

ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Review Board

**University of North Alabama
Florence, Alabama**

Dr. Jill Simpson

Committee Chair

August 15, 2024

Date submitted

Submitted to: Dr. Lee Renfro
Chair, Shared Governance Executive Committee

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

I. Executive Summary

During the 2023-2024 academic year, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) received 82 new research proposals, 3 project renewals, and 13 addendums. Of the new research proposals, 4 of them required a full board review, as they included participants from protected groups (children and prisoners).

Four of the new proposals remain pending; three waiting for the Principle Investigator (PI) to submit revisions and one waiting for our external prisoner representative to review.

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:

September 15, 2023

- Full board review for IRB Protocol # 2023-051

October 25, 2023

- Full board review for IRB Protocol # 2023-072

April 3, 2024

- Full board review for IRB Protocol #2024-012

July 24, 2024

- Full board review for IRB Protocol #2024-033 (still pending approval)

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

- a. During the 2023-2024 academic year, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) received 82 new research proposals, 3 project renewals, and 13 addendums. Of the new research proposals, 4 of them required a full board review, as they included participants from protected groups (children and prisoners). Four of the new proposals remain pending; three waiting for the Principle Investigator (PI) to submit revisions and one waiting for our external prisoner representative to review.
- b. All members completed the IRB Member Basic Course through CITI Training.
- c. Set up IRB committee members' roles and permission in the system to secure documents stored on Canvas. Utilized Canvas to communicate with researchers when revisions were needed and keep researchers informed about the status of their submissions, modifications, and renewals.
- d. Listed a prisoner representative member with appropriate background and experience to serve in that capacity.
- e. Promptly assessed protocols within the designated timeframe.

V. What were the Committee's formal recommendations?

- a. Whenever the chair position changes hands, the IRB chair must be highly versed in ethical procedures and standards necessary to review IRB proposals.
 - i. *The IRB chair successfully finished the mandatory training program and consistently engaged in self-directed learning to enhance their professional development in the role.*
- b. The IRB chair position changes annually, which results in loss of experience, knowledge, consistency in procedures for submitting a protocol, and retaining IRB documentation and protocols.
 - i. The vice chair reviewed a substantial number of protocols during this period (2023-2024) while developing comprehensive skills and knowledge as a leader on the committee. When the workload became overwhelming, the Chair delegated proposals to be reviewed by other faculty volunteers on the committee. In addition, Dr. Laura Williams helped us to ensure a smooth transition of knowledge and expertise when the position changes hands.

VI. What does the Committee plan to accomplish?

A. In the coming year?

The new chair, vice chair, and current committee plan to continue meeting the charge of this committee.

B. In future years?

No basis for judgement on this question.

VII. What are the Committee's weaknesses?

- a. During the 2023-2024 term, the only weakness identified is that not all committee members attend the full board reviews.
 - i. To accommodate varying schedules, a Doodle Poll was sent out so that meetings could be scheduled when the most committee members were available. While we never achieved 100% attendance, we did have a quorum at every meeting.
 - ii. Meetings were held virtually, via Microsoft Teams, in an effort to encourage more participation.
 - iii. For those who were not able to attend, the meeting minutes were distributed via email with a request for additional comments/concerns. The additional comments/concerns were incorporated into the feedback that was given to the PI for revisions.

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

If committee members continue to not participate, they should be removed from the committee and replaced by someone willing to be involved.

VIII. Comments

n/a