

ANNUAL REPORT

HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS COMMITTEE (IRB)

**University of North Alabama
Florence, Alabama**

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Committee Chair

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Date submitted

Submitted to: Dr. Calhoun and the Shared Governance Committee
Title/Committee (if applicable)

Date received

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

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2013/2014

I. Executive Summary

Seventy-eight research proposals were submitted to the Human Subjects Committee; fifty-six were expedited, fourteen were exempt, and eight required full review. Seventy-six proposals received approval. Two faculty members were provided with corrective feedback regarding their proposals, but they were never resubmitted for additional review or approval.

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

According to the University of North Alabama's Shared Governance Document, the Human Subjects Committee (a task committee) is tasked with administering UNA's policy on the use of human subjects for research purposes and to review and recommend changes to that policy to the research committee.

III. The Committee met on the following dates:

The HSC committee met on August 26, 2013 to elect a chair and vice-chair. Ryan Zayac was elected as the chair, and May Takeuchi was elected as the vice-chair to provide continuity as she had served as the previous year's chair.

On September 23, 2013 the HSC met and reviewed 2 proposals submitted under the direction of Dr. Matt Green in the Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (HPER). The committee made several recommendations regarding issues related to the informed consents, research assistants CPR/First-aid training, participant anonymity/confidentiality issues. The proposals were resubmitted and ultimately approved later in October.

The committee met again on January 31, 2014 to review 5 proposals submitted under the direction of Drs. Matt Green and Eric O'Neal in the HPER department. Feedback was provided on each proposal and resubmissions were required. All 5 proposals were eventually approved by the end of February.

The last full board review took place through email discussion, as courses were no longer in session. During the middle of May, members of the committee commented on a proposal from the HPER department under the direction of Dr. O'Neal. The committee made several suggestions regarding the wording on the informed consent and procedural methods to protect confidentiality of the

participants. These changes were made in a subsequent revision and the proposal was ultimately approved in late May.

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

8 research proposals received full review and subsequent approval from the HSC (the 56 expedited and 14 exempt submissions were reviewed solely by the chair). Dr. Blackstone reviewed the NIH and HHS IRB Policies this summer and updated UNA's policy to meet those requirements. UNA's website was updated in October to reflect these changes. The web page now includes an ethics tab, a policy guidance tab and forms tab. There are also regulations on audio/visual policy concerning human subjects and how to report deviations and human subject complaints.

- V. What were the Committee's formal recommendations?

HSC recommends that we look into modifying the proposal forms so they are all submitted in one electronic format (e.g., PDF) as opposed to several different files (i.e., Excel, Word, PDF). It is also recommended that we look into the feasibility of updating the website to allow for proposals to be directly uploaded on the website instead of being emailed.

- VI. What does the Committee plan to accomplish

- A. In the coming year?

We aim to continue to improve efficiency of the IRB process in order to review proposals in a timely fashion. This may include revising the website and discussing the process of how exempt/expedited reviews are handled.

- 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, and there are currently no identifiable weaknesses.

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

Not applicable.

VIII. Comments.

The steady increase in research at UNA led to the Human Subjects Committee reviewing the largest number of proposals (78) since the HSC was established. 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. In conjunction with Tanja Blackstone, Lynda Coates, and Phyllis Underwood, we updated the IRB application process to make it more user-friendly and plan to make continued improvements in the following years.