



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
Obesity Research Cluster™

# Strategic Plan



2014 - 2017



## Developed By

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## **Vision Statement**

Achieve national leadership and recognition in interdisciplinary Obesity research and education.

## **Mission Statement**

Develop interdisciplinary basic clinical and community translational research to prevent and treat Obesity along with its related complications, using innovative collaborations and strategic partnerships.

## **Values**

- Integrity & Trust
- Respect for Interdisciplinary Teamwork & Diversity
- Mentoring & Training
- Compassion & Dedication
- Multidisciplinary & Dynamic Knowledge Development and Dissemination

## **The Obesity Research Cluster**

The Texas Tech Obesity Research Cluster (ORC) conducts interdisciplinary research to address the complexity of Obesity from the biological, behavioral, environmental and societal aspects. This centralized research infrastructure promotes translational, basic, clinical and community research to understand the etiology, complications and effective prevention and treatment of Obesity. The ultimate goal is to take an active role in improving quality of life, locally and globally.



## Strategic Priority 1: Expand and Enhance Research and Creative Scholarship

In line with TTU's mission and quest to be a Tier 1 and AAU-like University, ORC will continue to expand funding for research and creative scholarship to increase our research base. Output of funded research projects and peer-reviewed publications will increase both the research visibility and reputation of our independent units, ORC, TTU, HSC and individual faculty. Scholarship will particularly focus on large multidisciplinary projects that impact the human condition by preventing and/or treating obesity-related diseases.

### KEY STRATEGIES

- Enhance collaborations between TTU and HSC faculty on obesity across basic clinical and community research and expand these collaborations across the TTU System.
- Foster multidisciplinary research focused on the biological, behavioral, and environmental bases for nutrition/obesity-related diseases. Target areas include childhood obesity research, health disparities and at risk populations and “omics” approaches, obesity and cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.



- Increase the number of collaborative teams pursuing external funding with an emphasis on federal, state, foundation and corporate funding.

- Stimulate and support new and innovative collaborative obesity research through regular networking activities and other forums of group discussions.
- Increase collaborations in the areas of obesity-cancer, obesity-diabetes and obesity-cardiovascular disease.
- Secure and provide competitive seed funds to support ORC interdisciplinary collaborations with expectation that they will be sustained through external grants. Initial funding has been provided by the OVPR, and we plan to seek matching funds from other TTU colleges and HSC schools.
- Continue offering a colloquium/seminar in obesity to enhance interactions and collaborations, and invite outside experts in obesity each semester with student, postdoc, and faculty participation.



## **Strategic Priority 2: Enhance Academic Environment through Faculty, Postdoc and Student Success and Diversity**

ORC will support recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty across obesity areas, and attract high quality graduate students, postdocs and other trainees to obesity-related academic programs. Consistent with the TTU mission, ORC will contribute to the growth and diversity of the student/post doc population by providing a supportive training environment that emphasizes integrity, diversity, and cross-disciplinary collaborations, to assist them in reaching their goals. In particular, there will be an emphasis on growing graduate, undergraduate, and postdoc involvement in obesity-related research.

### **KEY STRATEGIES**

- Expand ORC with an emphasis on research with active and collaborative members.
- Continue to communicate, recruit, and retain collaborative ORC members.
- Establish research prizes for outstanding contributions in Obesity by students, postdocs, and faculty.
- Promote and support strategic hiring in nutrition and obesity-related research and assist TTU with target hires in obesity and cancer (CPRIT) related research.
- Improve and increase the training and education in clinical and community nutrition and obesity prevention, treatment, and management. ORC will continue to look for opportunities to increase the critical mass in obesity research (students, postdocs, and faculty).
- Promote multidisciplinary interactions in nutrition and obesity research through organized interdisciplinary collaborative efforts and dissemination of research information among scientists and clinicians of various backgrounds.
- Identify specific undergraduate and graduate programs for obesity research training.
- Enhance funding to support student and postdoc recruitment, research, and travel support.
- Increase emphasis and opportunities for undergraduate research and mentoring.
- Provide information and encourage study abroad and other international collaborations in obesity.



- Develop cross-departmental obesity courses with an emphasis on multi-disciplinary aspects.
- Support faculty efforts to increase obesity-related content in health science courses within professional curricula.



## Strategic Priority 3: Further Outreach and Multidisciplinary Collaborations (Internal and External)

Increase collaborations between ORC members and across the TTU System and other partners. Internally, ORC will encourage resource sharing and support of core facilities. ORC will initiate and support opportunities for international collaborations in this area. ORC will work to expand the number of collaborations and strengthen the existing efforts in multi-institutional research and training, with agencies and communities locally, statewide, and internationally.

### KEY STRATEGIES

- Collaborate with current core facilities to submit instrument grants (such as NSF MRI grants).
- Collaborate with other core facilities on campus to facilitate access to those resources for obesity researchers (e.g. CBG, TTU Imaging facility, and HSC facilities).
- Continue updating the ORC web site for resources and assist faculty with identifying obesity-related resources, opportunities, and grants in obesity-related areas.
- Work across programs to submit training grants.
- Utilize faculty expertise for partnership with agencies and community locally, nationally and internationally.
- Expand outreach to inform others of our work and increase scope of our research by partnering with others (for example, USDA childhood obesity funding requires partnership with the community and USDA Cooperative Extension Programs, such as Texas A&M AgriLife Extension).
- Translate basic and clinical research into programs that improve health and wellness and reduce obesity in the community.
- Improve the quality of nutrition and obesity information provided to the public
- Encourage and promote collaborative research efforts with professional societies, such as, The Obesity Society, the American Society for Nutrition, Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics, Society for Nutrition Education, The American Heart Association, and others.





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