

Destination Excellence – Update and Planning Day Report for 2018



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1.0 Background

In December 2017, the Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University of Newfoundland (Memorial), launched its strategic plan – *Destination Excellence*. In the initial year of implementation, the emphasis was on communicating the spirit and language of the plan through a series of presentations to various internal and external stakeholders and establishing the various core project teams tasked with implementing aspects of the plan. Close to 30 presentations took place with a variety of internal and external stakeholders including academic divisions, clinical disciplines, administrative offices, Eastern Health, Rotary Clubs, and others. Appendix A contains a list of all the presentations completed in 2018. In tandem with the presentations, the formation of the Destination Excellence Implementation Steering Team (DEIST) and the specific project teams tasked with developing aspects of the plan took place. In addition to the DEIST, which is co-chaired by Dr. Margaret Steele, dean, Faculty of Medicine, and Ms. Gerona McGrath, project manager, there are five project teams: wellness, research, social accountability, mentorship, and progress report card. Each team is composed of faculty, learners and staff to ensure broad-based, inclusive representation. Participation in the teams was determined through a combination of invitations to individuals by virtue of their areas of responsibility or particular expertise and via an open call for participation to faculty and staff. Student groups were invited to put forward the names of individuals to represent them on the project teams.

In an effort to keep stakeholders informed about the progress of the implementation and to solicit input to guide future actions of the project teams, an on-site update and planning day retreat was organized for November 30, 2018. Invitations were sent from the Office of the Dean to selected external stakeholders, senior leaders across the university, senior leaders within the Faculty of Medicine, emerging leaders chosen by their senior leaders in the various units\divisions\disciplines, members of the original strategic plan development team and members of the project teams. A complete list of invited groups is available in Appendix B. Approximately 85 people from a variety of roles took part in the sessions.

2.0 Update and Planning Day Goals, Agenda, and Structure

The goals of the day were 3-fold:

- provide an update to participants on the work done since the launch of *Destination Excellence* in December 2017;
- provide an opportunity for participants to hear what each project team is doing and see the interconnections across the different teams; and
- give participants the opportunity to provide input and feedback to the project teams to inform their work as they move forward.

The agenda for the day is available in Appendix C. Each of the project team co-chairs presented information on their project team's membership, actions to date and questions for participants. This was followed by a series of break-out and reporting sessions. Participants were assigned to tables of eight to ten people such that each table had a representative from each of the project teams as well as one or two people not affiliated with a particular team. A facilitator and a recorder were assigned from among the participants at each table to keep the conversation during the breakout sessions flowing and to capture the main points of the discussion. After each break out session, there was a short 2-minute report back to the entire room aimed at sharing key discussion points.

3.0 Questions and input

As noted above, each of the project teams posed questions to the participants for their input. The complete list of questions from all teams is located in Appendix D. Input to the questions was captured electronically by the recorders at each table and emailed to the facilitator to be compiled and disseminated to the respective teams. All teams received their input within a week of the session and began incorporating the feedback into their work plans immediately. Brief summaries of the overall input to each team follows with references to appendices which contain more detailed summaries.

3.1 Wellness Team Input overview

The Wellness Team asked for feedback related to a proposed definition for wellness that could be shared across the Faculty of Medicine, suggestions related to a proposed wellness survey to various internal stakeholder groups within the Faculty of Medicine and suggestions on how to measure success. Although there was no definitive consensus regarding whether to have both individual and workplace wellness definitions or to have just one, some of the feedback suggested one definition linking both would be appropriate. Several suggestions for the survey were received including that there be a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions and key questions/themes to explore on the survey. Regarding measuring success, important factors such as senior leadership demonstrating ‘buy in’ to creating a culture of wellness was thought to be essential for success. There were also more quantitative suggestions to demonstrate success over time including tracking wellness issues and absenteeism. Appendix E has a more complete summary of the input related to the Wellness Team’s questions.

3.2 Research Team Input overview

The Research Team asked for input on how to determine our areas of greatest research potential and how to determine research priorities. There was feedback that while it is important to celebrate strengths and set priorities, there has to be a balance with creating a culture that values and supports all research. To determine areas of future potential, the main suggestions were to have an inventory of current areas of strength and look to build on these in the future as well as to consider the needs of the various communities we serve to find areas of potential research. With regards to setting priorities, there was a suggestion to determine what the priority issues are for the stakeholders and then translate that into research areas. Appendix F has a more complete summary of the input related to the Research Team’s questions.

