

Strategic Plan 2017 to 2020



About this Document

At Arthritis Research Canada (ARC), we have a single purpose: investigating, understanding, advancing and sharing knowledge about arthritis research. In the sixteen years since our organization was founded, our research team, administrators and volunteers have worked tirelessly – and the result is a unique patient-oriented investigative effort focused on practical research for everyday living.

This strategic plan reflects our ongoing commitment to make the most of the resources available to ARC, so that the results of our work truly transform the lives of people living with arthritis. This plan will guide our activities for the next three years and beyond. It reiterates our longstanding commitment to excellence in research, while redoubling our determination to raise awareness and engagement with the public to ensure maximum benefit results from the creation of new knowledge.

The plan also looks inward – recognizing the need to secure the human and financial resources that make our work possible. Both fundraising and the recruitment of scientific leaders are highly competitive endeavours, and we must succeed at both to ensure ARC's work continues.

We are reminded of the importance of this work every day, as we connect with members of our Arthritis Patient Advisory Board. They are an inspiration to us, and increasingly they are our partners in research, playing an active role in our work to ensure its relevance and applicability to their everyday struggles.

It is our pleasure to present this plan, and an honour to recommit to this work. Please join us to improve the lives of people living with arthritis.



Daniel Parlow
Chair, Board of Directors



Dr. John Esdaile,
Scientific Director



Shauneen Kellner,
Executive Director

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The Context for Planning

The Arthritis Research Centre of Canada (ARC) was created in 2000 in recognition of the tremendous potential that research can bring to arthritis treatment in Canada, and indeed, the world. Since 2015, it has operated as **Arthritis Research Canada**, with an ongoing commitment to making arthritis research a priority for the more than 5.2 million Canadians affected by this disease.

ARC has earned international attention and is a leader in arthritis research. ARC has built a strong multi-disciplinary research team of outstanding medical doctors and research scientists, who willingly collaborate with clinical professionals around the world. ARC continues to identify ways to further develop and attract faculty.

With affiliated facilities in British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec, ARC is dedicated to understanding, advancing and sharing knowledge about the causes of arthritis, and addressing issues that are impacting people with arthritis right now.

Scientific Success

In the health research community, success is measured in a variety of ways, including by the amount of research funding awarded to a given scholar or centre; the number of scholarly publications generated by a researcher or team; and the extent to which the best and the brightest faculty members and students are attracted to join. On all these fronts, ARC is considered a leader by its peers, recognized as exceeding expectations compared to similar-sized university-affiliated centres.

As illustrated below, total research funding awarded to ARC scientists has grown steadily over the past four years, topping \$6M in 2015-16 and expected to set a new record in 2016-17.

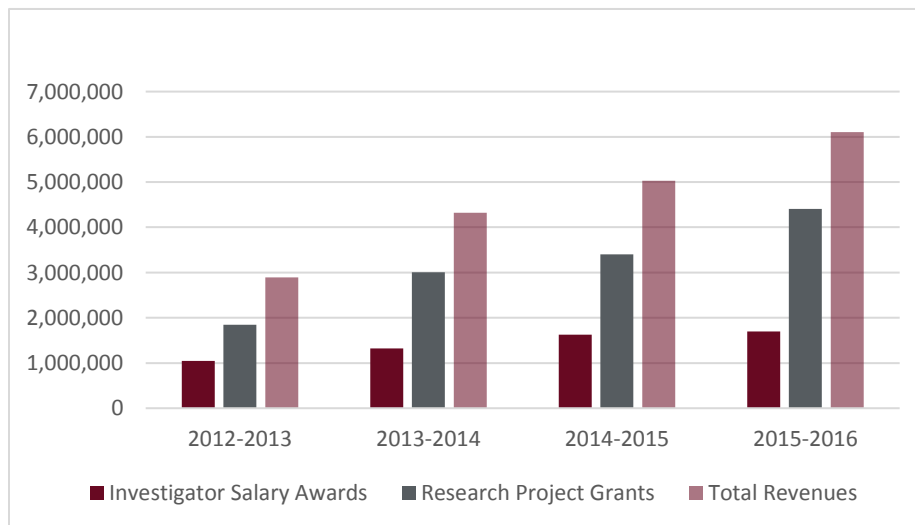


Figure 1: Research Funding 2012 to 2016

ARC scientists and students have published close to 450 major papers since 2012, including in influential arthritis journals such as Arthritis Care and Research; Rheumatology; Nature Reviews Rheumatology; Annals of Rheumatic Disease; Arthritis & Rheumatology; as well as important non-arthritis journals such as the American Journal of Medicine; PLOS One; British Medical Journal; Annals of Internal Medicine; Journal of the American Medical Association; and Statistics in Medicine. ARC scientific papers are recognized as having a high impact factor or ranking because they are frequently cited in the work of others.

