



VIEW DIGITAL
VERSION

STRATEGIC PLAN

2024-2027



CANTRAIN

Funded by



CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

FOREWORD

A MESSAGE FROM THE NOMINATED PRINCIPAL APPLICANT, PR. JEAN BOURBEAU

CANTRAIN'S FIRST STRATEGIC PLAN

After one year of operation, CANTRAIN has evolved significantly from the grant proposal. Now is the time to reflect on the current state of the organization, revisit our vision, mission, and values, and set new goals and objectives to achieve in the three years ahead.

This 3-year strategic plan was created with the input of key individuals across the entire organization to gain an accurate understanding of our current state, direction, and desired future. We have involved a cross-functional group of "development-minded" people in the strategic planning process to increase the yield of valuable insights and create a sense of ownership throughout the organization.

This process has helped us develop a shared understanding of our organization and business context, and identified critical areas for improvement and growth.

CANTRAIN'S HISTORY

CANTRAIN is the largest of seven Clinical Trials Training Platforms (CTTP) selected from a national peer-reviewed competition launched by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) in the spring of 2022. The CIHR's Clinical Trials Fund, supported through the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada as part of the federal government's \$2.2 billion Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Strategy (BLSS), is intended to support the Canadian clinical trials pipeline from discovery to implementation. Worth \$250M, the Clinical Trials Fund represents the largest-ever investment in clinical trials in the country's history. The present strategic plan reflects on what we have achieved since the official launch of operations in January 2023, and looks forward to what we hope to achieve in the remaining 3 fiscal years.

CANTRAIN is proud to be a significant part of this foundational investment to improve pandemic readiness and overall competency of Canada's current and future clinical trial research professionals and trialists while better engaging community partners and patients in the process.

CANTRAIN'S DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

CANTRAIN is unlike any other training platform. CANTRAIN's vision is not just to train people how to conduct clinical trials research; it is to prepare all Canadians for the future through an innovative, competency-based clinical trials training curriculum enriched by experiential learning and expert mentorship. Coupled with salary and internship awards for a variety of learners and a strong focus on public engagement, CANTRAIN's offering is truly unique. Our training platform is focused on performance, evidence-based, and far more inclusive than most.

Competency-based training – Competence encompasses knowledge as well as the skills, abilities and behaviors that contribute to optimal performance. Our focus is not just training people WHAT to do, but HOW to do it well.

Scientifically-grounded – Our curriculum is built using adult learning strategies based in cognitive science. Cognitive learning strategies improve comprehension, retention, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-life situations to solve difficult problems more quickly.

Patient-centered and inclusive – CANTRAIN is raising the bar on patient engagement by developing evidence-based best practices for training patients and community partners, in addition to advanced curricula for researchers in patient engagement.

Real-work relevance, real-world evidence – Preparing Canadians for the future means helping them explore career opportunities in this huge ecosystem, providing a training approach that reflects the operational realities of clinical trial sites, and provides recognized individual and institutional career benefits.

Clinical trials research is key to the future health and wellbeing of Canadians. CANTRAIN will help strengthen the clinical trials ecosystem by ensuring we have the quality human resources and public engagement capacity needed to advance healthcare through research.

“Better prepared, better care.”

WHAT LIES AHEAD

Drawing on the insights gained during the first year of creation, growth, and operations, we have set clear goals and objectives for the years ahead. These goals are aligned with our new vision and mission, and they are designed to move us closer to our desired future state of excellence, engagement, and sustainability.

As we move forward with implementation of the strategic plan, we emphasize the importance of open and honest communication. We intend to create a safe space for individuals to share their thoughts, concerns, and ideas, and create a culture of collaboration that encourages active participation, within CANTRAIN, across the ecosystem in which we operate, and with the people we serve.



Jean Bourbeau MD, MSc, FRCPC, FCAHS

Professor, McGill University
Senior Scientist, Research Institute McGill
University Health Centre
Nominated Principal Investigator CANTRAIN

FROM THE GRANT TO NOW

SEPTEMBER 2022 - FEBRUARY 2024

WEBSITE AND APPLICATION PORTAL

Website up and running since January 2023, including portals for LMS access, studentship applications, internship applications and annual conference registration.

STAFF

Hired 27+ staff; 4 more coming from BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan.



LMS

Purchased and installed a best-in-class Learning Management System – Blackboard Anthology Ultra.

STUDENTSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Awards worth over \$1.16M conferred on 45 awardees (42 stipends disbursed: 10 Master's studentships, 25 doctoral studentships, 7 postdoctoral fellowships; 3 CIHR non-cumulation)

Built the Awards program and portal for three collaborating Clinical Trial Training Platforms (CTTPs) for a combined award amount of \$2M+, including over \$750k in provincial matching funds.

INTERNSHIPS

Internship program for Clinical Research Professionals (CRP) launched with \$160k in co-funding (n=16).

TRAINING

Common core foundation (CCF) developed:

- Welcoming orientation, Health Canada regulatory compliance courses (n=3), CANTRAIN core programming (n=11)
- Registration portal open December, 2023. On-boarding and access to LMS opened February, 2024.
- Four streams training:
 - i-GPT: Graduate and Postdoctoral Trainees (launched in Nov 2023 and ongoing);
 - ii-CRP (in construction);
 - iii-Trialists (in construction);
 - iv-Community Partners (in construction)

FEDERAL FUNDERS PROVINCIAL FUNDERS HEALTH RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS



SPOR HEALTH CHARITIES COMMUNITY PARTNERS



PUBLIC ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS
RESEARCH CENTRES & INSTITUTES



PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS BIOPHARMA BIOTECH
CLIN CONTRACTUAL RES ORGANIZATIONS

NETWORK

UNIVERSITIES

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

CANTRAIN**CONNECT**

- Various types of mentorship forms available
- Mentorship integrated within each stream
- Webinars, mentor-led engagement sessions, etc.
- Mentors for each module of the Common Core Foundation (CCF)
- Mentorship Handbook for Awardees & Supervisors
- Mentors as SMEs are critical for content development
- Mentorship engagement through LMS that increases accessibility and inclusivity (location, specialization,...)
- Resources to support local programs and activities
- Clinical Research ECHOs (Extension for Community Health Outcomes) for CRPs, Trialists, Methodologists with CTPP Can-Tap-Talent

Domain Expertise:

- CCF Modules Mentors
- Workshops, special presentations, ECHO

Professional Advice:

- Clinical and scientific mentors
- 1:1; supported online through LMS
- ECHO

Talent Development:

- Learning how to do the job well.
- 1:1, Peer mentoring network (CRPs)
- ECHO; workshops on 'how to...'

Industry Exposure:

- Various roles in clinical trials industry
- Internships - Experiential placements
- Career workshops, events

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Providing real-world experience in clinical trial research

- 1. Clinical Research Professionals (CRP) [and Early Career Researchers (ECR) from partnering CTTs]**
 - Inter-institutional exchanges for academic partners
- 2. Graduate and postdoctoral trainees (GPT)**
 - Paid industry placements for career development
 - Co-funded by MITACS and private sector biopharma/biotech/CCRO
- 3. Landed Immigrants**
 - Paid academic and industry placements to obtain Canadian experience, critical for job-search success
 - Brings HQP skilled in medical & health sciences into the Canadian clinical trials sector

4. Community Partners and Patients

- Part of curriculum-based training for patients, family members and patient advocates to observe and experience operations within patient-led or disease-specific organizations or Clinical Trial Units (CTUs).

SALARY AWARDS: STUDENTSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

CIHR ANNUAL SALARY STIPENDS; SECURED UNTIL 2025-26

1. **Contribute to national and provincial capacity-building by stimulating graduate trainees' pursuit of clinical trial research.**



2. **Foster partnerships with provincial funders and health research organizations**

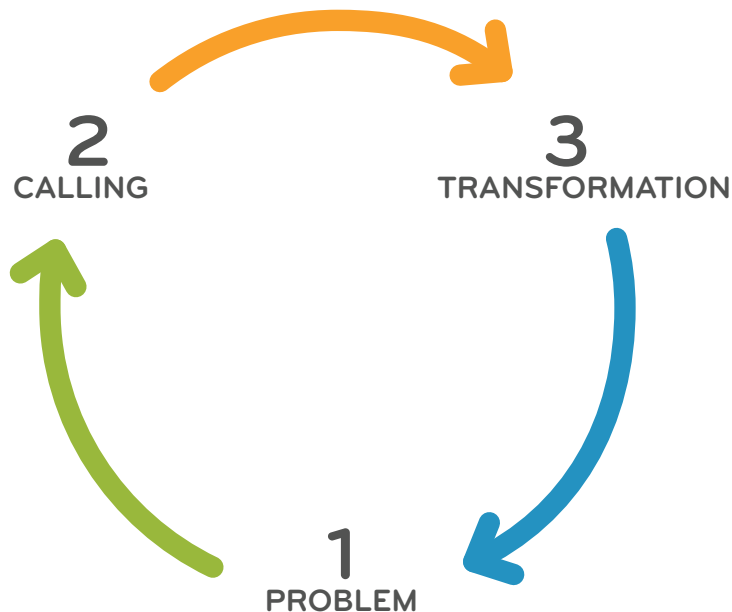
- Matching funds increase the total number of salary awards available
- FY2023-24: \$487,500 for CANTRAIN in matching funds from BC, Alberta, Quebec, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia; \$375,000 unused from Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Nova

Scotia (no qualified applicants); negotiation on-going with Ontario for \$350,000.

