



University of Alabama School of Medicine



Department of Neurology

Executive Summary

This strategic plan for the Department of Neurology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham was prepared during the spring of 2003. The circumstances of its preparation were auspicious ones for planning: the department had just selected its new chairperson and the university had made significant commitments to invest in the department. These commitments included new resources to double the size of the faculty over a five to six year period, to increase and consolidate the department's physical space, and to provide support for new development activities within the department. The plan was prepared under the leadership of the chair-elect, Dr. Ray Watts.

Dr. Watts identified three key strategic directions for the department's future. They are to strengthen the impact of the department, to position the department to compete with the best departments nationally, and to build selected areas of strength to be national leaders while ensuring a position of regional leadership for all other areas of activity. This plan provides a framework for using the new resources to move the department in these directions over the next five to six years.

The plan was produced through a participative process involving all departmental faculty as well as administrative, nursing and resident representatives. The planning participants began by reviewing and modifying the existing departmental mission, vision and core values statements. They then divided into teams representing the department's academic centers and focus areas, its educational mission and its administrative support system. Each of these teams was charged with developing a plan for the growth of its area over the next five to ten years. The departmental plan is built from the results of those unit plans.

Our Mission...

The University of Alabama at Birmingham Neurology Department dedicates itself to:

Research

- Discovering new knowledge about the nervous system and developing treatments and cures for neurological diseases

Clinical Care

- Providing the highest quality general neurological care for all patients at UAB and access to state of the art subspecialty care and innovative treatment for patients from Alabama, the region and beyond

Education

- Teaching the next generation of discoverers, care providers and teachers to ensure continued advances in the knowledge and treatment of neurological diseases

We pursue our research, clinical care and education missions in an interactive manner and we strive to be a leader in interdisciplinary activities – a model for collaboration at UAB.

Our Vision...

How do we characterize our desired future for the department? Through our vision statement, we affirm that we will be:

- **The researchers' preferred choice for state of the art exploration;**
- **The patients' preferred choice for state of the art care; and**
- **The students' preferred choice for state of the art education**

Our Core Values...



Our core values define the common beliefs and philosophy by which we guide our day-to-day activities, our decision-making, and our planning for the future of the department. They are:

Compassion (*The best care, humanely rendered*)

Integrity

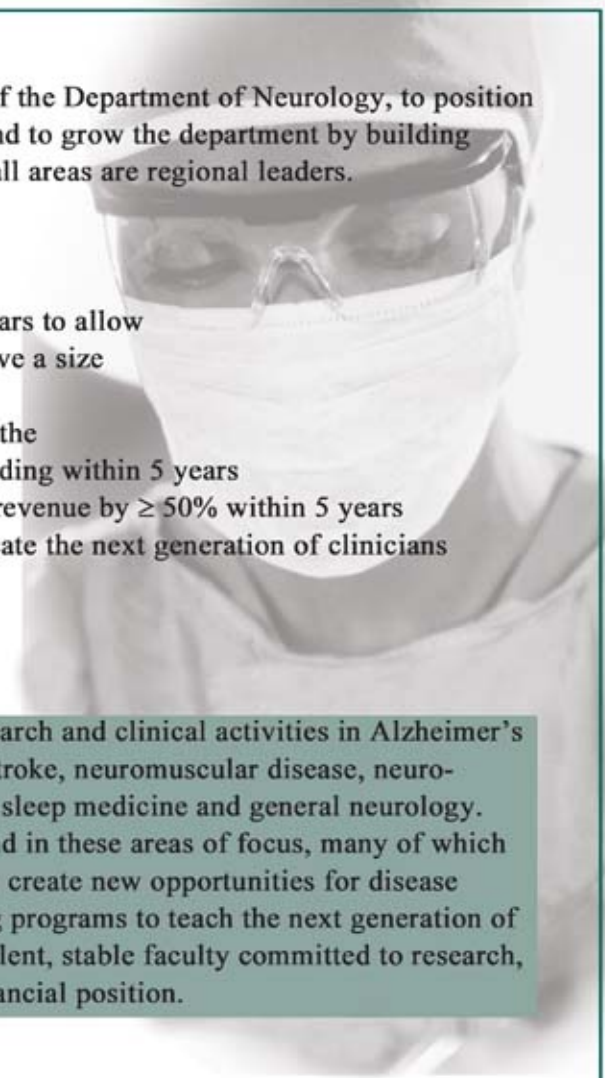
Innovation

Collaboration

Efficiency

Respect, and

Contribution to Human Health



OUR PLAN aims to strengthen the regional and national impact of the Department of Neurology, to position the department to compete with the best departments nationally and to grow the department by building selected areas of focus to be national leaders while ensuring that all areas are regional leaders.

