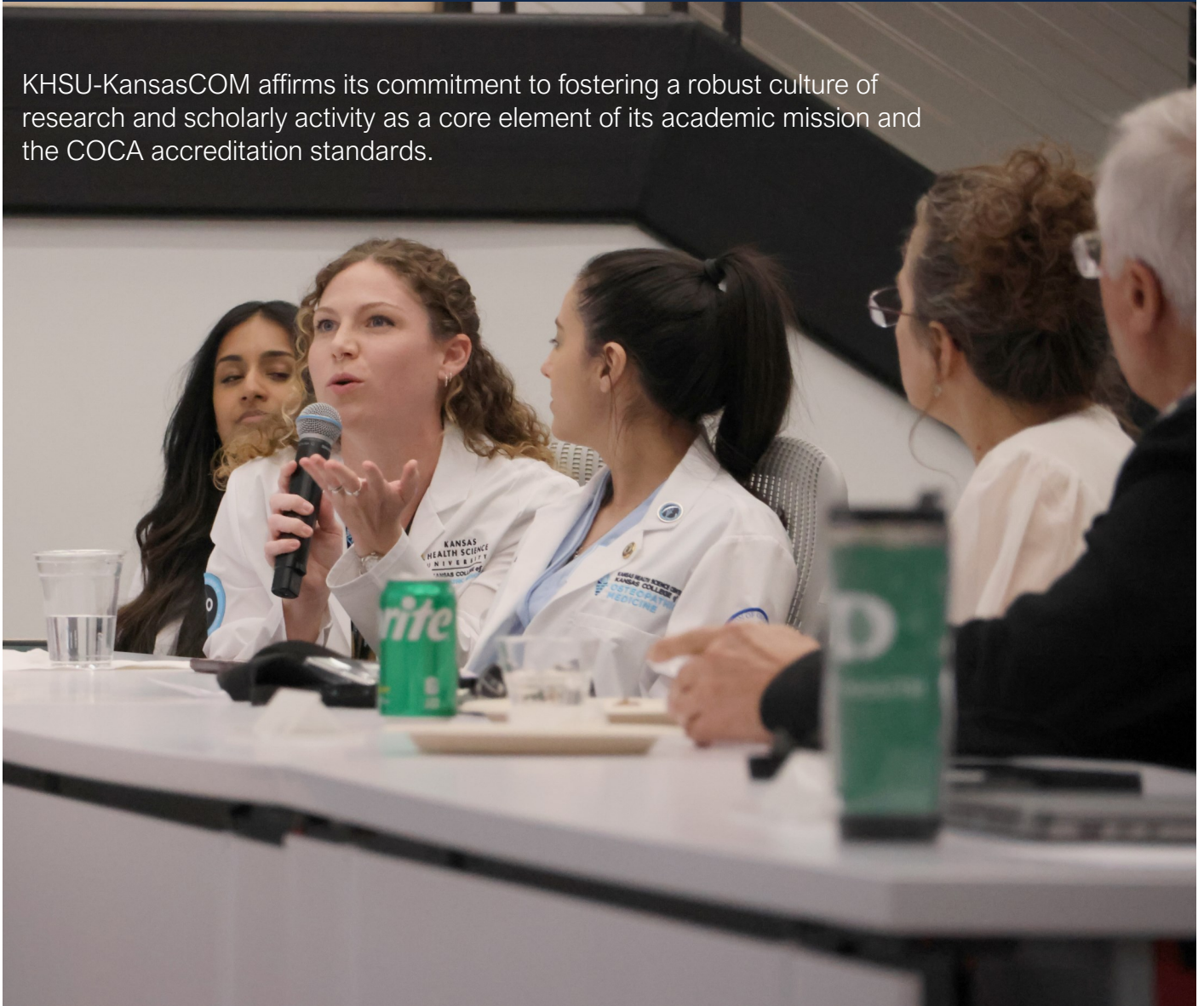


Kansas Health Science University-Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine

Research and Scholarly Activity Strategic Plan (2025–2028)

KHSU-KansasCOM affirms its commitment to fostering a robust culture of research and scholarly activity as a core element of its academic mission and the COCA accreditation standards.





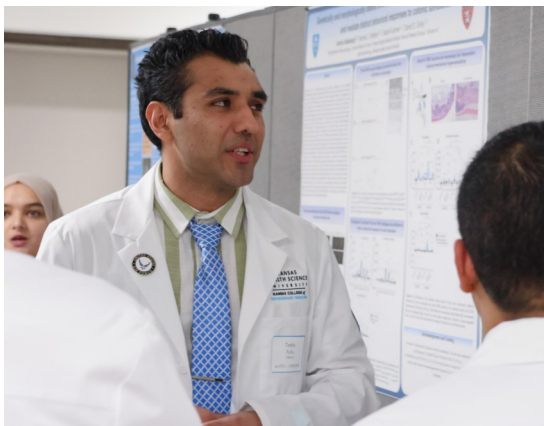
I. Introduction and Strategic Alignment

Kansas Health Science University – Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine (KHSU-KansasCOM) affirms its commitment to fostering a robust culture of research and scholarly activity as a core element of its academic mission and the COCA accreditation standards.

