

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

ANNUAL REPORT

2015/2016

I. Executive Summary

As of August 1, 2016, 119 research proposals were submitted, with 114 receiving approval from the Human Subjects Research Committee; 85 were expedited, 30 were exempt, and 5 required full review. Three reports of research non-compliance were reported. As a result of these non-compliance issues, data were destroyed and the faculty member and student were provided with additional human subjects training.

II. The Committee's Charge (from the Shared Governance Document)

1. To review compliance with and administer the University of North Alabama policy on the Use of Human Research Participants
2. To examine the University of North Alabama policy on the Use of Human Research Participants annually and assess university practices in light of the information obtained
3. To propose changes in university practices relating to the use of human research participants
4. To handle any proposals the committee may make affecting university policy according to section C.2 "Shared Governance Procedure for Policy Change Recommendations"
5. To submit a final written report electronically by the first day of the fall semester to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost with a copy sent to the Chair of the SGEC.

III. The Committee met on the following dates:

The HSC committee met on September 3, 2015 to elect a chair and vice-chair. Ryan Zayac was elected as the chair, and Eric O'Neal was elected as the vice-chair.

On September 25, 2015 the HSC met and reviewed 1 proposal submitted under the direction of Dr. Kristy Oden in the College of Nursing involving the use of pregnant participants. The committee made several recommendations regarding issues related to recruitment and the informed consent. The proposal was resubmitted and ultimately approved on October 6, 2015.

The HSC met and reviewed 1 proposal submitted under the direction of Dr. Eric O'Neal in the Department of HPER on December 4, 2015. The committee asked for a small number of clarifications regarding procedures and updates to the informed consent. The proposal received final approval on December 14, 2015.

The full committee met and reviewed a proposal on February 16, 2016 under the direction of Dr. Kristy Oden examining the effects of music on children's stress levels during doctor's visits. The committee made several recommendations regarding changes to the methodology and informed consent documents. The proposal received final approval on February 23, 2016.

The HSC met on May 3, 2016 to review a proposal under the direction of Dr. Larry Bates in the Department of Psychology using prisoners as participants. In consultation with Dr. Kyes Stevens of Auburn University, the committee made a number of recommendations regarding issues related to recruitment, data collection, liability issues, and informed consent updates. The proposal was resubmitted with the suggested changes and received final approval on June 22, 2016.

The committee conducted a full-board review through email over the week of July 25-August 4, 2016. A proposal submitted under the direction of Dr. Jessica Mitchell in the Department of Secondary Education was reviewed and feedback was provided. At the time of the submission of this report, final approval has not been provided.

IV. What were the Committee's actions and accomplishments this year relative to each of the items of the charge?

Five research proposals received full review and subsequent approval from the HSC. Of the remaining submissions, 112 were reviewed solely by the chair, with the vice-chair reviewing 2 submissions (research proposals submitted by the HSC chair). Drs. Buchanan and Zayac continued to review the NIH and HHS IRB Policies and updated UNA's policy to meet those requirements. UNA's website was updated in September, 2015, to reflect these changes, including Governor Bentley's signing of ACT 2015-167 which now allows students 18 years or older to provide informed consent for research participation.

V. What were the Committee's formal recommendations?

HSC recommends that we continue to look into a mechanism for updating the website to allow for proposals to be directly uploaded on the website instead of being emailed. The committee also suggests working on developing a formal cooperative agreement policy for instances in which researchers from other universities with prior IRB approval wish to collect data at UNA. Additionally, given the increased number of non-compliance issues, we recommend that the committee develop a formal disciplinary standard for individuals and departments that do not follow established protocols. Lastly, the committee has submitted a request to the SGEC asking that the committee name be changed to the Institutional Review Board.

VI. What does the Committee plan to accomplish

A. In the coming year?

As described above, the committee will focus on developing a new cooperative agreement policy and disciplinary standards. The committee will also aim to continue to improve efficiency of the IRB process in order to review proposals in a timely fashion.

B. In future years?

Future years' goals will be similar to the above stated goals.

VII. What are the Committee's weaknesses?

The HSC committee worked very well together this past year. However, there are typically 1-2 committee members that are either non-responsive or provide minimal effort. It will be important for the new chair to establish expectations at the first meeting and hold committee members accountable for their actions.

A. What can the Shared Governance Committee help you do to address the weaknesses?

We believe this is an internal issue that can be addressed within the committee. If issues continue to arise, Shared Governance may be able to assist the HSC by removing any members who are not meeting expectations.

VIII. Comments.

The steady increase in research at UNA led to the Human Subjects Committee reviewing the largest number of proposals (119) since the HSC was established. That is a 37% increase above the previous record total of 87 proposals from the previous year. It is especially noteworthy that the turnaround time for exempt and expedited proposals was within 1-4 days; with a number of faculty and students complimenting the chair and committee on how quickly their proposals were vetted.

The committee chair is appreciative of the recognition of the time commitment necessary to review these proposals by the VPAA's Office. By providing a course release to the chair, this will allow him or her to work more efficiently. However, if the upward trend in submissions continues, it may be necessary to consider hiring a part-time staff member with experience reviewing IRB proposals, or elect College IRB co-chairs to lessen the burden on the HSC chair.