Executive Summary

The Office of Academic Affairs at Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine (HWCOM) held a one-day Clinical Research Retreat on February 14, 2013. The purpose of the event was to create an opportunity for information exchange and networking for those active or interested in clinical and translational research. Participants included FIU and HWCOM administrators, clinical and basic science faculty. The expected outcome of the retreat was to establish a baseline from which research administration can plan and measure the future growth of the clinical research program.

Presenters were asked to give a brief overview of their recent and current research. The purpose was not to present scientific results but to inform peers about the direction of the ongoing research, the available infrastructure and existing expertise.

The event comprised four sessions, each moderated by a chair and including three to four presenters. A question and answer period concluded each session. During these sessions, the participants identified strengths, weaknesses; opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the research program of HWCOM.

Strengths:
1. Diversity, expertise and dedication of the HWCOM and FIU faculty
2. Diversity of the patient population in South Florida for clinical research
3. FIU location in South Florida with proximity to Latin America and the Caribbean
4. FIU and HWCOM commitment to international research and academic collaboration
5. Availability of infrastructure, space and expertise to perform a wide range of clinical studies through partnership with Miami Research Associates
6. Dedication to community-based research in line with HWCOM’s mission and goals
7. Potential philanthropic support commensurate with the status of a research-based public university

Opportunities:
1. Provide IRB services to increase awareness of HWCOM and generate revenue
2. Utilize FIU HealthCare Network clinical practice for research studies
3. Private sector funding and nontraditional funding sources such as crowd sourcing
4. Flexible structure of HWCOM allowing new strategies to be easily adopted and implemented
5. Partnering with industry
6. Collaboration among clinical faculties and basic scientists

Threats:
1. Poor economic climate affecting nontraditional funding sources
2. Government budget shortfalls leading to funding cuts (fiscal cliff, sequestration)
In summary, the clinical research retreat created a forum for researchers to share information and identify areas of common interest for future activities. Collaboration among clinicians as well as basic scientists and clinical faculty is essential and can help overcome obstacles for research growth. HWCOM is committed to growing and strengthening its research programs. By establishing this baseline with strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified, a plan for future growth can be created, implemented, and its outcomes measured.

**Actionable Plan**

Identify priorities for individual researchers and research groups and facilitate funding for implementation. Suggested areas of focus include cancer, aging and age-related disease, community-based and preventive medicine and tropical medicine.