3. **CANTRAIN further fostered collaboration among CTTs and raised for them additional funds to match their awards' programs**

- FY2023-24: Leveraged an additional \$275,00 in matching funds for CTTs CAN-TAP-TALENT, CBITN, StrokeCog

INITIATING A TRANSFORMATION



THE PROBLEM

The Canadian clinical trials research sector does not have the capacity to quickly test potential therapies for treating its own population. This became abundantly clear during the pandemic.

THE SOLUTION

Ensure that the Canadian clinical trials research sector is ready and able to quickly evaluate potential treatments and therapies.

OUR HIGHER PURPOSE

Improve health and wellbeing through **clinical trial research** for the Canadian population and beyond.



**"BETTER PREPARED.
BETTER CARE."**

OUR VISION AND MISSION



VISION

CANTRAIN is transforming how Canadians are prepared to develop, conduct, engage in and benefit from clinical trial research.



MISSION

Develop clinical trial research competency through an efficient training environment delivering cutting-edge, inclusive educational curricula.

OUR VALUES



Combined contribution of CANTRAIN staff, Governing Council,
Principal Applicants, Co-Applicants and Collaborators.

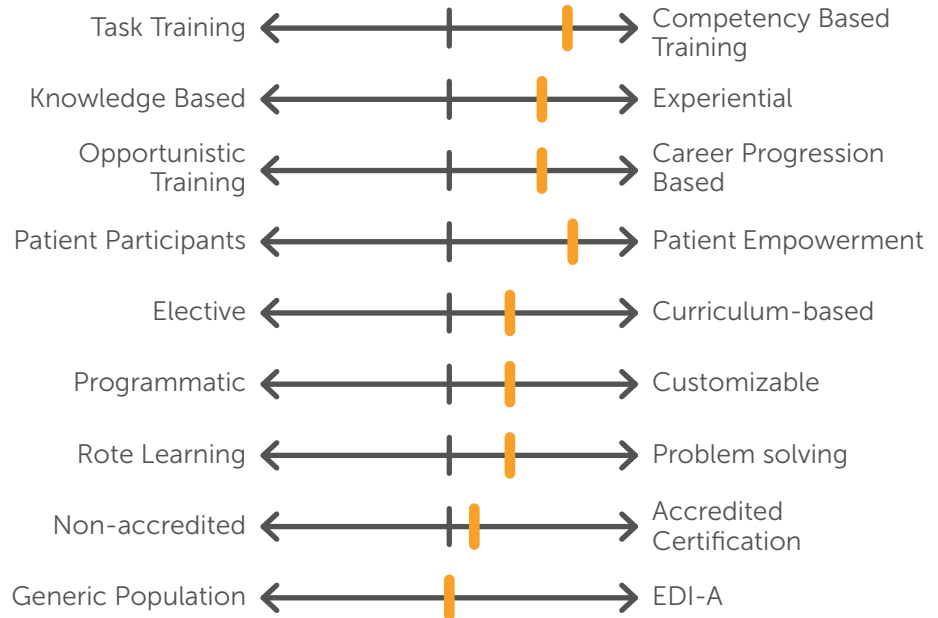
WHAT IS POSITIONING?

Features that associate the organization's offering with a credible, attractive and different position, in regards of other existing organizations, in its market and in the minds of clients/funders/partners.