This plan aligns with COCA accreditation standards, institutional values, and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Quintuple Aim. It fosters student and faculty inquiry while promoting translational, educational, and osteopathic research focused on improving health outcomes for the state of Kansas and beyond. This plan supports faculty and student inquiry while promoting translational, educational, and osteopathic research focused on improving health outcomes for the state of Kansas and beyond.

This plan builds upon the Research Agenda dated 2022–2024, which aligns with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Quintuple Aim, and it integrates new infrastructure, expanded faculty mentorship, and strategic external partnerships to ensure continued growth and sustainability.

II. Strategic Goals (2025–2028)



1. Expand Research Infrastructure and Resources

- **Faculty and Staff Support for Research:** KHSU-KansasCOM currently provides robust support for research led by the Associate Dean of Research and includes the Office of Research and Scholarly Activity (ORSA) personnel, research coordinators, and administrative staff, along with budgeted resources for research infrastructure, faculty development, and student engagement. Moving forward, the College seeks to grow these resources to further enhance support for student and faculty research, ensuring projects are increasingly well-resourced and aligned with institutional priorities.
- **Wet Lab Launch:** Complete and operationalize the 1,200 sq. ft. biomedical wet lab to provide pre-clinical and bench research opportunities to medical students.
- **Digital Platforms:** Expand use of The Commons as the official registry and collaborative platform for all faculty and student research projects.
- **Software and Tools:** Broaden the use of additional systems, exploring Qualtrics, NVivo, and Zotero, and retire less robust systems.
- **Research Compliance:** Maintain updated policies and procedures on IRB, intellectual property, privacy, and data security.

2. Promote Faculty and Student Engagement

- **Research Electives:** Expand RSCH 901e and add electives across OMS years with clear oversight and eligibility requirements.
- **Mentorship Program:** Implement structured and intentional mentorship programs led by senior faculty and linked to faculty development plans.
- **Research Club Support:** Continue student-led research club activities, including journal clubs, faculty meet-and-greets, and interest surveys.

3. Elevate Scholarly Output

- **Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) and OPP Research:** Students and faculty at KHSU-KansasCOM actively engage in research incorporating Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine (OMM) and Osteopathic Principles and Practice (OPP). Starting in Health Systems Science courses, students are introduced to OMM and OPP-related research and questions. Moving forward, they are encouraged to expand clinical studies, educational innovations, and translational projects involving OMM techniques, further reinforcing the College's unique osteopathic identity and aligning with COCA 8.3-1 standards.
- **Cultural Competency and Health Disparities:** Students and faculty actively engage in research addressing cultural competency and health disparities. Moving forward, they are encouraged to grow projects investigating health outcomes across diverse populations, with particular emphasis on underserved and rural communities in Kansas. Research initiatives will continue to explore social determinants of health, access to care, and culturally tailored interventions, advancing the College's mission to promote equitable health outcomes and align with COCA Element 8 standards.
- **Annual Research Symposium:** Scale up participation across other osteopathic schools and local educational institutions.
- **Publications and Posters:** Support and track scholarly output using The Commons publication module; celebrate achievements through KERNels and the KHSU website.
- **Faculty Expectations:** Define scholarship criteria in faculty evaluations to encourage publications, presentations, and funding applications.



4. Cultivate External Collaborations

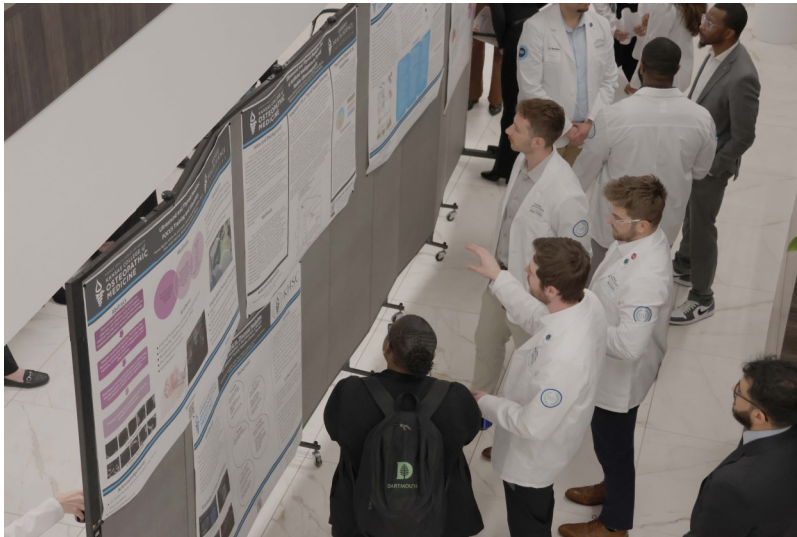
- **Practice-Based Research Network (PBRN):** Leverage the Kansas Education and Research Network (KERN) to link providers and researchers statewide in shared translational projects.
- **IRB Access and Support for Partner Institutions:** KHSU-KansasCOM maintains an Institutional Review Board (IRB) that oversees research conducted by students, faculty, and staff. This IRB is also available to KERN practices and other third-party collaborators, providing ethical oversight and regulatory compliance for research beyond the main campus. Moving forward, the College seeks to expand access and support, offering additional training and guidance to partner site investigators to strengthen collaborative

