychiatric care</p>



Social Policy and Advocacy

GOAL

Well informed and inclusive health services planning and policy development.

Objective	Actions
1. Advocate for high quality care and services across the MHA program	<p>1a) Participate in health system planning and aim to ensure that population needs and national benchmarks for services are addressed</p> <p>1b) Identify opportunities to influence system planning to help ensure continuity of services and supports (e.g., through partners such as education, community services, justice)</p> <p>1c) Finalize a competitive Academic Funding Plan (AFP) contract which will enhance recruitment and retention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for sufficient FTEs by applying to the new MD Committee or equivalent <p>1d) Continue to contribute guidance to the recruitment of psychiatrists for the region</p> <p>1e) Participate in infrastructure planning</p> <p>1f) Continue to advocate for adequate administrative support and allied health human resources to allow psychiatry to practice at highest effectiveness and efficiency</p> <p>1g) Collaborate with system partners to support populations at risk for psychiatric illness</p>

Objective	Actions
2. Support knowledge translation (KT) for our community partners and the public to build literacy in mental illness and treatment	<p>2a) Encourage and support faculty to participate in community presentations and other outreach formats</p> <p>2b) Support faculty to develop and implement education programs for the community and allied health professionals</p> <p>2c) Build expertise among faculty to support KT (e.g., knowledge and skills in social networking)</p> <p>2d) Partner to promote positive attitudes and practice associated with MHA</p>
3. Contribute psychiatric expertise and knowledge to policy development that supports MHA care	<p>3a) Allocate faculty resources to participate in policy development that supports MHA care</p> <p>3b) Develop a departmental process or structure to support and guide policy development activities</p>



Enablers for Moving Forward

Moving forward, the department will continue to work with faculty, staff, and partners who have contributed to the development of the strategic plan, to support its implementation. A more detailed operational plan will be developed to identify specific tasks, timelines, accountability, responsibility and indicators of success for the objectives and actions. We have identified four enablers to help ensure the successful implementation of our strategic plan, which are described below.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Implementation of the strategic plan will require leadership from across the department. The following objectives are critical to the success of the strategic plan implementation:

- Ensure an effective, efficient and inclusive department organizational structure
- Develop leadership skills and competencies within the department to support both department and system leadership
- Support and continue to build a culture of professionalism within the department

Actions for moving each objective forward have also been identified and are provided below.

Objective	Actions
1. Ensure an effective, efficient and inclusive department organizational structure	1a) Review department structures and address gaps and/or identified issues 1b) Strengthen faculty engagement within the department

Objective	Actions
2. Develop leadership skills and competencies within the department to support both department and system leadership	<p>2a) Develop and implement succession plans for leadership positions</p> <p>2b) Support faculty to participate in leadership development opportunities (e.g., CPD, mentoring, etc.)</p> <p>2c) Provide leadership in the use of technology to support psychiatric care, education, and research</p>
3. Support and continue to build a culture of professionalism within the department	<p>3a) Implement the performance management process for faculty (linked to 1c in Clinical Care)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the IPP process to incorporate performance review and ensure appropriate feedback is provided <p>3b) Continue to enhance the diversity of faculty members and staff over time within the department</p> <p>3c) Continue to promote, recognize and value faculty contributions to the academic mission of the department</p> <p>3d) Provide opportunities to build relationships and promote collegiality among faculty and staff</p> <p>3e) Encourage activities that promote physician health and well-being</p>

While those in senior leadership have an important role to play in guiding the work, all those in the department, from faculty and staff, to the Executive Committee, need to champion the actions within the strategic plan.

RESOURCES

We know that resources — human, financial, and physical, including information technology — are key enablers for the implementation of the strategic plan. As noted above, leadership development and planning are important work for the department over the next few years. Also, a key priority of the department is ensuring meaningful engagement of faculty and staff and building a culture of professionalism within the department where faculty and staff feel valued and recognized for their contributions.

ACCOUNTABILITY

As noted above, an operational plan will identify indicators of success, which are the foundation for monitoring implementation of the actions and success of the strategic plan. In addition, the Executive Committee and other governance structures of the department will support the development of operational plans and guide the implementation of the strategic plan. The operational plans will identify specific tasks for each action, timelines, accountability, responsibility and indicators of success. Through ongoing tracking of the actions, adjustments can be made to continually improve the implementation process.

ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

As we work to implement the strategic plan, communication within the department and with our partners will be critical. We know we need faculty and staff to feel they are connected to, and an integral part of, the strategic plan. This is why a collaborative process that engaged stakeholders from across the Maritimes, both within and external to the department was used to develop the plan. We took the time to listen to faculty, staff and partners, and provided many opportunities for feedback. The actions reflect this shared work and it will be a shared responsibility to support implementation.

Engagement will continue as we work to implement the objectives and actions within the strategic plan. Effective communication will help to build shared responsibility for the strategic plan and to celebrate and build on achievements.

Many people contributed to developing this strategic plan. The contributions made by faculty, staff and partners have been invaluable. Continued collaboration and the ongoing support and contributions of all these individuals will be essential in helping to move the strategic directions and associated objectives and actions forward and help to ensure the vision and goals are achieved.



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