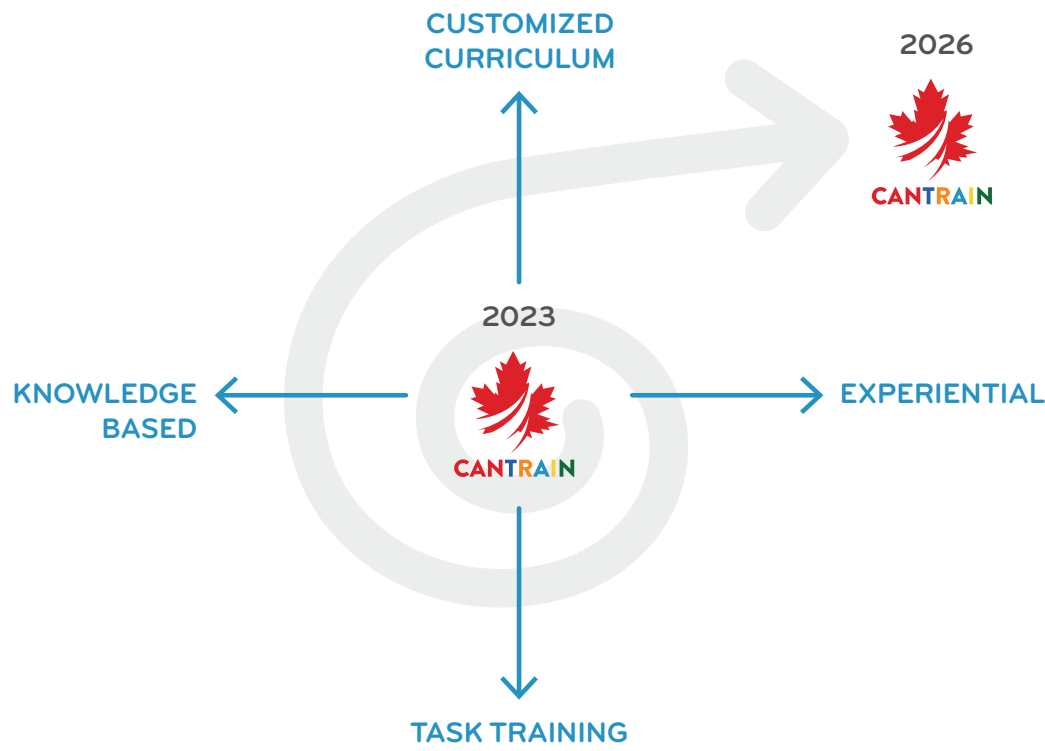
POSITIONING ATTRIBUTES

Assessment of CANTRAIN's program with respect to these attributes (December 2023)

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES



STRATEGIC POSITIONING





COMMON CORE FOUNDATION (CCF)

- Provides basic, fundamental knowledge applicable across all learners
- Provides an introduction to CANTRAIN and its training platform and programs
- Develops common basic knowledge and lexicon
- Dovetails with Health Canada required regulatory content.

Features:

1. Introduction to CANTRAIN and clinical trials
 2. Health Canada-required content
 3. CANTRAIN Core programming
 - Expand on, reinforce and fill gaps in regulatory modules
-



STREAM 1

GPT

*Graduate and Postdoctoral Trainees
Future Clinical Research Professionals and Trialists*

Training with focus on career development

- Build on the Research Institute of the McGill University Heath Centre *C&RA Experience* program offered through DCAT
- Creates a sustainable workforce by supporting knowledgeable career selection
- Program can be repurposed to meet other CANTRAIN objectives

Features:

- Intensive program
- Multichannel content delivery (readings, online modules, RWE, activities, presentations, etc.)
- Requires coordination of content, mentors and on-site activities

STREAM 2

CRP

*Clinical Research Coordinator
Representative of various Clinical
Research Professional roles*

Training customized for the learners

- Customizable for different roles and levels of experience
- Centralized, curated, categorized training hub
- Training approach that reflects clinical trial site management reality
- Also enables onsite training & coaching or custom training service offerings

Features:

- Competency-based
- E-learning, hands-on practice, just-in-time training, tools and templates
- Experiential and mentorship activities throughout

STREAM 3 TRIALIST

Key leaders for the future of the clinical trial research ecosystem

Training with a focus on real-world issues and career progression

- CME credits
- Certificate to contribute to career advancement
- Peer/Alumni coaching and mentorship
- Individual and institutional value/ benefits

Features:

- Online learning that is fast, efficient, asynchronous
- Training for the transition from clinician to clinician-researcher

STREAM 4 PATIENTS & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

*Essential partners in Clinical Trials:
Patients, family, patient-led and disease-specific organizations*

Training with a focus on patient empowerment

- Patient partner, patient advocate and patient engagement learning paths
- Developing evidence-based patient engagement best practices
- Developing evidence-based patient curriculum development best practices

Features:

- Interactive, competency-based learning
- Short (<30 min) training capsules
- Expert knowledge for patient partners AND research teams

STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

META-OBJECTIVES

2-3 year objectives that the organization wishes to achieve. Concern all departments, including operations, human resources, finance and development.