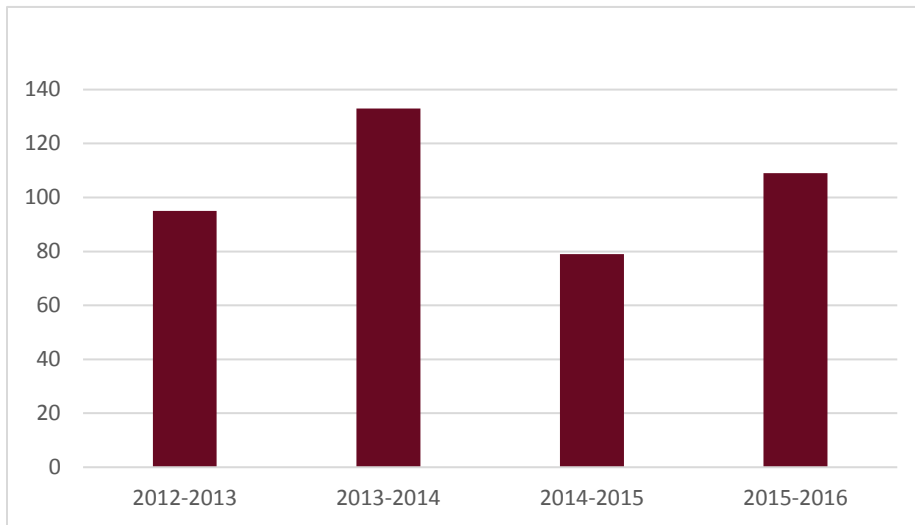


Figure 2: Major Research Publications 2012 to 2016

Over the past few years, ARC has developed a strong reputation for our team’s expertise in translating new knowledge into tools and treatments for better everyday living. Most recently, in December 2016, ARC’s Senior Research Scientist Dr. Linda Li received an unprecedented honour. She was named to lead an innovative new BC Knowledge Translation Methods Cluster with the specific mandate to develop and test new Knowledge Translation and Implementation Science methods.

Dr. Li’s appointment was part of a federal and provincial announcement of \$80 million in funding and in-kind contributions over five years towards the British Columbia Support Unit for People and Patient-Oriented Research and Trials (the [BC SUPPORT Unit](#)). The BC SUPPORT Unit is a multi-partner organization created to support, streamline and increase patient-oriented research throughout BC.

The BC SUPPORT Unit has two main roles: providing services to researchers, patients, health care providers and health system decision makers, and facilitating initiatives identified as provincial priorities. The Unit is also creating methods clusters (methodological communities of practice), and helping fund, plan and facilitate access to a multi-partner provincial data platform that will be separate but integral to the Unit much like the one used by Arthritis Research Canada scientists and others.

The cluster headed by Dr. Li recognizes how her work at ARC has always enabled patients to inform researchers about their lived experiences with diseases and the treatments and accommodations that work best for them.

Leveraging Opportunities

An unprecedented mix of characteristics in ARC's research environment is responsible for these results, including strategic recruiting; passionate leadership; inspirational mentoring and coaching; clear goal setting; interdisciplinary collaboration; top notch infrastructure support; and transparent accountability for results. Underlying all of these factors is ARC's not-so-secret weapon, patient involvement: all ARC research is inspired and informed by the challenges faced every day by people living with arthritis and related conditions.

