

ROSALIND FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY *of* MEDICINE AND SCIENCE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020–2023

FINAL REPORT · DECEMBER 31, 2023

OVERVIEW

The university had just launched its 2020–2023 strategic plan when the COVID pandemic sparked unexpected and frequent change. The RFU community was quick to adapt, ensuring the plan stayed on track while prioritizing student and employee health and wellness. As we continue facing unprecedented times in higher education, it's important for RFU to remain nimble, knowing where and how we can adapt when needed.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

- **Completed HLC Year Four Assurance Review with no areas of concern.**
 - This review, completed four years into RFU's current 10-year HLC accreditation cycle, confirmed that RFU remains in compliance with all HLC accreditation criteria.
- **Achieved maximum years of accreditation for 100% of RFU's eligible programs, those with program-specific accreditation.**
 - The programmatic accreditation process ensures that RFU's academic programs meet the educational standards specific to each particular field of study.
- **Developed and implemented new marketing strategies for student recruitment.**
 - A new social media engagement strategy for prospective students and increased investment in digital advertising increased RFU's total reach online by more than 1,000%.
- **Reorganized Enrollment Management to better meet academic and student needs.**
 - Recruited a new vice president for Strategic Enrollment Management and associate vice president of Marketing and Communications. The enhanced collaboration between the two divisions has resulted in more targeted recruitment strategies based on specific academic program needs.
 - Total enrollment headcount increased by 8.5% in AY23. Number of first-year students increased from 607 in 2022 to 661 in 2023, the highest number in 5 years.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

- **Created the Michael Reese Foundation Center for Health Equity Research.**
 - The center aims to facilitate health equity-focused research collaborations that respond to community needs and implement interventions that improve health equity in Lake County, Illinois.
- **Launched the Nexus for Faculty Success.**
 - The Nexus provides a university-wide space to advance faculty leadership, learning and teaching, and academic writing and scholarship.
- **Continued research growth across RFU.**
 - Opened the university's 100,000-square-foot Innovation and Research Park in 2020 to expand research capacity and facilitate academic-industry partnership. Completed buildout of 14,000 square feet of wet lab space with a \$2 million matching-fund grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.
 - Secured \$10.3 million in grant funding in 2023, a 31.5% growth in secured funding over prior year.
 - Dedicated recruitment efforts yielded strong additions to RFU research faculty in key areas such as psychology.

LIFE *in* DISCOVERY

● PARTNERSHIPS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

● Launched the university's new College of Nursing.

- First DNP-PMHNP cohort seated in 2022 and will graduate in 2025.
- Transitioned Nurse Anesthesia into the college in November 2022.
- Created a three-phased Nursing Education to Workforce (NEW) Pathway to expand access to education for underserved youth in Lake County and to innovate recruitment into the MSN-ENP program.
- First MSN-ENP cohort seated in 2023 and will graduate in 2025 (Phase III).
- First Phase II conditionally admitted cohort selected in 2022 (Phase II).
- First Nursing INSPIRE high school cohort graduated in summer 2023 (Phase I).
- Received authorization from the Colorado Department of Higher Education to offer classroom, simulation and clinical nurse anesthesia training in the state.

● Advanced mission-critical initiatives with the support of philanthropic partners.

- Opened the Dr. Scholl Foundation Empathy Lab, one of the few physical spaces in the United States specifically designed to teach empathy.
- Extended the reach of the Community Care Connection mobile clinic, removed financial barriers to empower the health career aspirations of students, and broadened the reach of pathway programs for K-12 students from underrepresented communities.
- Health justice, community impact and education equity were the primary areas of giving from individuals, corporations and foundations.

● Established a governmental affairs program to advance the university's mission and strategic objectives.

- Recruited an executive director for government relations with significant experience in education and regional knowledge.
- Defined a system to develop the annual legislative agenda for the university, including a listening tour with academic and administrative leaders, review of regional and national policy agendas, and university funding needs.

● INTEGRITY TO MISSION AND VISION

● Increased philanthropy revenues by 63% over the prior three years.

- Revenue increased 80% from \$12.6 million to \$22.8 million in support of strategic initiatives.
- Advanced a Roadmap for Growth in Philanthropy and Stakeholder Engagement with an investment in staff, focus on operational processes and utilization in private grants and charitable gifts, and growth in philanthropic revenue.
- A shift to more donor-centric, mission-driven philanthropy strategies has allowed for expanded focus on major gifts, planned giving and partnership philanthropy development.

● Reorganized IT and funded cybersecurity and infrastructure improvements.

- The newly recruited Chief Information Officer and Chief Information Security Officer developed and implemented strategies to protect our digital and physical assets, learning environment, research findings and personal data.
- Significant improvements to our risk profile and infrastructure took RFU's security scorecard rating from a "D" in Dec. 2022 to a "B" in March 2023.

● Increased student satisfaction across various areas (technology, financial aid, etc.).

- Student surveys reflected positive growth for a number of support services, particularly RFU's Student Health Center and Student Counseling Service.
- Library staff launched a digital-first strategy that prioritized the acquisition of digital books and journals for use in any location. RFU's eBook collection expanded from a few thousand items to over 200,000.

● Maintained strong levels of faculty and staff satisfaction.

- Ninety-five percent of RFU employees strongly agree or agree that "RFU is a good place to work," reflecting the university's strong record of retention and employee satisfaction.
- Refreshed the university's core values, with a working group of faculty, staff and students defining how these values are lived every day at RFU.

● Developed the Campus Master Plan and secured project funding.

- Capital grants from the Illinois Board of Higher Education and Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) will support updates and expansion of simulation facilities, instructional skills lab renovations, and anatomy lab and classroom modernization.

● Reorganized the RFU Health Clinics and decreased financial losses.

- A complete overhaul of clinical and administrative processes created greater workflow efficiencies for the Health Clinics. Billing and technology improvements, new and updated policies and procedures, monthly provider productivity targets, and the phaseout of primary care services helped narrow projected financial losses from \$3.7 million to \$2.2 million.
- Added physical therapy clinics two days a week to increase patient access for musculoskeletal care and rehabilitation.
- In 2023, the Community Care Connection program increased health screenings year over year by almost 40%, performed over 2,800 follow-up calls to facilitate next-level care, provided 1,201 flu vaccinations and 250 COVID vaccinations, and referred 191 underinsured/uninsured members of the Lake County community to local clinics or ER for immediate intervention.

● Reorganized DEI to better meet RFU needs and student expectations.

- Key initiatives included recruiting RFU's inaugural vice president for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; creating a university-wide DEI office; and implementing recommendations from the President's Task Force on DEI.
- RFU's 2022 employee survey indicated that over 90% of employees feel the university values diversity and respects its employees' cultures.