



MEMO

ATTENTION: Senate
c/o Rummana Khan Hemani, Registrar and Secretary to Senate

FROM: Wendy Loken Thornton, Chair, Research Ethics Board

RE: Annual REB Senate Report 2015-2016

DATE: September 14th, 2016

Dear Rummana Khan Hemani:

In accordance with Policy R20.01, "Ethics Review of Research Involving Human Participants", Section 14.7, I am submitting, on behalf of the Research Ethics Board, the Annual Report to Senate. The report spans the time frame September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wendy Loken Thornton", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wendy Loken Thornton, Ph.D., R. Psych.
Associate Professor, Department of Psychology
Chair, Research Ethics Board
Simon Fraser University

Enclosure

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Annual Report to Senate

September 1, 2015– August 31, 2016

Over the past year, the Simon Fraser University (SFU) Research Ethics Board (REB) and Office of Research Ethics (ORE) have continued to refine their policies and procedures to clarify the standard requirements for research submissions, kept abreast of national and provincial changes in guidelines and legislation that impact research ethics, provided ongoing education and continued to be responsive to the inquiries of our research community.

The REB membership underwent many changes over the past year. Dr. Jonn Axsen, the representative to the board from the Faculty of Environment, stepped in August 2016. Dr. Meg Holden will be welcomed to the REB as the new representative from the Faculty of Environment once she is approved by Senate. Mr. Paul Hans has joined the REB as the undergraduate student representative to the board. Three new community members have joined the REB, William Booth, Anita Haidar, and Mikelle Sasakamoose. We are grateful for their contributions as they represent many of the communities that participate in the research that our SFU researchers lead.

As part of ORE's and the SFU REB's ongoing quest to educate students and Faculty members regarding the ethical requirements when conducting human participant research, the ORE has conducted ten education sessions in various SFU departments as well as hosting Brown bag monthly brown bag sessions on various topics. It is our goal, to reach out to more and more SFU departments to provide as much research ethics education and training as we can, which will lead to enhanced research ethics knowledge and ultimately improve the conduct of human participant research.

A breakout session at the Annual Canadian Research Ethics Board conference titled "Model review: A Discussion of Case Study and Framework to Enhance Research Ethics Review of Research Involving Gender Non-Conforming, Queer, and Trans Youth" was led by Sarah Bennett, Manager, ORE and Holly Longstaff. The feedback given to conference organizers by attendees stated that this breakout session was the best one at the conference and was thoroughly enjoyed by those in attendance. In addition to leading a breakout session, Ms. Bennett moderated a breakout session about researching self-injury online.

In our efforts to remain a leader in the BC Ethics Harmonization Initiative (BCEHI), the ORE, in response to a call for proposals from the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (MSFHR), submitted a successful proposal to lead the BCEHI to a sustainable future. Ms. Bennett, who has been highly involved in the ethics harmonization initiative since its beginning, led the proposal which sought to provide support to further integrate the harmonized ethics review process within the partner organizations and to provide educational training for researchers and REB administrative staff across institutions. MSFHR awarded the SFU ORE a grant for one year to lead the BCEHI so that all researchers can benefit from continued harmonized ethics review efforts.

The current membership of the REB, and current ORE staff can be found below. The Chair, Dr. Wendy Loken Thornton, and Deputy Chair, Dr. Jeremy Snyder, were both reelected to these roles until May 31, 2017.