ARC's Board of Directors and senior leadership team entered into the planning process in late 2016 with the knowledge that it will take strategic, targeted and committed effort to maintain and build on this past success. Amongst the opportunities and barriers they identified were:

- Clarifying and strengthening affiliate site relationships, to build support, resources and capacity for arthritis research in Alberta, Quebec, and beyond.
- Meeting the challenge of communication and marketing, in a noisy and crowded public conversation where more "urgent" diseases and patient populations are competing for donor dollars.
- Making the case with philanthropists and governments for the "ultimate results" of ARC's research (e.g. using insurance data, productivity statistics, and compelling information regarding the impacts of applied research on quality of life and length of life).
- The need for expansion and development of ARC's Board of Directors, to ensure that governance capacity is maintained and grows as the organization grows and faces new and complex challenges.
- ARC has enjoyed strong and stable leadership with its present Scientific Director and Executive Director with long tenure. Planning now for succession will ensure that future leadership changes occur with a minimum of disruption.

These and other key factors in ARC's operating context influenced the creation of this plan, which will guide operations through 2020 and beyond.

The Foundation of the Strategic Plan

The mission, vision and values statements below are the foundation of our strategic plan. Together, they provide clear statements of our reason for being; the future we exist to create; and the values that guide our activities and choices as we work to achieve that vision.

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to transform the lives of people living with arthritis through research and engagement.

Vision Statement

Our Vision is a future where research-based services, tools and knowledge empower people living with arthritis to triumph over pain and disability.

Our Values

Integrity



Being accountable and transparent, meeting or exceeding standards and expectations for confidentiality, safety, protection of privacy and ethical conduct

Collaboration



Working effectively across disciplines, specialties, organizations and communities to combine efforts and share information in pursuit of shared goals

Innovation



Constantly seeking and applying leading edge ideas, practices and knowledge while maintaining our commitment to quality and pursuit of the highest standards

Passion



Effectively translating unwavering dedication to our mission into practical, relevant, high quality actions that make a positive difference for people living with arthritis

Strategic Plan at a Glance

1.0 Maintain and deepen scientific excellence

- 1.1 Recruit and support leading scientists
- 1.2 Expand and enrich scientific collaboration
- 1.3 Maintain a robust, respected training program
- 1.4 Continue and grow knowledge translation

2.0 Strengthen fundraising and secure resources for sustainability

- 2.1 Continue to enhance fundraising capacity
- 2.2 Enhance marketing and public awareness of ARC
- 2.3 Diversify revenue sources

3. Plan for leadership succession, operational sustainability and evolution

- 3.1 Plan for scientific and operational leadership succession
- 3.2 Identify and plan for future infrastructure needs
- 3.3 Enhance processes for board succession and recruitment

Strategic Direction #1:

Maintain and deepen scientific excellence

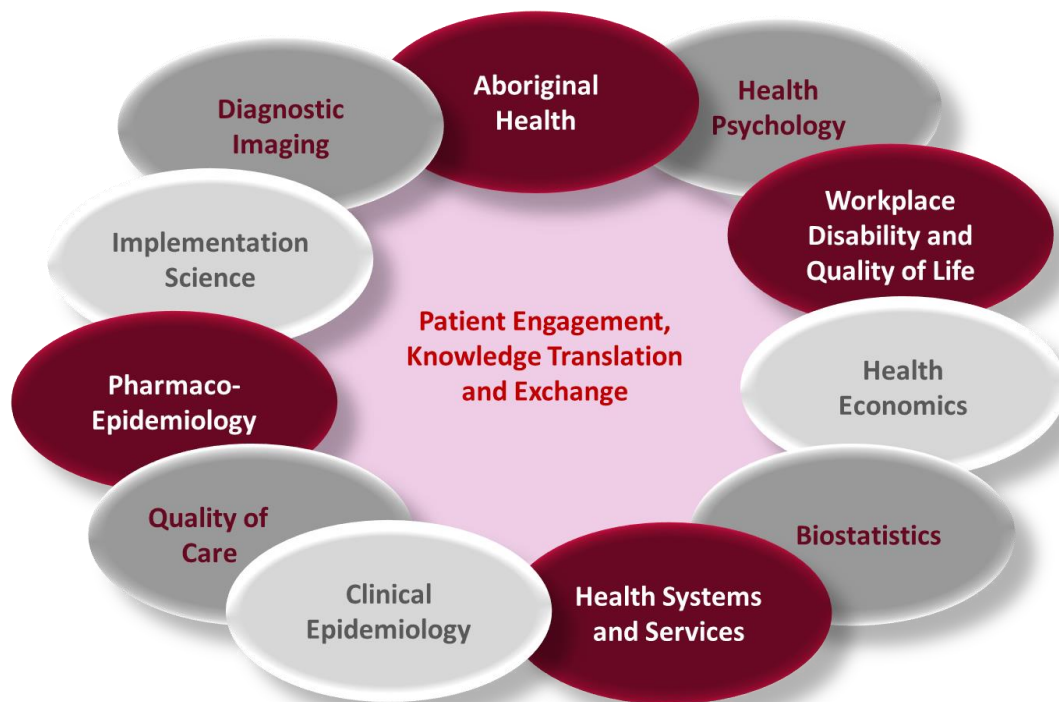
Scientific excellence is the vehicle by which ARC operationalizes its mission, creating new knowledge to prevent the development of arthritis and to transform both the quality and length of the lives of people living with arthritis and related conditions. Academic health science combines three pillars or activity foci: research, training and knowledge translation, all reflected in our objectives for this priority area.