research opportunities and further enhance compliance and rigor.

- **Clinical and Community Partners:** Strengthen research relationships, particularly around clinical outcomes and public health interventions.

5. Secure Sponsored Research Funding

- **Grants Development:** Continue the grant submission pipeline including public and private funding opportunities.
- **Sponsored Project Tracking:** Scale adoption of Cayuse SP for proposal development, budget tracking, and reporting.



III. Strategic Initiatives and Timeline

Initiative	Timeline	Lead(s)
Wet Lab construction and launch	Q3 2025 – Q2 2026	Facilities, Research Leadership, Advancement
Faculty Mentorship Program rollout	Q1 2026	Drs. Bhakta, Martin
Expand RSCH 901e elective	Q3 2025	Dr. Bhakta, Curriculum Committee
Commons Full implementation	Q2 2025	ORSA Team, KERN
Annual Research Symposium expansion	March 2026	Dr. Bhakta, Research Club, KERN, and ORSA Team
Increase external grant applications by 25%	By end of AY 2026–27	Office of Sponsored Projects





IV. Signature Initiative: Kansas Education and Research Network (KERN)

Overview

KERN is a practice-based research network (PBRN) housed within the Office of Research and Scholarly Activity (ORSA) at KHSU-KansasCOM. It serves as a bridge between the academic research community and primary care providers across Kansas, especially those in rural and underserved areas. The Commons, a digital hub for project registration, collaboration, and publication celebration, anchors KERN's activity.

KERN's strategic direction is driven by its dual mission:

- Empower academic-clinical partnerships to generate impactful research; and
- Build sustainable infrastructure for authentic rural patient engagement in comparative effectiveness research (CER).

Strategic Objectives and Key Initiatives

1. Build Rural Patient Engagement Capacity

- KERN is developing a replicable framework for community-centered research.
- **Patient Engagement Committee (PEC):** Establish a 10–12 member committee, with ≥40% rural representation, to inform KERN's research agenda and review protocols.
- **Partnership Development:** Formalize engagement with 3–4 rural towns, including community groups and clinics, to co-create research initiatives.
- **Curriculum & Training:**
 - Research literacy education for patient partners.
 - Researcher training in inclusive and participatory methods.
 - A certificate program on Collaborative Research Skills.
- **Dissemination & Evaluation:**
 - Use The Commons for transparent project communication.
 - Conduct regional listening sessions and publish findings in peer-reviewed outlets.

2. Enhance Practice-Based Research Capacity

- Maintain project registration through The Commons (mandatory for all student, faculty, and KERN-member research).
- Launch structured recruitment and protocol review tools.
- Develop researcher-patient mentorships and shared governance structures.

- Mandatory usage for project registration and tracking.
- Supported by the KERN Advisory Board and ORSA team

4. Sustainability and Replication

- Integrate PEC into KERN governance and long-term funding structures.
- Embed engagement frameworks into faculty expectations and research grant development.
- Scale successful community engagement pilots to other regions across Kansas.

Projected KERN Outcomes (2025–2028)

Time Frame	Outcome
Short-Term (Year 1)	Launch PEC, complete curriculum, establish community partners, train 75% of researchers.
Medium-Term (Years 2–3)	50% of KERN research includes patient input; 3 co-authored publications; broaden dissemination through The Commons and confer-
Long-Term (Year 4+)	Patient engagement fully institutionalized; KERN model replicated across multiple rural

IV. Assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement

- **Tracking Tools:** All projects, publications, and grant submissions will be tracked via The Commons and Cayuse SP.
- **Outcomes Dashboard:** Annual reporting on number of publications, student participation, external grant submissions, and symposium metrics.
- **Accreditation Metrics:** Outcomes will be benchmarked against COCA scholarly activity standards and internal CQI indicators.

V. Conclusion

KHSU-KansasCOM's research and scholarly activity strategy reflects an institutional culture that values inquiry, rigor, and collaboration. The integrated approach outlined here builds on recent momentum and provides a sustainable framework for meaningful student and faculty research engagement that meets the expectations of COCA and the broader academic community and community stakeholders.