3.3 Social Accountability Team Input overview

The Social Accountability team asked for input regarding proposed short and long definitions of social accountability for use across the Faculty of Medicine, thoughts from participants on what

social accountability means to them and how best to capture all of the social accountability initiatives taking place. Feedback indicated that the short and long definitions did not 'match' because different terms and concepts were used in both. Overall, participants preferred the longer definition but with modifications. As expected, there were a range of thoughts regarding what social accountability means in practice and how to capture what we are already doing. Much of the feedback addressed the need for engagement with communities and to create an internal environment where everyone uses a socially accountable lens in their academic, research, service activities and daily work. Appendix G contains a more detailed summary of the input to the Social Accountability Team.

[3.4 Mentorship Team Input overview](#)

The Mentorship Team asked for input regarding any gaps in their objectives and which objectives should take priority. Goals 1 and 2, establishing pathways to match mentors and mentees and providing educational resources regarding mentorship, generated the most input and seemed to be the most important in terms of priorities among participants. There were several positive suggestions on things to consider as the plan for a mentorship website develops. A summary of the feedback to the Mentorship Team is available in Appendix H.

[3.5 Progress Report Card \(Metrics\) overview](#)

The last session of the day was structured differently than the previous ones. For the final session of the day, participants sat with their own project teams and at least one member of the Progress Report Card team. The task was to think about one outcome from their project, how one might demonstrate the outcome was successful and to think about what information is available to help with measurement. While this exercise was meant as a way for the Progress Report Card team to solicit concrete outcomes from teams to use in developing short and long term, quantitative and qualitative metrics for our overall report card, it was also an opportunity for each of the teams to think in concrete terms about how they would track and measure progress and, ultimately, demonstrate success. Appendix I contains details on the metrics work done by the project teams.

4.0 Evaluation of the event

At the conclusion of the last session of the day, participants were provided with a paper evaluation form. A total of 52 evaluations were completed by the approximately 85 participants for a 60 per cent response rate. The evaluation results can be viewed in Appendix J. Overall the feedback was very positive about the organization of the day and the process. However, two sets of comments are worthy of note: the observation that there was an absence of any discussion around educational excellence and the question of whether metrics are needed so early in the process. The DEIST was presented with the evaluation results at its December 2018 meeting and asked for input regarding education excellence and the question of metrics. To address concerns that education-related initiatives may not be receiving the profile they deserve, the DEIST will invite presentations from the Education Deans Committee to discuss how they are implementing *Destination Excellence* within their units. To address wider communication issues, future communications activities related to academic programming (i.e., new programs, accreditation-related communications from various offices) should highlight linkages to *Destination Excellence* explicitly.

Regarding the question of metrics, the DEIST strongly supported the idea that it was not too early to develop a measurement tracking / progress plan. In fact, now that the core project teams are in place and have commenced their work in earnest, the development of a comprehensive scorecard is essential. In 2018 when the various project teams were forming, they were initially unsure of their team objectives and goals. Now that the teams have been in place for a few months and have a clear sense of their outcomes and milestones along the way, they are at a point where they can meaningfully integrate the use of metrics to monitor their work.

5.0 Priorities Moving Forward

As noted in the previous section, in addition to the core *Destination Excellence* project teams maturing their project plans and moving towards providing deliverables, a priority for the first

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six months of 2019 will be the development of a report card system. To facilitate this, the Progress Report Card co-chairs will be attending project team meetings to present on the different metric categories and to discuss the flow of information to and from the project teams specific to metrics.

The other priority for the first half of 2019 is refining and refreshing communications around the *Destination Excellence* implementation. In the launch and initiation stage, most of the communications focused on creating awareness of and excitement about the new strategic plan through various tools and tactics. Now that the teams are moving into truly implementing projects, the teams can take ownership of promoting awareness of their activities via the team section of the *Destination Excellence* website and having the website serve as a record of the actions of the various teams. This includes updating visuals on the website by adding more pictures and graphics. These updates and new initiatives will be communicated to stakeholders via the communications office through speaking notes, MUNMED express and other tools used by the office to reach our various audiences. As well, as we move farther from the launch of the plan and more into the details of implementation, continued commitment from the DEIST and project team members in promoting the use of the language of the strategic plan, promoting awareness of on-going initiatives and being change agents will be critical.

We anticipate having another update and planning day in the late fall of 2019. This will be an opportunity for various stakeholders to again come together to understand the progress over the year and to provide input in achieving what we aspire to in *Destination Excellence*.