Training and supporting both emerging and established scientists continues to be a hallmark of ARC's research activity. Our collegial, supportive environment ensures that our trainees and researchers, funded by competitive scholarships and salary awards, continue to generate new knowledge in arthritis prevention and care, and our focus on knowledge translation recognizes the importance of ensuring that research evidence is widely shared and adopted.

Objective 1.1 Recruit and support leading scientists

ARC's Scientific Director will retire, or step down from his current leadership role, in the foreseeable future. As a result, scientific leadership succession is a priority, and the ARC Board of Directors recognizes its duty to ensure that a succession plan is in place for transition of scientific leadership when the time comes.

At the same time, we recognize that scientific leadership relies on the efforts of our entire team. Their multi-disciplinary areas of expertise complement and combine to produce unique new research evidence and translate it into practical action for prevention, diagnosis and treatment. ARC's Scientific Director maintains an ongoing effort to recruit new scientific talent, by scanning in a wide range of fields (as illustrated below) to complement and expand the skills of our existing research group.



Objective 1.2: Expand and enrich scientific collaboration

This objective underscores our commitment to continue strengthening and building on essential partnerships. ARC is proud to be affiliated with the University of British Columbia (UBC) and the Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute (VCHRI). We also value our partnership with Simon Fraser University (SFU) through the *Maureen and Milan Ilich/Merck Chair in Statistics for Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases*. In Calgary, ARC is affiliated with the University of Calgary and the McCaig Institute for Bone and Joint Health, while in Quebec City, ARC scientists collaborate with colleagues at Université Laval.

Scientific collaboration also means working closely with the Arthritis Patient Advisory Board (APAB), and with continuing consideration of opportunities to leverage advances in artificial intelligence and laboratory sciences. The APAB is comprised of volunteer advocates with arthritis who bring personal experience and knowledge to research decision making at ARC. Their goal is to ensure the patient perspective is represented on research matters related to prevention, treatment and self-management of arthritis. Individually and collectively, they collaborate on research grant submissions, participate in research, and communicate research information and findings to arthritis patients, professional organizations and the general public.

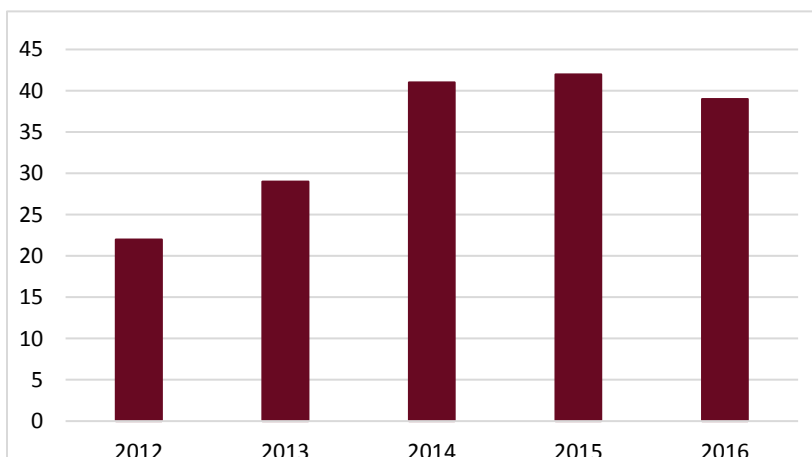
Recently, APAB members from BC have supported their counterparts in Quebec City to create Patients impliqués dans la recherche sur l'arthrite (PIRA). Together, these volunteer groups strengthen the relevance and reach of our research.

