



Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Year 1: Jan 1-June 30, 2024

Year 2: July 1, 2024-June, 2025

Year 3: July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Year 4: July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide innovative research, education, and clinical care in a culture of excellence, discovery, and scholarship to the next generation of physicians, scientists, and educators to advance patient-centered and equitable healthcare.

Vision Statement

We envision a thriving community of medical educators, researchers, and physicians who advance high-quality, innovative, and reliable health care for all.

Strategic Goals:

- Education and Academic Excellence
- Research and Discovery
- Staff and Faculty Success
- University & Community Relations

Education and Academic Excellence

The Whiddon COM has made significant strides to bolster support for learners and to ensure all students are positioned to succeed at the University of South Alabama. Over the next four years, Whiddon COM will continue to advance its educational mission by using student and curricular data and outcomes to help prioritize and drive performance across all its educational and support programs. With learning as a constant, Whiddon COM will find new pathways to increase exposure to students beyond the traditional classroom, expand student access to supportive experiences and programming, and define incentives to encourage more faculty to participate in teaching and learning.

Strategic Goal 1: Develop an integrated educational model for the College that uses evidence-based decision-making to support student success

Strategic Outcome	Strategies
1.1 Strengthen and infuse the educational programs with basic science and clinical experiences and greater exposure to health system and research system science. (former 1.1)	<p>1.1.a. Recruit qualified faculty to support basic science, clinical, and systems-based instruction.</p> <p>1.1.b. Develop and maintain integrated curricular maps across all educational programs to ensure alignment and continuity.</p> <p>1.1.c. Expand early clinical exposure for pre-clerkship students through structured experiences.</p>
1.2 Support faculty engagement in structured development, mentoring, and academic advancement pathways. (Former 1.3)	<p>1.2.a. Implement longitudinal faculty development programming focused on teaching, mentoring, and educational leadership.</p> <p>1.2.b. Promote and support enrollment of COM faculty in MHPE program.</p>
1.3 Pursue greater standardization across programs for monitoring and assessing educational outcomes. (Former 1.4)	<p>1.3.a. Build and maintain program-level curricular maps and data dashboards for assessment and integration.</p>

1.4 Create individualized experiences and programming to support learner education and success. (Former 1.6)	1.4.a. Establish and implement Individualized learning plans (ILPs) for students with defined academic or career goals.
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Research and Discovery

In advance of the new medical school building featuring state-of-the-art research facilities, Whiddon COM is at the ideal juncture to grow its research mission, with the goal of being recognized as a leader in academic research. Through investments in faculty, staff, and research infrastructure, and by cultivating a collaborative environment driven by curiosity and a passion for transforming research discovery into healthcare innovations, we will expand and strengthen our capacity to generate high-impact biomedical research for the benefit of the patients we serve.

Strategic Goal 2: Increase nationally and internationally recognized research and scholarship through targeted focus on people, organizational structure, resources, and infrastructure.

Strategic Outcome	Strategies
2.1 Increase the number of faculty performing research. (Former 2.2)	2.1.a. Identify new and existing interdisciplinary research collaborations among faculty to enhance data integration and visibility across departments
	2.1.b. Increase the research activity of clinical faculty
	2.1.c. Support the publications of research conducted across the College of Medicine (formerly 2.1.d)
2.2 Increase the number of trainees in biomedical research. (Former 2.3)	2.2.a. Expand graduate training program slots and recruit top biomedical candidates.
	2.2.b. Attract postdoctoral researchers through national outreach and funding.

	2.2.c. Expand the number of medical students involved in research projects
2.3 Provide tailored support for faculty to obtain extramural funding. (Former 2.4)	2.3.a. Provide targeted workshops for grants development (esp. clinical faculty). (formerly 2.3.b.)
2.4 Enhance the research environment and infrastructure. (Former 2.5)	2.4.a. Allocate space and startup resources for research labs in the new Whiddon COM building 2.4.b. Improve access to EHR and clinical biobanks to enable data-driven research.

Staff and Faculty Success

Whiddon COM is committed to creating a culture that clearly communicates and reinforces the importance of dedicated, high-quality employees to the college's success. Over the next four years, we will review and develop structures and supports for professional collaboration and mentoring to instill team-based approaches to collaborative problem solving among employee and reward and celebrate both individual and collective employee contributions that enhance COM's reputation and standing.

Strategic Goal 3: Strengthen employee recruitment, satisfaction, and retention, including pathways for professional growth and career advancement.