The objectives should be:

- Specific** *For effective planning*
- Measurable** *Progress evidence*
- Attainable** *Possible to accomplish*
- Relevant** *Aligned with purpose*
- Timely** *Realistic end-date*

YEAR 1 OBJECTIVES

These objectives are aligned with the meta-objectives. They concern the priorities on which the organization should work to implement the strategic imperatives.

... and attached to:

- Key** *It's important*
- Performance** *It measures*
- Indicators** *It's quantitative*

META-OBJECTIVES

2024-2027

- 1/ Be a sustainable non-profit organization.
- 2/ Be recognized as a leading clinical trial research educational organization across Canada.
- 3/ Increase the number of highly qualified people in the Canadian clinical trial research environment.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

In order to meet our strategic objectives we must ...

1. Have a solid operational/ organizational structure and culture with Pan-Canadian resources.
2. Develop alternative revenue sources (private, public).
3. Have accredited educational programs fully operational, evaluated & monitored for all streams.
4. Have an expansion plan that allows CANTRAIN to rapidly prepare new, high-quality professionals for the Canadian clinical trial workforce.

YEAR 1 OBJECTIVES

- 1/ Implement solid, comprehensive business processes (decision, development, communications) across the organization.
- 2/ Increase sustainable funds obtained from public and private partners.
- 3/ Integrate education and evaluation best practices into content development.
- 4/ Enrol learners in all CANTRAIN programs.



METHODOLOGY AND DYNAMICS OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING



- Consultative sessions with with Principal investigators, co-investigators, collaborators, and and employees to revisit the mission and vision
- Building empathy into strategic planning: staff retrospective and meetings to listen to frontline employees, to learn their pain points and ideas
- Conducted interviews, focus groups and surveys to better understand our clientele
- Collaborative working sessions for the market analysis, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), value propositions
- Developed the strategic plan in a funnel framework: from high level thinking to the specifics - planning accordingly for real time impact.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the following for their participation in the strategic planning process:

- all CANTRAIN Principal investigators, co-investigators and collaborators
- CANTRAIN staff;
- members of the Governing Council

Extensive consultation conducted and report prepared by:

- Julie Dessureault, Consultant, President, Valence Co inc.
- Dr. Lisa Goos, BScH, BEd, MA, PhD National Director, Mentorship Program and Experiential Learning, CANTRAIN

CANTRAIN Executive Team:

- Pr. Jean Bourbeau, MD, MSc, FRCPC, FCAHS
Nominated Principal Applicant and National Lead, CANTRAIN
- Dr. Bruno Battistini, BSc, MSc, PhD
National Executive Director & Chief Operating Officer CANTRAIN
- Dr Sandra Peláez, BEdPsy., MSc, PhD
National Director, Clinical Trials Training Programs' Streams, CANTRAIN
- Dr. Lisa Goos, BScH, BEd, MA, PhD
National Director, Mentorship Program and Experiential Learning, CANTRAIN

Course – a series of educational lessons in a specific area of study

Curriculum – a sequence of scaffolded concepts, content, and activities intended to develop knowledge, skills, and competencies in participants

Internship – A period of work experience offered by an organization for a limited period of time, used to gain relevant skills and experience in a particular field. Internships may be paid or unpaid; CANTRAIN internships are paid.

Module – collection of files, pages, assignments, quizzes and other course content.

Processes – a business process is a repeatable collection of steps used to accomplish a goal. A good process must be repeatable, transparent so it can be monitored over time,

and agile, in order to adapt to small changes without causing delay.

Programs - Coherent set or sequence of activities and resources designed and organized to meet specific educational objectives and outcomes over a sustained period. Educational programs can encompass a wide range of subjects, disciplines, and instructional methods, including classroom instruction, online courses, workshops, seminars, and hands-on experiences.

Program evaluation – A systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using data to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of programs and to contribute to continuous program improvement.

Sponsorship – money that is given by an organization or corporation

to support a person, project or activity conducted by a nonprofit organization in exchange for recognition.

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) - a set of step-by-step instructions describing how to complete a particular business process. SOPs aim to achieve efficiency, quality output, and uniformity of performance, while reducing miscommunication

Streams – CANTRAIN streams refer to a population of learners with similar educational needs.

Studentship – A monetary award given to support the salary of a person in graduate-level academic training (ex. Master's, doctoral or postdoctoral level)