Objective 1.3: Maintain and expand a robust, respected training program

Since it was founded in 2000, ARC has provided a rich and fertile training environment for more than 77 future scientists. These have included trainees at a range of points in their professional development:

- Masters students just beginning to explore research as a career;
- PhD students who have committed to a future as investigators; and
- Post-doctoral fellows acquiring the professional skills needed to pursue a lifelong career path as an independently-funded researcher

At any given time, as many as 25 trainees are working under the supervision of ARC-affiliated scientists in Vancouver, Calgary and Quebec City. They work as essential members of our research teams, while also pursuing their own projects and studies.



This objective recognizes our commitment to continuing to secure and invest resources in providing supervision, support and infrastructure for the best and the brightest minds who are the future of arthritis research in Canada and beyond.

Figure 3: Trainees annually, 2012 to 2016

Objective 1.4: Continue and grow knowledge translation

This objective reflects ARC's unique expertise and widely respected achievements in knowledge translation (KT) – particularly as exemplified by Dr. Linda Li and the volunteer members of the Arthritis Patient Advisory Board (APAB).

Dr. Li's expertise has been recognized through her recent appointment to lead the new KT and Implementation Science Methods Cluster in the BC SUPPORT Unit. With a combined \$80 million in funding and in-kind contributions from federal and provincial governments and partners, the BC SUPPORT Unit is a multi-partner organization created to support, streamline and increase patient-oriented research throughout BC. The KT and Implementation Methods Cluster has the specific mandate to develop and test new methods to integrate clinical science and knowledge into healthcare policy and practice. As leader of this Methods Cluster, Dr. Li is well-positioned to connect ARC scientists with emerging evidence about methods that optimize the effectiveness of knowledge translation and exchange.

We also reiterate our commitment to ARC's continued leadership and excellence in KT and public engagement through our on-going support for APAB, which is increasingly recognized as a national pioneer in patient-oriented research – fostering meaningful exchange between patients and researchers who share common interests.



The table below summarizes these four Objectives and the proposed Outcomes Measures that, once documented, will demonstrate their achievement.

Strategic Direction #1: Maintain and deepen scientific excellence	
Objective	Outcome Measures
1.1 Recruit and support leading scientists	Scientific team maintains or enhances disciplinary diversity and achievements annually Scientific Director succession plan is developed and implemented
1.2 Expand and enrich scientific collaboration	Year over year increases in activities and publications that reflect expanded or enriched collaboration Annual increases in collaborative activities amongst Vancouver, Alberta and Quebec scientists
1.3 Maintain and expand a robust, respected training program	Year over year increases in number of trainees and their financial support/associated awards Annual increases in collaborative activities involving Vancouver, Calgary and Quebec trainees
1.4 Continue and grow knowledge translation	New KT/IS evidence from the BC KT Methods Cluster informs activities by ARC scientists Increase number of trainees in KT and implementation science ARC continues to foster patient engagement by supporting APAB and PIRA Collaboration continues between APAB/PIRA and ARC researchers at all sites Year over year increases in presentations, grants and publications involving APAB/PIRA members

Strategic Direction #2:

Strengthen fundraising and secure resources for sustainability

In the last few years, two transformational gifts - \$4M from the Maureen and Milan Ilich Foundation in 2012, and \$3M from the Province of British Columbia in 2014 – have provided ARC with time, stability and security to develop and implement a thoughtful strategic plan for long-term financial sustainability. This work began during the period guided by our past strategic plan, and this Objective signals our intention to continue.