Current REB Membership

Elected by/from Faculty	Faculty	Term Ends
Wendy Loken Thornton (Chair)	Arts and Social Sciences	May 31, 2019
Jeremy Snyder (Deputy Chair)	Health Sciences	May 31, 2018
Peter Hall	Arts and Social Sciences	May 31, 2019
Maureen Hoskyn	Education	May 31, 2018
Tim Racine	Psychology	May 31, 2019
David Whitehurst	Health Sciences	May 31, 2019
Victoria Claydon	Science	May 31, 2019
Andrew Blaber	Science	May 31, 2019
Geoffrey Poitras	Business	May 31, 2018
Carman Neustaedter	Interactive Arts and Technology	May 31, 2019
Teresa Cheung	Applied Science	May 31, 2019

Student Members Elected by Senate		Term Ends
Iva Cheung	Graduate Student	May 31, 2017
Filip Jaworski	Graduate Student	May 31, 2017
Paul Hans	Undergraduate Student	May 31, 2017

Elected by Senate from Community Outside SFU	Term Ends
Paula Hrankowski	May 31, 2019
William Booth	May 31, 2019
Anita Haidar	May 31, 2019
Mikelle Sasakamoose	May 31, 2019

Office of Research Ethics

Jeffrey Toward, Director, Ex-Officio (non-voting)	Brittney LaPietra, Ethics Coordinator
Holly Longstaff, Associate Director (Interim), Ex-Officio (non-voting)	Janet Yule, Ethics Coordinator
Dina Shafey, Associate Director, Ex-Officio (non-voting)	Angela Tai, Ethics Assistant
Sarah Bennett, Ethics Manager	Paola Pinto Vidal, Office Assistant

In accordance with article 15.7 of SFU Policy R20.01 (Ethics Review of Research Involving Human Participants), the Senate approved a list of individuals, forwarded by the REB, to serve as ethicists, lawyers and medical doctors in the event that there is no elected member available with expertise in any of these areas to serve on the board. The REB has called upon these individuals on several occasions to provide their expertise in the review of research studies as required by TCPS2 (2014). Their input is has become invaluable as the REB reviews more complex research studies that regularly require advice on ethical, legal and medical issues.

This year, the Canadian Association of Research Ethics Boards held their annual conference in Toronto and two REB members (Chair and a Faculty representative) and three ORE staff attended. These conferences offer a great opportunity for research ethics board administrators and REB members to learn about the latest regulations and how they should be applied as well as share important tips and best practices in research ethics review with other professionals in the field. At this year's conference, Sarah Bennett, SFU ORE Manager, was appointed to the CAREB Board of Directors in the role of Member at Large.

Research Ethics Review Summary

All SFU Faculty, staff and students, who are conducting a new research study involving human participants, submit an initial application for ethical review, which must be reviewed and approved by the SFU REB and the Director/Associate Director, ORE, before any research-related procedures can begin. From September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016, 502 requests for initial ethical review of research were received and reviewed by the SFU REB/ORE. The number of requests for initial ethical review increased by 18 submissions over the 2014-2015 academic year (484 requests). Every study that is approved is designated as either Minimal Risk (Figure 1) or Above Minimal Risk (Figure 2). Note the number of approvals in Figure 1 and Figure 2 do not sum to the total number of initial ethical reviews conducted since not all studies have yet been approved (74 still under review). Additionally, there were 16 REB approved courses this past year.

