Translational Impact Summit – Day 1

I. Policy Impact in Action – Panel Q&A

Q1. How can researchers ensure their science is useful to policymakers without becoming advocates?

Asked by: Moderator (Kristi Holmes)
Answered by: Dr. Robin Mermelstein

Answer:
Dr. Mermelstein emphasized the importance of producing **one-page policy briefs** that clearly explain research implications in plain language. She noted that the role of researchers is **to educate, not advocate**, by presenting the evidence and its implications while avoiding prescriptive policy positions. She encouraged CTSAs to serve as consistent, trusted sources of scientific information for policymakers and their staff, highlighting that staffers are often the primary audience digesting scientific input.

Q2. What structures best support long-term trust and co-creation between researchers and policymakers?

Asked by: Kristi Holmes (panel prompt)
Answered by: Drs. Mermelstein, Justin Blackburn, and Shari Bolen

Answers:

- **Dr. Mermelstein:** Recommended sustained engagement through regular communication (e.g., recurring briefs), relationship-building with legislative staff, and understanding policy timelines rather than episodic outreach
- **Dr. Blackburn:** Highlighted **co-design** as essential—engaging policymakers continuously throughout the research process so the final outputs remain relevant and usable. He stressed regular check-ins and responsiveness to evolving policy needs.
- **Dr. Bolen:** Emphasized persistence and patience, noting that policy change is slow and often nonlinear. She advised researchers not to disengage when progress stalls, as long-term relationships often yield unexpected opportunities.

Q3. How did the WISE Indiana model handle funding uncertainty and rapid timelines?

Asked by: Lisa Welch
Answered by: Dr. Justin Blackburn

Answer:
Dr. Blackburn explained that WISE relied on a **central administrative and project management core**, allowing investigators to engage quickly when task orders arose. While funding timelines were unpredictable, the built-in project management and direct connection to policy action made participation worthwhile and feasible for investigators balancing other commitments.

Q4. What impact metrics were used beyond traditional publications?

Asked by: Corey Snelson
Answered by: Dr. Justin Blackburn

Answer:
Dr. Blackburn noted the use of **process and outcome metrics**, including expert engagement, trainee involvement, presentations, and policy use. He also referenced the **Translational Science Benefits Model (TSBM)** while acknowledging challenges such as leadership turnover and shifting state priorities that complicate long-term impact tracking.

Q5. How can researchers respond quickly during crises when resources are limited?

Asked by: Sandra Morales-Mirque
Answered by: Dr. Justin Blackburn

Answer:
Dr. Blackburn explained that a key advantage of CTSA-linked models is **network scale**. Large expert networks increase the likelihood that someone can respond rapidly. He cited rapid literature review capacity developed during COVID as an example of how infrastructure built for emergencies can persist beyond the crisis.

II. Delphi Working Session – Process Transparency

Q6. How will Delphi data be used, and who will analyze it?

Asked by: Shannon Casey
Answered by: Dr. Emmanuel Tetteh

Answer:
Dr. Tetteh stated that the Translational Impact Working Group will analyze Delphi responses between rounds. The outputs will be synthesized into a **set of shared, actionable priorities** to be reported back to all participants by the end of Day 2. The working group will then intentionally plan actions aligned with those priorities.

III. Fireside Chat – Communities Driving Impact

Q7. What unintended consequences emerged from the Faith-Based Organizational Network (FBON)?

Asked by: Emmanuel Tetteh
Answered by: Dr. Lori Carter-Edwards and Pastor James Gailliard

Answers:

- **Dr. Carter-Edwards:** Noted that outcomes such as conference presentations, multiple grant submissions, and national visibility were **not original goals** but emerged organically from capacity building.
- **Pastor Gailliard:** Added that the creation of the **Eastern North Carolina Ministerial Alliance** itself was unintended, arising from health-focused collaboration that later expanded into broader social and educational initiatives.

Q8. How should researchers think about long-term commitment in community partnerships?

Asked by: Darcy Freedman
Answered by: Dr. Lori Carter-Edwards

Answer:
Dr. Carter-Edwards explained that long-term partnerships often begin **without dedicated funding**, requiring early relationship-building and listening. She recommended seeking **small, flexible funding** to support early capacity-building activities and aligning with community priorities before pursuing larger grants.