In 2012, ARC hired its first Director of Development, and began to build our professional fundraising capacity. Despite changes in personnel and volunteers, the benefits of this effort are now being seen. In the past four years we have:

- Increased total annual donations to more than \$500,000 in 2015-16
- Created and hosted our annual keynote event, the ARthritis Soiree, which has raised more than \$1M to date
- Implemented a direct-mail campaign
- Implemented and populated a data management system to record and safeguard donor information

Most recently, in 2016 ARC Board member and volunteer Naz Panahi was honoured by the Vancouver chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) as an outstanding volunteer fundraiser. In announcing the award, they cited her as “an amazing champion for philanthropy” who has “demonstrated incredible commitment to create greater awareness of arthritis and raise funds to advance arthritis research.”

Objective 2.1: Continue to enhance fundraising capacity

The need for space to collaborate on research will grow proportionally with the increasing number of faculty and students who join ARC. Over the last four years, prudent management has resulted in our operating budget growing minimally by 8 percent. But looking ahead, we know that continued scientific success will create new demands, and so this Objective expresses our commitment to activities that will ensure longer-term financial sustainability.

As ARC grows and matures, its infrastructure and operating needs also increase. Competitive grants and awards rarely include funding for overhead and space, and so we rely on philanthropic support to fill that gap. Our relatively young fund development function requires continued attention as we expand and increase the complexity of fundraising activities. The activities anticipated to pursue this Objective include detailed planning, along with recruiting and convening new Board members, staff and volunteers who are committed to fundraising.

Objective 2.2: Enhance marketing and public awareness of ARC

This Objective states our intention to develop a strong brand for marketing and communications activities to shape stakeholders’ perception of ARC’s presence, reputation, activities and values. The public conversation around support for health research activity is noisy and highly competitive, and to be heard by potential donors we must increase the value and effectiveness of ARC’s internal and external communication and marketing. We will do this by focusing and clarifying the organization’s

value proposition, with the goal of enabling partners and donors to more easily understand why ARC is a good choice for a gift and/or an ongoing relationship. This effort will also support consistent direction and motivation for employees and scientists, while relying on them to bring forward the stories of research impact in order that we may effectively communicate to donors about the positive impacts of their support for ARC.

Key to this effort is our continuing goal of clearly differentiating the difference between ARC (an independent, national research-focused charity) and The Arthritis Society (TAS). We recognize that, due to its longer tenure, TAS continues to be better known by potential donors, and so it is crucial that we raise our profile to help stakeholders understand how the two organizations differ in their focus.

Objective 2.3: Diversify revenue sources

As a relatively young fundraising organization, ARC has to date focused its efforts on populating our donor “pipeline” – identifying gift prospects, cultivating and stewarding them when they honour us with a gift, and encouraging larger gifts and deeper involvement over time. This has resulted in a philanthropic revenue profile dominated by annual giving (i.e., direct mail and individual annual gifts) and the proceeds of our signature event, the ARThritis Soiree. The image below summarizes our annual revenue by source for the last three years.