Strategic Outcome	Strategies
3.1 Promote internal practices that support a culture of collaboration and highlight of achievement among units.	3.1.a. Establish a recurring recognition program to celebrate employee contributions across units that is then published through marketing systems institution-wide
3.2 Encourage career development for all through expanded access to	3.2.a. Institute leadership and professional development training for staff

professional learning and networking opportunities. (Former 3.4)	3.2.b. Develop and maintain a centralized calendar of quarterly development offerings accessible to all employees
3.3 Increase cross-disciplinary training and professional development for faculty. (Former 3.5)	3.3.a. Implement regular professional development sessions on evidence-based teaching, academic leadership, and research
	3.3.b. Promote an accessible, searchable repository of faculty research interests

University & Community Relations

As a medical school deeply connected to our own health systems and those across Mobile and the Gulf Coast, our trainees, faculty, and researchers are integral to our community and the state. Over the next four years, we will continue to support and find alignment with USA Health to meet its growth and quality targets, further leverage our assets inside and outside of the clinical setting to advance community health, and work in partnership with our University and college and community partners to increase our impact on the community.

Strategic Goal 4: Enhance connections between the College of Medicine, the University, and the USA Health System to advance medical knowledge and care.

Strategic Outcome	Strategies
4.1 Research collaboration across University: Enhance options for professional and research-linked collaboration with other academic units, health and non-health (Former 4.4)	4.1.a. Highlight initiatives and/or research partnerships between COM faculty and other University units including events or services
4.2 Promote and support joint University programs that enhance the education and research mission of the College and University. (Former 4.5)	4.2.a. Promote participation in the existing campus-wide SURF program by advertising COM-based research opportunities to eligible undergraduates. 4.2.b. Develop targeted recruitment with 2- and 4-year colleges for the UME and the BMS graduate program, including on-campus visits, joint advising sessions;

	4.2c. Support and facilitate pathway programs that provide early academic preparation, mentoring, and exposure opportunities for students who are interested in pursuing medical school
4.3 Continue to share success in research and the educational impact of Whiddon COM with the community. (Former 4.6)	4.3.a. Leverage USA Health Marketing and COM Communications to develop and distribute coordinated storytelling campaigns that spotlight Whiddon COM's educational programs, research achievements, and community impact.

Alignment to the [University of South Alabama Strategic Priorities](#)

Student Success: 10 Strategies from the Whiddon COM Plan

- 1a. Strategically increase enrollment to 16,500 students. Employ targeted recruitment efforts for undergraduate students, adult learners, veterans, international students, Start South students, and graduate students. - 2 strategies
- 2. Increase performance on student success metrics for all students related to progression and completion. - 2 strategies
- 3. Provide students services and student life experiences that they value, support their personal wellness, and create opportunities for personal development. - 1 strategies
- 5. Provide faculty and staff professional development and support to increase the implementation of high-impact practices resulting in increased student engagement and success and meaningful relationships with faculty and staff. - 5 strategies

Research, Discovery, and Creative Works: 9 Strategies from the Whiddon COM Plan

- 10. Recognize and support excellence in faculty research, scholarly work, and creative achievements with emphasis on the structural supports necessary to achieve higher levels of national recognition in these areas. - 5 strategies
- 11. Increase grant proposal submissions. - 1 strategy
- 13. Increase the proportion of research that is interdisciplinary. - 3 strategies

Graduate Education: 3 Strategies from the Whiddon COM Plan

- 6. Ensure graduate students have meaningful engagement in research, clinical and/or other professional opportunities. - 1 strategy
- 7. Increase the number of grant-funded graduate students.- 1 strategy

- 8. Develop high-demand graduate programs aligned with institutional strengths.- 1 strategy

University Community Engagement: 2

- 15. Ensure that students' educational programs include faculty-guided, substantive engagement through collaborative community partnerships to include internships, clinical placements, research experiences, and/or other experiential learning (e.g., study abroad and service learning). - 2 strategies

Alignment to the Current USA Health Strategic Plan Imperatives with the number of Whidden COM strategies aligning to each imperative:

Mission Balance: 19 strategies

Smart Growth: 8 strategies

Differentiation: 7 strategies

Flexibility: 3 strategies

Operating Efficiency: 1 strategy

The strategies from the USA Health Strategic Plan (numbered to reflect the corresponding strategy numbers in the plan) are listed below, with the number of aligned Whidden College of Medicine strategies shown in parentheses for each.

- 3. Establish a Culture of Success: (5)
- 5. Develop a Stable and Engaged Healthcare Workforce: (6)
- 8. Begin Developing a Scalable and Impactful Research Capability: (9)
- 9. Enhance and Expand Educational Programs to Benefit Local, Regional & National Care: (13)