Q9. What does "capacity building" mean in community-academic partnerships?

Asked by: Follow-up discussion (session context)
Answered by: Pastor James Gailliard

Answer:
Pastor Gailliard described capacity building as improving a community organization's **infrastructure, leadership, autonomy, and ability to pursue future opportunities**—not merely supporting a single research project. He emphasized that communities should be stronger after the partnership concludes.

IV. Economic & Commercial Aspects of Impact

Q10. Will slides and recordings from the summit be shared?

Asked by: Multiple attendees (chat)
Answered by: CCOS team (Lenore Roca, Amelia Bucek, Kerry James)

Answer:
Yes. Organizers confirmed that **slides, recordings, Q&A, links, posters, and non-proprietary materials** will be shared with all summit attendees after the event.

Q11. What is the role of CTSA hubs in regional economic ecosystems?

Asked by: Session framing (Kristopher Bough)
Answered by: Dr. Maryann Feldman

Answer:
Dr. Feldman described CTSA hubs as **market-shaping institutions** that help align academic research, clinical validation, regulatory expertise, and capital. She emphasized that coordination—rather than discovery—is often the limiting factor in biomedical innovation, and that place-based ecosystems influence translational velocity.

Q12. How can small pilot investments have outsized impact in commercialization?

Asked by: Session framing
Answered by: Dr. Elan Ness-Cohn

Answer:
Dr. Ness-Cohn explained that **small, milestone-driven awards** (e.g., $10–25K) can be powerful when tightly scoped to answer decisive feasibility questions. Early "go/no-go" decisions preserve resources, sharpen pipelines, and increase credibility with investors and industry partners.

Translational Impact Summit – Day 2

I. Planning for Impact in Element E – Innovation Tournament & RFA Design

Q1. Were idea submissions aggregated prior to review to identify overlapping themes?

Asked by: Jessica Sperling, PhD
Answered by: Dr. Rinad S. Beidas

Answer:
No. Ideas were not aggregated prior to review. Aggregation occurred during deliberations by the challenge committee. Dr. Beidas noted that pre-aggregation would likely be advantageous in future iterations.

Q2. Did the Innovation Tournament increase interest or volume of RFA submissions compared to prior years?

Asked by: Sydney Bollinger
Answered by: Dr. Rinad S. Beidas

Answer:
It is difficult to isolate the effect of the Innovation Tournament on submission volume due to broader funding-environment factors. Historical trends may be examined, but attribution is not yet clear.

Q3. Were community members (non-academic partners) involved in idea submission?

Asked by: Jessica Sperling, PhD
Answered by: Dr. Rinad S. Beidas

Answer:
Not in this iteration. Legal and timing constraints limited participation to internal Northwestern University and Northwestern Medicine communities. Dr. Beidas stated that community-inclusive tournaments have been done previously and are planned for future iterations.

Q4. Did semi-finalists present their ideas to the challenge committee?

Asked by: Haley Swilling
Answered by: Dr. Rinad S. Beidas

Answer:
No. Many ideas were anonymous and had no identified “owner,” and timelines were compressed. This approach was identified as a potential enhancement for future tournaments.

Q5. Did you collect demographic or disciplinary data on idea submitters?

Asked by: Margaret Lynn Schneider
Answered by: Dr. Rinad S. Beidas

Answer:
Yes, optionally. Among respondents who provided data, participants included faculty, staff, postdocs, health system colleagues, and trainees across multiple disciplines. Broader outreach to community partners is planned for future iterations.

II. Multi-CTSA Research Panel

Q6. How do translational science case studies differ from “impact stories”?

Asked by: Rebecca Butcher
Answered by: Dr. Clara Pelfrey

Answer:
Impact stories are typically public-facing success narratives. Translational science case studies are rigorous, research-based analyses involving interviews, document review, and methodological coding to understand how translation occurred.

Q7. How are contextual factors (e.g., institutional culture) identified in case studies?

Asked by: Lloyd Michener, MD
Answered by: Dr. Clara Pelfrey

Answer:
Multiple team members are interviewed, and cases are often expanded from published work or TSBM submissions. Explicit focus is placed on both challenges and strategies used to overcome them.

