

NFC Meeting  
May 11, 2020

Via Webex

Present:

Ashwani Monga  
John Gunkel  
Nancy Cantor  
Sherri-Ann Butterfield

Alexander Gates  
Ana Rivas

Brandon Paradise  
Elizabeth Surles  
Fran Bartkowski  
Jane Gilman  
John Kettle  
Joseph Markert  
Beryl Satter  
Ashaki Rouff  
Gary Farney  
Michael Barnett  
Rosa Oppenheim  
Haesun Kim  
April Benasich  
Mary Rizzo  
Miklos Vasarhelyi  
Tim Raphael

From New Brunswick:

Beverly Tepper  
Laszlo Szabo

Gates:

We have two NB people with us to talk about EIRB, Tepper and Szabo.

-IRB: Like any university receiving federal funding for human subjects, we have IRBs. Here, we have three. 1) NB Health Sciences programs. 2) RBHS in Newark and School of Nursing in Camden (each have 3 or 4 panels beneath them). 3) Tepper heads the Social Behavior or Arts Sciences IRB (social behavioral research in Camden, NB and Newark).

Szabo provides administrative support and regulatory support for IRB proposals. He does pre-screening. Then it goes to the Board, which looks to disciplinary-specific issues. Faculty serve on IRB committees to do the reviews. It's like peer review for a manuscript.

Tepper:

There are three types of IRB review: 1) Full Board Review (highest level of risk); 2) Expedited Review (lower level of risk). There are 9 categories within "expedited review." For example, looking at biological specimens, such as saliva; non-invasive procedures like collecting body weight; voice and image collection; survey work. 3) Exempt (lowest level of risk). It is not actually exempt, but that's what this category is called. Ex: evaluation of public benefits programs; food evaluation studies (taste); etc. Check website to figure out where your study fits, or ask the IRB staff.

When you submit, it goes to IRB staff first. They ensure everything's completely filled out. They might ask for some changes – more paperwork, clarification, etc. Next, it goes on to an IRB reviewer.

If you have a Full Board Review, it goes to two reviewers. They might send comments back to the PI. Once they get the response, it will then be discussed at a full IRB meeting. A PI could be asked to make more changes after the full IRB meeting.

Expedited and Exempt proposals are reviewed on a rolling basis, weekly. They usually only have one reviewer. Shorter feedback – no need to wait for a meeting to make final decision.

Gates:

Federal grants are requiring measure of "broader impact." This means working with students, often. Therefore more people have to use the IRB.

To do an IRB, do you need training? CITI? Do we all need that CITI training?

Szabo:

Federal regulations require all who do "human subject" "research" do the IRB review, and this means they must take the training. I was asked if oral history work requires IRB review. 99% of the time it does not. It has to do with the definition of "human subject" "research." Oral history does use "human subjects," but not "research" ("a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge").

Q: The Queer Newark Oral History Project (QNOHP) has gotten IRB permission in the past, but do we need it in the future?

Szabo:

It doesn't appear the QNOHP would need it. I can meet with the QNOHP people separately and discuss it. Sometimes a group like QNOHP can benefit from meeting with IRB –for example, if a journal or funder chooses to hold up publication or funding until it gets an IRB review.

Tepper:

Journals across the spectrum are increasingly requiring IRB reviews. IRB can remove a potential road block.

Gates:

-Grants that need IRBs: 1) you apply for the grant; you wait; then, say you get the money but are told to get an IRB review first, but have little time to do it. So, do you try for the IRB before or after you get the grant?

Szabo:

Generally, don't submit before you get the grant. Let us know if a funder requires it after you get the grant and we'll try to get the approval fast (as a "just-in-time" IRB request). We have guidance on our website.

Q: For undergrad research project using interviews, do you need IRB approval?

Tepper:

If course is using research methods, technically it doesn't need IRB approval. However, if it turns into a student research project – and the student builds on data from the class – the student wouldn't have gotten the approval for the classroom interviews done. So, we recommend that faculty get IRB approval for student courses, just in case the students move ahead with the work.

A student research project or honors project requires IRB approval.

Gates:

So we need IRB approval for an online course that we've innovated?

Tepper:

That's why we recommend getting IRB approval if there's even a chance that the work will move into an actual research project.

Szabo:

Mostly these kinds of projects will fall into the "Exempt" category and go through IRB quickly. It takes about 4 work days. The IRB board is composed of our peers.

