

ACADEMIC HEALTH CENTER Best Practices

Case Study

BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

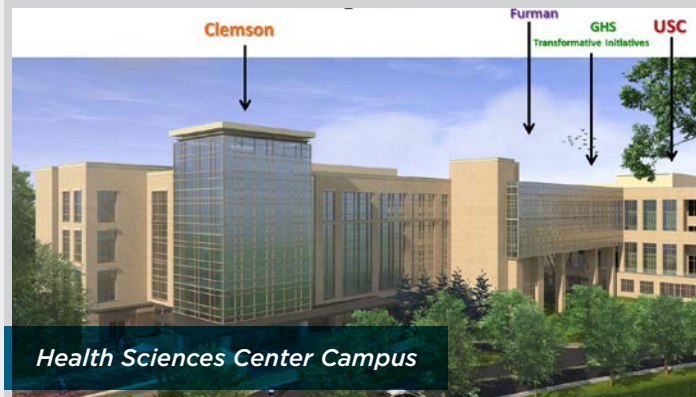
A Governance Model for a Shared Academic Health Center:
A Partnership Among Greenville Health System, Clemson University,
Furman University, and University of South Carolina

GREENVILLE HEALTH SYSTEM

KEY POINTS

A successful partnership must strategically include the following:

- ✓ Build clear pathways to decision making at the highest levels of each partner
- ✓ Establish councils and committees committed to advancing the partnerships among institutions
- ✓ Implement communication strategies aimed to engage all partnering institutions in key strategic initiatives
- ✓ Leverage existing competencies and resources to achieve a shared vision



ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Meeting a growing demand for healthcare while avoiding duplication of infrastructure

As the largest health system in South Carolina, we recognized the need to bridge the gap between academics and clinical practice. To better position ourselves to meet the growing needs of a diverse and interprofessional workforce, we sought partnerships among three prominent institutions of higher education: Clemson University; Furman University; and the University of South Carolina.

THE GREENVILLE APPROACH

Bringing four institutions together to leverage resources and infrastructure into a partnership that transforms healthcare

Greenville Health System brings the establishment of a dynamic clinical learning environment, as well as our expertise in innovation, to this partnership. The partnership, known as the Shared Academic Health Center, leverages existing competencies and resources to achieve a shared vision of transformation in healthcare, higher education, and economic development, while creating better lives for the people of South Carolina and beyond. To do this, we had to expand our clinical learning environment, create more job opportunities, develop robust health career pipelines, increase grant funding, and ultimately improve the quality of life for the communities we serve.

Established in 2013, the Shared Academic Health Center bridges the gap between academics and clinical practice by defining itself as innovative, inter-institutional, interprofessional, and interdisciplinary. In order to function as a shared entity, we recognized the need for shared governance, branding, and financial operations.

HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

The Health Sciences Center (HSC) is a *shared academic health center with four partners*: Greenville Health System, Clemson University, Furman University, and the University of South Carolina. The partnership provides the framework for a shared “clinical university” model that bridges the gap between academics and clinical practice. The Health Sciences Center is:

> INNOVATIVE > INTER-INSTITUTIONAL > INTERPROFESSIONAL > INTERDISCIPLINARY

Shared Governance Structure Created

In order to manage the clinical learning environment and represent the interests of our four partnering institutions, it was important for us to create a pathway of communication and management in the Shared Academic Health Center. Several bodies make up the governance of the Shared Academic Health Center and establish the pathways for decision making processes at the highest level of each institution.

• Board of Managers

Comprised of key community stakeholders representing the four partners, the Board of Managers is responsible for management of the Shared Academic Health Center and its strategic direction.

• Academic Operations Council

The Academic Operations Council is comprised of the chief academic officer of each partnering institution and its role is in the oversight and strategic direction of the clinical learning environment of the Shared Academic Health Center.

• Innovation Council

The Innovation Council, made up of members from primary economic entities in the community, sets the strategic direction for the business and economic development functions of the Shared Academic Health Center, by providing assistance and vision to the HSC Management Team and making recommendations to the Board of Managers.

• Management Team

This group, comprised of representation from the partnering institutions, as well as leaders in academics and research at the Health System, is responsible for the day-to-day operations, financial, and programmatic new and ongoing initiatives. This group is responsible for carrying out the decisions made by the Board of Managers, the Academic Operations Council, and the Innovation Council.

Importance of Creating a Dedicated Liaison Role

To ensure the seamless operations of the Shared Academic Health Center, a chief of staff role was established to serve as a liaison between the four partnering institutions. The chief of staff provides a direct link between all internal and external governing bodies, and ensures the momentum of all ongoing and future initiatives is maintained. The chief of staff role is instrumental in bridging the level of understanding among all key players of the Shared Academic Health Center.

The Shared Academic Health Center worked with the communications department at all four partnering institutions to promote a shared branding of its programs and endeavors. Shared branding is reflected on joint research efforts and scholarship initiatives highlighting the partnership among the institutions in the Shared Academic Health Center.

Crucial Steps to Keep in Mind

- **Develop a Strategic Plan**

A 2018–2030 strategic plan was developed to include shared vision, mission, values, goals, and strategies approved by the four partners.

- **Hire Shared Staff**

Joint hires were put in place between the health system and each academic partner to facilitate the partnership.

- **Incorporate Guiding Principles**

A shared guiding principle that embraces the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's quadruple aim (population health, positive patient experiences and outcomes, reduction of healthcare costs, and clinician work life balance) was approved by the four partners.

RESULTS/OUTCOMES

- Empowerment of key clinical and academic leaders who are committed to developing and enhancing education and workforce, as well as research and scholarship, within their departments to provide meaningful experiences for faculty and learners from partnering institutions
- Establishment of embedded scholars from partnering institutions who work directly within clinical departments to advance research and scholarship and drive process changes within the clinical learning environment
- Establishment of facilities on the health system campus for academic partners' programs and initiatives (e.g., University of South Carolina School of Medicine; Clemson University School of Nursing)
- Enhancement of experiences provided to all learners across the health system pipeline, beginning with kindergarten and going through lifelong learning opportunities. More targeted use of infrastructure and resources from the four partnering institutions to deliver unique experiences to students interested in careers

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RELATED MATERIALS ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

Health Sciences Center website: <http://hsc.ghs.org>

Related charts and graphs: <https://hsc.ghs.org/case-study/>

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