Figure 1: Minimal Risk Study Approvals by Academic Year

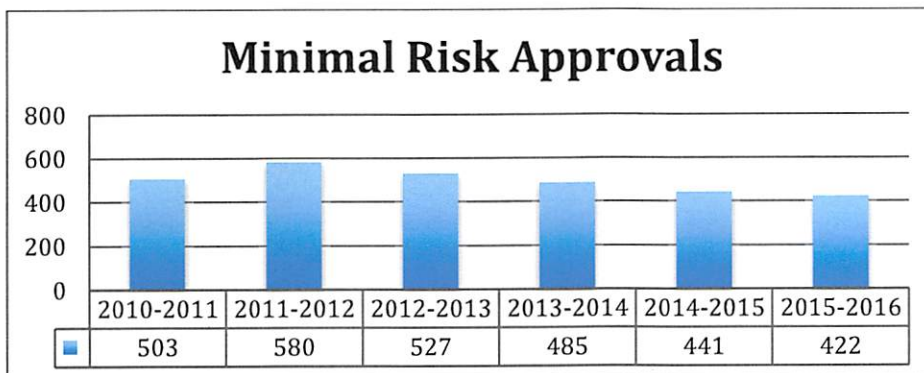


Figure 2: Above Minimal Risk Study Approvals by Academic Year



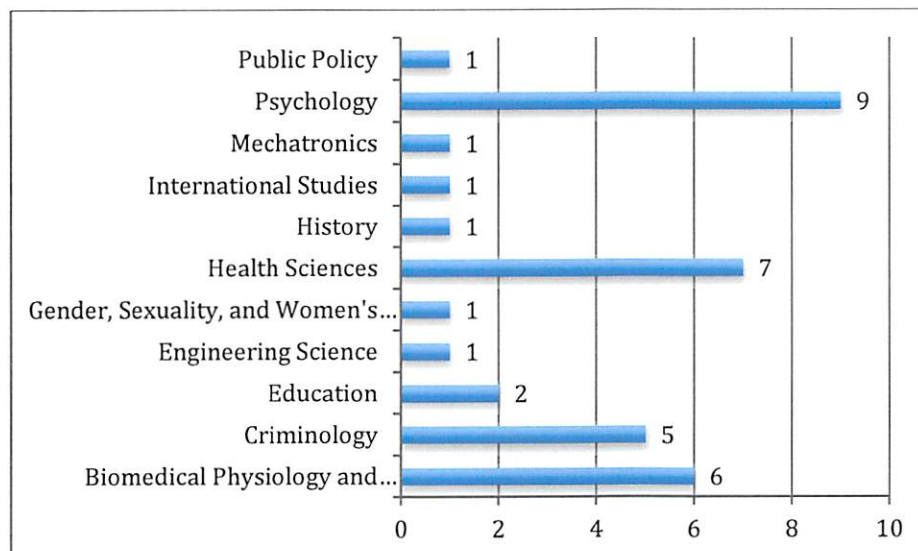
Proportionate review requires that research studies that may be designated as above minimal risk, or are more complex in nature, must be reviewed by the Full Board. Delegated review for new applications can occur when the study is considered to be of minimal risk to the prospective participants. Figure 3 highlights the number of applications that were reviewed by the Full Board.

Figure 3: Full Board Reviews Conducted by Academic Year



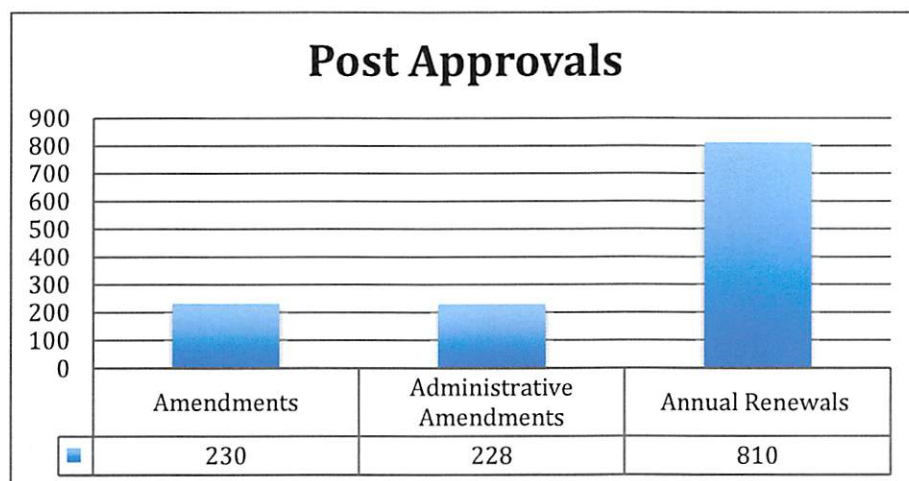
There was a marked increase in Full Board Reviews conducted in 2015-2016 compared to both 2014-2015 and 2013-2014. As a result, there are still a number of complex research studies being conducted by SFU investigators that require time and effort by SFU REB members to review. As always, the goal of such reviews is to ensure participant safety and that risk to participants and researchers is properly managed and mitigated. Figure 4 shows the distribution of research studies reviewed by the Full Board for the various SFU Faculties and Departments.

