Jennifer Kerpelman

Associate Vice President for Research (AVPR)
540 Devall Drive, Rm. 2A09
Research and Innovation Center
Auburn Background

1999
Faculty member in Human Development and Family Science

2011
Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies in the College of Human Sciences
  • 2018-19 Interim Vice President for Research

2024
Associate Vice President for Research
Associate Vice President for Research (AVPR) Responsibilities

- Promote and facilitate development of interdisciplinary/collaborative/team-based research initiatives across campus.

- Foster a culture of collaboration and collegiality between faculty, staff and SVPRED administrators.

- Further develop a culture of innovation at the university, supporting efforts to identify, develop and commercialize intellectual property developed from university-based research - particularly in disciplines that may not have traditionally been frequent developers of intellectual property.
AVPR Responsibilities (contd.)

• Work with SVPRED to:

  • Define and implement a vision for strategic investment in research opportunities that will leverage existing areas of expertise on the campus.

  • Identify needs and develop strategies for university research facilities and related infrastructure.

  • Help optimize research operations and structure, including the identification and implementation of best practices and technologies that will enhance research efficiency and productivity on the campus.

  • Identify strategic opportunities to support improvements to research lifecycle (proposal development and submission processes, contracting processes, and research integrity and compliance processes...).

  • Further define and implement best practices for administration of externally-funded projects.
Auburn University Rural Health Initiative
Example of a Strong Collaboration
Auburn University Rural Health Initiative:
Partnering with communities to increase access to high quality and affordable health and wellness care throughout rural Alabama.

Website: https://www.auburn.edu/outreach/ruralhealth/

- Initiated in 2020
- Partnership with AU Outreach, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Academic units, Communities
- Will soon exceed $4M in external funding
- Pilot site with OnMed station in LaFayette, Alabama: Chambers County Community Health and Wellness Center
- Engaging faculty and students in outreach, educational and research opportunities
- Encouraging and arranging visits to see the center and the OnMed station
- Expanding across Alabama (adding 4 more OnMed units->West Alabama communities; adding telehealth carts in 10 Southeast Alabama communities)
- Initial funding received toward acquisition of a mobile health clinic
Remapping Alabama’s Rural Health Landscape

• The Challenge:
  • Alabama ranks 44th in healthcare nationally.
  • Alabama is among states with the highest rates of diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.
  • Alabama has high maternal mortality rates, as well as alarming rates of substance use disorder and growing untreated mental health needs.

• The Opportunity:
  • Auburn University, with diverse academic units, is well-positioned to extensively impact the health and well-being of Alabama's residents.
  • The collaboration among University Outreach, ACES, and various academic units accelerates Auburn University's capacity to address health disparities in rural and underserved populations.

• Pilot Site:
  • Students are currently contributing to community-based health assessments, interventions, and wellness education. The first cohort of Rural Health Fellows has been launched.
  • Faculty are beginning to implement community engaged research, outreach scholarship, and programming addressing a range of health topics.
  • Community leadership and community members (teens and adults) are engaging in a range of role, including that of Health Ambassadors, promoting health care access and well-being.
Making a Tangible Difference

• Auburn University Rural Health Initiative (AUHRI) aligns with Auburn University's commitment to innovation and excellence.

• With a comprehensive approach to healthcare, education, and research, AURHI is poised to make a lasting impact on the health outcomes of rural Alabamians.