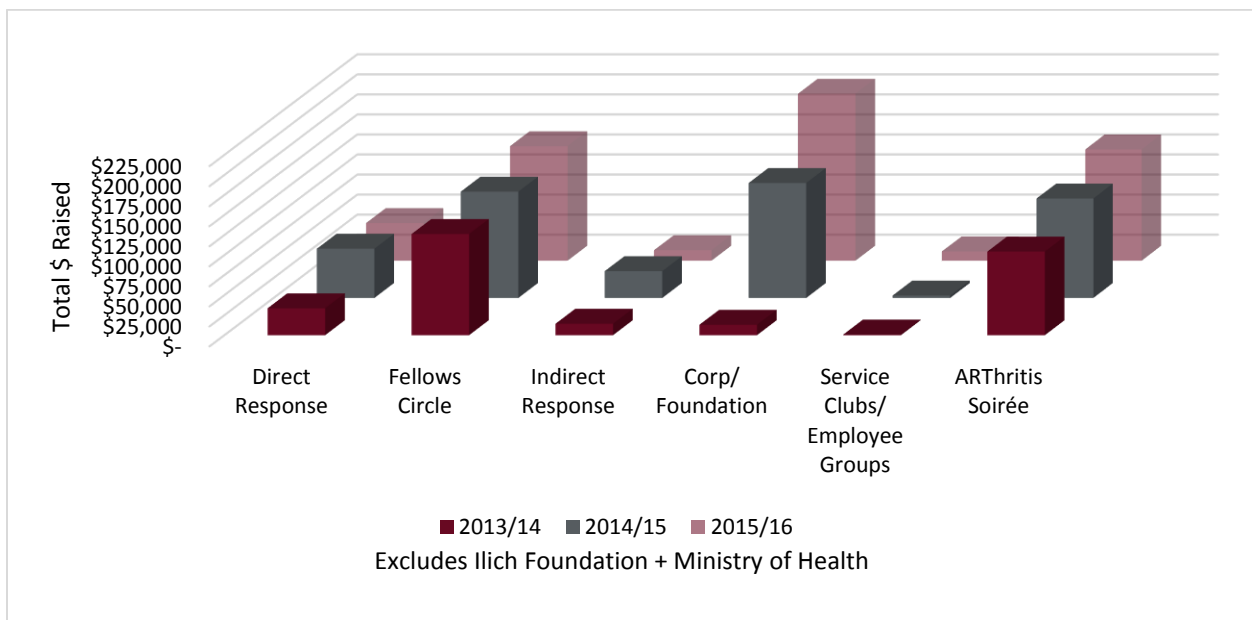


Figure 4: Growth in donor revenue, 2012 to 2016

Looking ahead, we need to diversify and deepen our fund development program. Based on the sustaining fundraising plan identified in objective 2.1, we anticipate activities supporting this objective will include further development of our planned giving program and other tactics contributing to revenue diversification and growth.



The table below summarizes these three Objectives and the proposed Outcomes Measures that, once documented, will demonstrate their achievement.

Strategic Direction #2: Strengthen fundraising and secure resources for sustainability	
Objective	Outcome Measures
2.1 Continue to enhance fundraising capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board/staff/volunteer fund development committee established and functioning by Fiscal Year End (FYE) 2018 • Sustaining fund development program is planned and implemented by FYE 2018 • All ARC scientists, Board members, staff, APAB members and volunteers contribute to fundraising in some way, know our key marketing messages and can readily articulate ARC’s donor value proposition, by FYE 2019 • Fundraised dollars are sufficient to meet ARC’s infrastructure and operations support needs annually starting in 2020
2.2 Enhance marketing and public awareness of ARC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake research to establish baseline data on public awareness of ARC and its value proposition by FYE 2018, including the extent to which ARC and TAS are differentiated • Strategic marketing and public awareness strategy, aligned with fund development and strategic plan, is developed and implemented by FYE 2018 • Research confirms increases in public awareness of ARC, its value proposition and its differentiation from TAS (measured every two years starting in 2019)
2.3 Diversify revenue sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on targets established in approved fund development plan (2.1 above), goals are met or exceeded annually for increase in revenues from annual giving, special events, government support, grants and other major components of the fund development program

Strategic Direction #3: Plan for leadership succession, operational sustainability and evolution

Leadership and operational stability are the foundation on which ARC's scientists rely. A visionary and respected scientific leader, combined with stable, effective and efficient organizational infrastructure, reduce the distraction and increase the focus of our scientific team on their mission. This Strategic Direction addresses the commitment of ARC's Board to securing the tools, people and space on which they rely.

Objective 3.1: Plan for scientific and operational leadership succession

Visionary scientific leaders and effective operational managers are in demand at present, due to demographic changes as Baby Boomers move to retirement and no longer dominate the field of candidates.

ARC has never known a time when it was not led by its dynamic and multi-talented founding Scientific Director, and so planning for and mentoring his successor is an essential task. And, given ARC's relatively small number of employees, planning for succession in operational leadership is a concurrent Board priority. And as we plan for growth, we recognize that succession planning may involve expanding staffing (for example, with the addition of new fundraising and communications staff, an Operations Director, or the appointment of a Deputy Scientific Director to share supervision and collaboration loads).

Succession planning may also include ensuring needs are met for ongoing professional development and human resources management, to support and retain our existing team members.

Objective 3.2: Identify and plan for future infrastructure needs

Since 2012, ARC has occupied 12,946 square feet of research, administrative and clinical office premises supplied by Progressive Construction – a highly valued component of the multi-faceted support we enjoy from the Milan & Maureen Ilich Foundation. While we continue to enjoy a very positive and open relationship with our generous landlord, it is incumbent upon our Board to look ahead and ensure that this or another arrangement is sufficient to meet future space needs as our scientific team grows.