For now, the system tends to give you the maximalist version of permission/ consent for research (the 8 page consent form). Then you as a researcher can ask for a simpler form. Now, we're considering going the other way – starting with the minimal form (a 1-page consent form). Ask Szabo if you get a response that seems disproportionate to the risk you're undertaking.

Tepper:

We usually required actual signatures. Now we're shifting to an online consent form.

Full Board and Expedited Protocols have to go through a yearly review. Often it's just a one-page progress report. It's less paperwork than the older "continuing review" form we used. We will send a reminder about this.

Szabo:

I'm happy to meet with NFC or with departments to explain the IRB process, say yearly, or each semester; whatever works for the specific department.

Cantor:

We are pursuing all the issues we discussed last time. We got CARES money that students are applying for. We are putting aside some of our own institutional funds so that undocumented and international students can get some funding (since they can't get CARES money). I'm pushing Dept. of Education to get CARES money.

State has frozen 50% of RN's allocation from March through the summer. We're worried about RN students; we're ground zero for impacts of this crisis. Try to help your students. Our team is working round the clock, on financial aid, etc. We're trying to get students computers or online access; deal with mental health; we've waived all funding registration holds on students. Bil Leopold is working on a re-enrollment campaign for our students. We're doing a lot of virtual events; students really want to know what we'll be doing in the fall. First, we will be open. SIRS surveys show that the students did learn this spring teaching remotely. We will probably continue remotely, and slowly phase in parts that are safe (possibly some kinds of research). Fully reopening is unlikely. We won't force anyone back, whether they are uncomfortable or have pre-existing conditions or whatever. But we want some of our spaces open, so that students who have no place to study can use our library or computer labs.

We're hoping for a general announcement by mid-week.

Monga:

Gunkel and I are working on academic program protocol for possible phased opening. A mix of remote and possible in-person teaching. If faculty can't come – or students – we will accommodate. But there are many faculty and students who want or need to be on campus. We have to balance this.

We have time to plan, so we don't want just asynchronous teaching. We'd like some synchronous aspects.

Butterfield:

We are institutionalizing regular cleaning for every building. We need to make this safe for staff as well as students and faculty. Each department might have to make determinations.

Cantor:

Now, they are saying constant hand disinfectant use is better than glove use. We will need more masks. We will probably encourage people to get their own masks, perhaps with stipends.

Monga:

Deans are working on requests for hybrid/ online class plans from faculty.

Cantor:

Maybe we can have staggered schedules to make parking safer.

Butterfield:

We are looking into the funding models of funding for parking also.

Gunkel:

If students don't have access to wi-fi, there are problems with synchronous courses. It is a bit safer to be sure that essential content of course is available asynchronously. There should be more flexible chat-rooms. You can't plan on a fully synchronous experience. Students had problems with it.

Cantor:

We want to be sure students can come to libraries/ computer labs for a synchronous class.

Butterfield:

We allowed students with no options to stay on campus.

Gates:

Results of our election: John Kettle for 3 year term in Faculty Senate. Ray Waters for one year term in Faculty Senate. Jane Gilman for Advisory Board.

Q: Senate was told to come up with a "normal teaching load." "What are the norms here? How are they implemented?" was the charge. We find this charge suspect. It came from Barchi, before the virus. It looks like an infringement on our ability to plan our own teaching by school or department.

Q: We have variations across campuses. Trying to get them uniform can be difficult. Chairs have say over teaching loads; should this be taken away?

Q: It looks like they are trying to parse up our job. Right now, we can't necessarily all do our research. Will they (Barchi) now ask for more teaching?

Q: Will there be an attempt to increase loads in departments where one can't do much online?

Cantor:

We've been thinking of how to make use of larger spaces so they can be used to safely do studio-type work (for the arts, for example). There are new space requirements we have to deal with.

Q: Since the virus, the arts and the sciences seem to have similar problems around spaces, labs, studios. We can think about linking challenges of these two constituencies.

Q: We've been told that our online class size will be increasing in order to save money by firing PTLs. This seems unjust to our PTLs.

Monga:

There are senior PTLs who have been teaching, say, 4 courses; now they can teach 2. But our budget is bad, and firing/ reducing PTL numbers is a way to save costs.

Minutes by Beryl Satter