

From Programs to Infrastructure: Building an Integrated Research Support Ecosystem in a College of Medicine

A practice-based case study in intentional organizational alignment

Andrea McCubbin, MPH • Mindy Thompson, MBA • Kelly Meulendyke, PhD • Rebecca Dutch, PhD
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY COLLEGE OF MEDICINE | OFFICE OF RESEARCH



WHY THE ECOSYSTEM

Research support is increasingly complex and often fragmented. Together, these challenges point to the need for a more connected infrastructure approach.

FRAGMENTATION: Fragmented research support can create inefficiency and make an increasingly complex research environment harder to navigate.¹

WORKFORCE: A sustainable research enterprise requires intentional investment in workforce onboarding, development, communication, and career pathways.²

COORDINATION: Cross-functional coordination can reduce fragmentation and duplication while creating more consistent support and information sharing.³

INFRASTRUCTURE: Research capacity may be strengthened through multiple, complementary infrastructure investments rather than a single intervention.⁴

LISTEN FIRST

Our ecosystem began with research community voices.

A college-wide survey of researchers and research teams identified needs for research navigation and grant development support, leading to dedicated roles in both areas and a broader shift toward connected research support.

OUR RESEARCH PURPOSE

Promote an environment that encourages excellence in transformative research by investing in people, fostering collaboration, and providing the infrastructure and support needed to advance health in Kentucky and beyond.

OUR RESEARCH LANDSCAPE

College of Medicine | FY2026

\$195M

Annual Sponsored Awards

378

Principal Investigators

923

Research Awards

201

Research Professionals
Across 30+ Dept/Centers

889

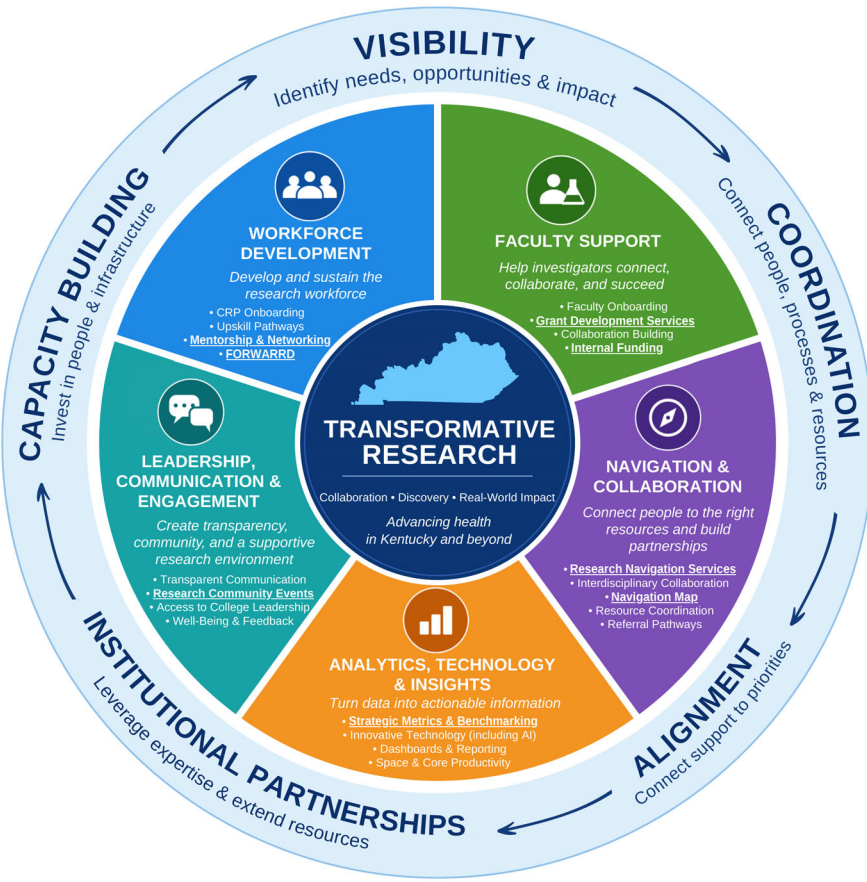
Active Clinical Trials

6,672

Participants Enrolled in Active
Clinical Trials

AN ADAPTABLE RESEARCH SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM

Intentional connection turns individual programs into organizational infrastructure.



CONNECT with our College of Medicine
Office of Research Team

Scan the QR Code to explore the digital poster, linked
resources, and COM Office of Research contacts.

THE ECOSYSTEM IN ACTION

College of Medicine | July 2024 – September 2026

57

Incoming Faculty
Onboarding

197

Research Navigation
Assistance Requests

23

Research Staff Professional
Development Sessions

68

Department & Center Space
Productivity Meetings

130

Grant Development
Consultations

74

GURU Grant Writing
Workshop Participants

54

Research Community
Building Events

2,511

Research Navigation Map
Views/Engagement

WHAT WE LEARNED

Integration can create more value than expansion.

Connect and align what already exists before building something new.

Workforce development is research infrastructure.

Invest in pathways to enter, learn, connect, lead, and grow.

Shared analytics turn visibility into decisions.

Put actionable information in leaders' hands to identify needs, guide resources, and measure progress.

Relationships make the system work.

Build trust through accessible communication, intentional engagement, and institutional partnerships.

REFERENCES

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3. Canevaro MA, et al. Acad Med. 2026;101(3):271–278.
4. Seehusen DA, et al. Fam Med. 2023;55(6):367–374.

Disclaimer: The authors retain intellectual ownership and responsibility for the overall concept and intellectual content of this work, including the abstract, conceptual framework, poster content, interpretations, institutional data, and final design. OpenAI ChatGPT was used as a collaborative tool to support refinement and visual design.

TAKE IT HOME

A MODEL YOU CAN ADAPT: Use these questions to start the conversation at your institution.

1

ASSESS



What services, people, expertise,
and resources already exist?

2

IDENTIFY



Where are the gaps, duplications,
barriers, and opportunities?

3

STRENGTHEN



What people, processes,
technology, or infrastructure
would build capacity?

4

PARTNER



Whose expertise or resources can
you leverage rather than recreate?

5

MEASURE



What data can identify needs,
show reach or impact, and
inform decisions?

6

ADAPT & SCALE



What is working, what needs to
evolve, and where should you
invest next?