Figure 4: Full Board Review Distribution of Research Studies by Discipline Type (n=35)



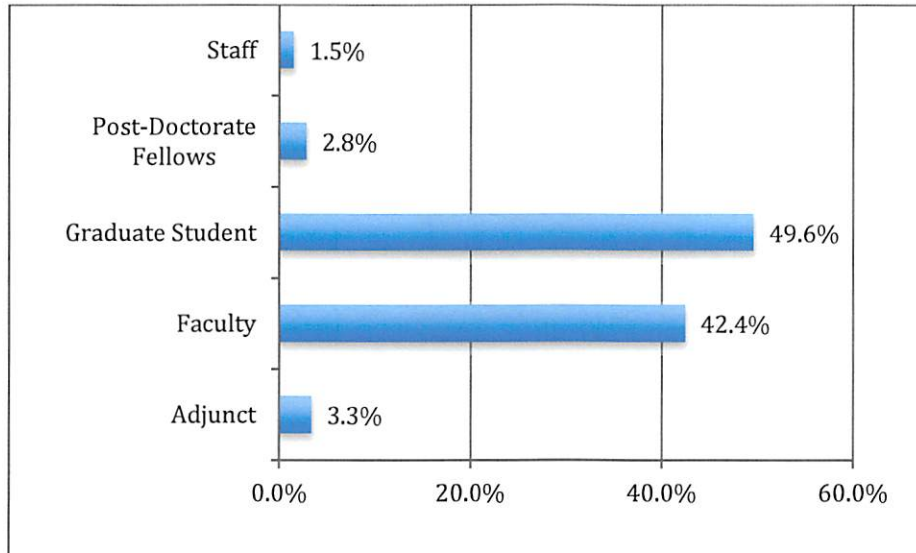
The SFU REB and ORE review and approve all post approval activities. Applications for amendments to previously approved studies are received throughout the year for studies that require changes to the research protocol, consent form(s) or other documentation. In addition any change in administrative information such as funding information or collaborator changes are acknowledged by the ORE in the form of administrative amendment approvals. The office also receives requests for annual renewals and completion of study acknowledgements as well as reports of unanticipated problems and protocol deviations as required by regulations. All amendments and annual renewals must be approved prior to execution while any unanticipated problems, protocol deviation reports, and study completion requests must be acknowledged by the office. From September 1, 2015 to August 31, 2016, 230 amendments, 228 administrative amendments and 810 annual renewals were approved by the SFU REB/ORE (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Post Approval Applications by Academic Year



Once again, graduate students serving as the Principal Investigator (PI) directed almost half of the research studies conducted at SFU during the past year (Figure 6). SFU is unique in allowing graduate students to serve as the PI for a research study. There are many challenges inherent in allowing graduate students to apply for research ethics review as the study PI because of the limited research experience accumulated to this point in their career and the unique pressures that this may place on their academic/research supervisor. However, it is believed that in permitting students to apply for research ethics review as principal investigators, SFU and the SFU REB have afforded these students an opportunity to better understand the implications of their research and how it may impact individuals, communities and themselves.

Figure 6: Distribution of Research Studies by Principal Investigator Type



Challenges Ahead

The SFU REB and ORE continue to evolve and keep current with best practices in the ethical review of research involving human participants. Policy and practice within the ORE and REB are continually being reviewed to ensure that both remain compliant with the relevant regulations and guidance that govern the conduct of research involving human participants.

The next greatest challenge for the SFU REB and ORE will be to revise R20.01 so that it remains current and compliant with the most recent version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2 2014) and other provincial, federal and international guidelines and policies that govern the conduct of research involving human participants.

The REB and ORE will continue to monitor any changes to institutional, provincial, national or international policy and flag any issues that may impact REB functioning or the submission and processing of applications for ethical review from the SFU researchers.