Objective 3.3: Enhance Board succession and recruitment processes

During the period covered by our most recent strategic plan, we have been fortunate to recruit 7 new Directors to ARC's Board. The informal strategy underlying these recruitments has been to build Board capacity by strategically pursuing appointments of individuals with specific skills, experience and network reach.

This Objective recognizes our commitment to formalize that approach in a thoughtful and well-documented annual cycle of Board succession planning. We will identify existing gaps in expertise or desired skills; track term limit changes that will create vacancies; develop a "pipeline" of qualified candidates; and consider expanding the Board to add new and complementary members such as representatives from Alberta and Quebec.



The table below summarizes these three Objectives and the proposed Outcomes Measures that, once documented, will demonstrate their achievement.

Strategic Direction #3: Plan for leadership succession, operational sustainability and evolution	
Objective	Outcome Measures
3.1 Plan for scientific and operational leadership succession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific Director succession plan is in place and timelines approved by SD and Board of Directors, by September 2017 • Executive Director succession plan is in place and approved by the Board as a contingency by September 2017 • Board reviews and agrees on whether or not to appoint a Deputy Scientific Director and Operations Director by September 2017 • Board reviews ARC staff reporting structure as part of succession planning, by FYE 2018 • Board reviews human resources management and professional development practices, annually starting in 2018
3.2 Identify and plan for future infrastructure needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue collaborative discussions with Progressive Construction regarding ARC space needs • Develop a five-year space plan and budget, by fiscal year end 2018
3.3 Enhance processes for Board succession and recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Board recruitment grid to identify priorities (e.g. in skills, expertise, connections, diversity, location, capacity and willingness to serve as an Executive member, etc.), prior to recruitment for AGM 2017 • Recruit and appoint new Board members based on recruitment priorities at or before AGM 2017 • Repeat Director prioritizing and recruitment process annually

From Strategy to Operations

ARC has created this strategic plan to enhance performance, accountability, transparency, and alignment across its scientific, administrative, and governance activities. Whether or not these potential benefits are achieved depends on the effectiveness of the organization in operationalizing the plan in the months and years ahead.

Next Steps

- The Board of ARC will review or revise and approve this plan in early 2017.
- The Executive Director and the Scientific Director will develop and the Board will approve a shared understanding of “what success looks like” for each of the Strategic Directions: the quantifiable metrics that can be celebrated once they are achieved.
- The Executive Director, Scientific Director, and Board will determine the inter-dependencies between the Strategic Directions (what comes first, what can wait until later, what we can afford to do now, what must wait for more resources) to establish the parameters and principles for operational planning 2017/18.
- The Executive Director and Scientific Director will develop a One-Year Action Plan (2017/18) taking into account inter-dependencies between the key strategies and ARC’s existing operational demands and workload.
- The Board of ARC will approve the One-Year Action Plan and 2017/18 Operating Budget before the beginning of the 2017/18 fiscal year.
- The Executive Director, Scientific Director, and Board of ARC will continue to engage in regular monitoring and evaluation of the status of the One-Year Action Plan, at each quarterly Board meeting, using the reporting tool adopted by ARC in 2009.

Guiding our Future

This strategic plan was developed and approved by the Board of Directors of Arthritis Research Canada in 2016/2017:

- Daniel Parlow, Chair
- Don Elkington, Vice-Chair
- Jocelyn Cruickshank, Finance Chair
- Martina Franchi
- Amanda Girling
- Colin Hansen
- Naz Panahi
- Joe Rogers

With the participation and support of these scientists and staff:

- Dr. John Esdaile, Scientific Director
- Dr. Mary De Vera, ARC Research Scientist
- Shauneen Kellner, Executive Director
- Patti Nakatsu, Director of Development

We also thank the following for their contributions and participation:

- Ron McKerrow, ARC Chair (2004 to 2016)
- Marilyn McCaig, Director (2010 to 2016)
- Dr. Kam Shojania, Clinical Professor and Head, Division of Rheumatology, University of British Columbia