Q8. Should case studies be tailored to specific audiences?

Asked by: Amelia Bucek
Answered by: Lisa Welch

Answer:
The protocol is academically rigorous, but outputs can be adapted into audience-specific formats (e.g., policy briefs, public narratives). Future coding may explicitly flag audience relevance.

Q9. What about delays in Altmetric and Overton data?

Asked by: John Farrar
Answered by: Dr. Douglas Luke

Answer:
Delays are a known limitation. Impact assessment requires long-term perspectives beyond 3–5-year funding cycles, and early signals should be interpreted as leading indicators rather than endpoints.

Q10. Where are the biggest gaps between bibliometrics and TSBM-type impacts?

Asked by: Kawthar Muhammad
Answered by: Dr. Nicole Miovsky and Dr. Clara Pelfrey

Answer:
Economic impacts are especially difficult to capture bibliometrically. Effective approaches triangulate bibliometrics with investigator self-report and qualitative case studies.

Q11. Are community partnerships represented in case studies?

Asked by: Athena McKay
Answered by: Dr. Clara Pelfrey

Answer:
Yes. Multiple case studies involve community partnerships, and cross-case analyses will address these explicitly.

III. Selected Poster Session

Q12. Do all industry-funded trials go through the Research Feasibility Committee (RFC)?

Asked by: Kitt Swartz
Answered by: Dr. Carl Schulman

Answer:
Yes. All industry-funded trials are reviewed. Approximately 4% were not approved. Expansion to PI-initiated trials is expected to increase this proportion.

Q13. Did the RFC reduce time to CTA execution?

Asked by: Margaret McManus
Answered by: Dr. Carl Schulman

Answer:
Data are still being collected; multiple factors influence execution timelines.

IV. TSBM State of the Science

Q14. What does “causal” mean in impact evaluation when no control group exists?

Asked by: Lisa Welch
Answered by: Joe Hunt and Dr. Douglas Luke

Answer:
Causality is challenging; many tools emphasize contribution rather than strict attribution. Tool selection should clarify causal claims and limitations.

Q15. Did terrain mapping include evaluation team capacity?

Asked by: Alfred Vitale, PhD
Answered by: Joe Hunt

Answer:
Not in this instrument. Evaluator team infrastructure is captured in a separate evaluator survey report.

Q16. Are there passive data sources that reduce reporting burden?

Asked by: Orfeu Buxton
Answered by: Dr. Douglas Luke

Answer:
Passive sources (e.g., policy databases, bibliometrics, NLP-enabled systems) are promising but must be carefully validated for reproducibility and interpretability.

V. Impact Measurement Alignment Working Session

Q17. What are “reactive requests”?

Asked by: Tyler Chisolm
Answered by: Alyson Eggleston

Answer:
Short-term, unplanned evaluation requests requiring rapid turnaround, often from leadership, that may later be integrated into routine evaluation processes.

Q18. How urgent are reactive requests?

Answer:
Poll results:

- Moderate urgency: 45%
- High urgency: 31%
- Low/very low urgency: 22%
- Very high urgency: 2%

VI. Supporting Impact in Early-Stage Investigator Development

Q19. Is the UCSF CRISP program open to pre-doctoral trainees?

Asked by: Rebecca Butcher
Answered by: Dr. Naomi Bardach

Answer:
No. CRISP is a post-doctoral fellowship, open to MDs, PhDs, nurses, occupational therapists, and related clinical disciplines.

Q20. What had the greatest impact on early-stage investigators?

Asked by: Moderator
Answered by: Dr. Naomi Bardach, Cathleen Kane, and Sandra Molzhon

Answers:

- **Access to EHR data and informatics training** (UCSF CRISP)
- **Experiential community engagement opportunities** (VCU)
- **Peer benchmarking and shared metrics** (Gotham Consortium)

VII. Closing Plenary

Q22. Where will the CTSA Impact Website live?

Asked by: Multiple attendees
Answered by: Karen Stark and Cathleen Kane

Answer:
The site is under development by CCOS in collaboration with the Impact Coordinating Group and is expected in 2026.