

**Progress in Stakeholder Engaged Research Forum:
Best Practices and Key Lessons Learned**

Hae-Ra H, Xu A, Waligora K, Okoye S, Reese M, Bone L, Dennison-Himmelfarb C

Introduction: Stakeholder engagement (SE) is recognized as a fundamental process to make research more relevant, translatable, and sustainable. The Community Engagement Program of Johns Hopkins ICTR hosted the *Progress in Stakeholder Engaged Research Forum* to engage researchers and stakeholders in a group discussion to reflect on their past and current practices in planning, implementing, and evaluating a variety of aspects of SE research.

Methods: A total of 50 researchers and their partners of successfully funded SE research participated in five concurrent discussion sessions. Each group was charged with one of the following topics: 1) preparation of stakeholders; 2) stakeholder roles and responsibilities; 3) scope of SE; 4) process and impact evaluation of SE; and 5) approaches to promoting SE. Each group discussion was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Results: Content analysis resulted in 18 themes. Examples of main themes included: mission driven versus “checking the box,” “mayor of the block,” community promotion and advancement, mentorship, being a participant, being engaged in all stages of the research process, tension between clinical group of interest and researchers, lack of dissemination of research findings to participants, needing both quantity and quality measures (not either/or), considering “culture of goal,” being cautious about getting too formulaic about the quality and applying “Leapfrog,” community engagement from the beginning (iterative process), and transparency.

Conclusions: The findings highlight the need for enhanced SE training and opportunities for both stakeholders and researchers. We plan to disseminate best practices for SE research while making strategic connections between stakeholders and researchers.