OUR SPECIFIC GOALS are to:

- Be one of the top ten departments nationally within 5 years
- Increase the size of our faculty to ≥ 50 members within 5 years to allow for increased research and clinical productivity and to achieve a size comparable to our national competitors
- Increase levels of clinical and basic science research across the department to reach $\geq \$10 - \12 million annual research funding within 5 years
- Grow clinical services in selected areas to increase clinical revenue by $\geq 50\%$ within 5 years
- Expand fellowship programs over the next 5-6 years to educate the next generation of clinicians and investigators

Our Strengths

As a department, we are engaged in a broad array of valuable research and clinical activities in Alzheimer's disease and dementia, neuroimmunology and multiple sclerosis, stroke, neuromuscular disease, neuro-oncology, Parkinson's disease and movement disorders, epilepsy, sleep medicine and general neurology. There are distinct pockets of research and clinical excellence found in these areas of focus, many of which allow us to link our research activities to clinical care and thereby create new opportunities for disease treatment. We are also actively engaged in education and training programs to teach the next generation of neurologists. We have a history of strong leadership and an excellent, stable faculty committed to research, clinical care and education. The department maintains a solid financial position.

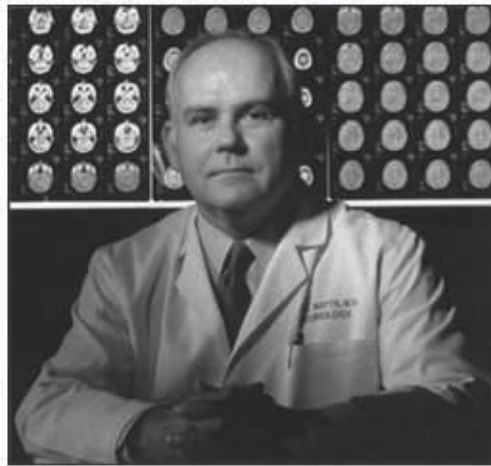
Our Needs

In order to reach our goals we must build our size. This expansion will allow us to grow research programs in our focus areas of neurodegenerative disease, neuroimmunology and multiple sclerosis, cerebral vascular disorders, neuromuscular diseases, neuro-oncology, movement disorders, epilepsy and sleep medicine. It will also allow us to address staffing shortages in some clinical service areas and to grow clinical services in multiple sclerosis, stroke, general neurology, movement disorders and epilepsy (through development of comprehensive services for children).

Philanthropic Opportunities

We are specifically seeking support to:

- Create new research funds to support research projects, pilot projects and bridge funding for investigators in our areas of disease focus
- Support new fellows and fellowship programs so that we can continue to educate and mentor young clinicians and investigators within the department
- Establish funds to support clinical programs/clinical research in chronic disease areas such as Alzheimer's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, Myasthenia Gravis, Epilepsy and Parkinson's Disease and in prevention and education programs in cognitive health and stroke/cerebrovascular disease
- Establish new endowed chairs, professorships, lectureships, fellowships, and scholarships



Ray L. Watts, M.D.

A Closer Look at the Chairman

Ray L. Watts, MD, became the Professor and Chairman of the Department of Neurology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) on July 1, 2003. Previously he was the A. Worley Brown Professor and Vice Chairman of Neurology at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

Watts is a native of Birmingham, earned a Bachelor of Science degree with honors in biomedical engineering from UAB in 1976 and was valedictorian of his class. He developed his focus on neuroscience at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, where he graduated with highest honors and was valedictorian of his medical school class in 1980. Thereafter he did residency and fellowship training at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital, where he was Chief Resident of Neurology in 1984. Watts also served a two-year research fellowship in the renowned Laboratory of Neurophysiology at the National Institutes of Health under the direction of Dr. Edward Evarts before joining the faculty at Emory in 1986. Watts and his colleagues built an internationally renowned Parkinson Disease and Movement Disorders Research and Clinical Center at Emory, and plans are underway to build a strong interdisciplinary research program in Parkinson's Disease and neurodegenerative disorders at UAB.

Dr. Watts' research has focused on understanding how the brain controls movement, mechanisms of neurodegeneration in Parkinson's Disease and related disorders, and the development and assessment of innovative experimental therapeutic approaches. His work has been published widely in leading journals in the field. In recent years he and his collaborators have had a major impact on understanding the genetics of Parkinson's Disease. Dr. Watts is the co-editor along with C. Koller of *Movement Disorders: Neurologic Principles and Practice*, a leading textbook published by Mc Graw-Hill, now entering in its 2nd Edition.

Currently, he is a member of the Medical and Scientific Advisory Board of the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA). He has served in various advisory capacities for federal agencies, foundations, and industry. He has served on the editorial board of the journal *Movement Disorders*, and he is a peer reviewer for the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Annals of Neurology*, *Neurology*, *Movement Disorders*, *Experimental Neurology*, *Trends in Neurosciences*, and *Clinical Neuropharmacology*. He has been a visiting professor at leading universities throughout the world. He is a member of the American Neurological Association; American Academy of Neurology; Movement Disorders Society; Alpha Omega Alpha; Society of Neuroscience; and the International Brain Research Organization.