

**BROCK UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD**  
**Wednesday, March 7, 2018**  
**12:00 – 2:00 p.m.**  
**MC D350-L**

**Minutes of the SREB Meeting**

**Attendance**

Michael Ashton  
 Robyn Bourgeois  
 Lynn Dempsey  
 Ann-Marie DiBiase  
 James Foley  
 Christina Garchinski  
 Karen Julien

Carly MaGee (non-voting)  
 Miya Narushima  
 Catherine Nash  
 Mary-Beth Raddon  
 Robert Steinbauer  
 Christine Tardif-Williams  
 Kendra Thomson  
 Lori Walker (non-voting)

**Regrets**

Linda Morrice

<b>MINUTES</b>		
<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
1	<p><b>Motion to approve Agenda</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tabled as meeting did not have quorum</li> </ul> <p><b>Motion to approve January &amp; February Decision Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tabled as meeting did not have quorum</li> </ul> <p><b>Motion to approve January Minutes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tabled as meeting did not have quorum</li> </ul>	<p>Motion to approve: N/A          Seconded: N/A</p> <p>Motion to approve: N/A          Seconded: N/A</p> <p>Motion to approve: N/A          Seconded: N/A</p>
2	<p><b>New Business</b></p> <p>The REB Sub-Committee on Guidelines, Practice, and Procedure (GPP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SREB was updated with minor changes made to documents the Board has already approved:</li> </ul> <p>REB Guideline: Definition of a Research Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has been more clearly specified in this guideline that correspondence with the REB must be signed or emailed from the PI's Brock email account.</li> <li>• Based on feedback from faculty, the word "Principal" has been removed from the student investigator title, even for the one student designated as a point of contact when there are multiple students on one project. The guideline now reads, "In studies where there is more than one SI, the first student listed on the application may be designated as a point of contact for correspondence on the file."</li> <li>• The following was modified: "Research personnel may come and go from the research team throughout the duration of the project, as long as the REB is updated with these changes, <i>on an annual basis at minimum.</i>" This will ensure members of the research team such as undergraduate students, transcriptionists etc. can enter</li> </ul>	

		<p>and exist the project without having to wait for clearance from the REB and limits the number of email updates sent to the REO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Board was reminded of their suggestions back in January: it was proposed that if the nature of the research is such that research personnel will be filtering in and out, the researcher might describe the anticipated practices for handling such changes in personnel in their application. This suggestion was incorporated into the guideline, which gestures to the REB's sensitivity to these changing practices (perhaps a more practical approach than an email notification to the REO for each change), while also satisfying the REB's request to have all members of the research team listed in the REB file. The guideline now reads: "If the nature of the research is such that research personnel will be coming and going frequently, researchers are asked to describe the anticipated practices for handling such changes in personnel in their REB application."</li> </ul> <p>REB Standard: Eligibility to Serve as a Principal Investigator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Per the discussion from the last board meeting, the terms "part-time, contingent, [and] sessional" were all added to 2.c. to accommodate the different titles across departments (e.g., part-time instructor, sessional, contract). All terms were included to ensure understanding and applicability to all departments/faculties.</li> <li>The new document to be approved by SREB today was reviewed:</li> </ul> <p>REB Guideline: Minor and Substantive Changes to Research with REB Clearance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GPP made a few changes to this document based on feedback from SREB, and for consistency in our own terminology/writing within the document. See changes bolded below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This could also include changes in participant recruitment procedures, participant demographics, <b>addition of a research topic</b>, or changes in the handling of research data, including the addition of new personnel or research team members. Substantive changes <b>must</b> not be implemented until REB clearance for the change has been secured through a Request for Change form unless immediate changes are required to protect participant safety (Article 6.16).</li> <li>Minor changes are adjustments or refinements to research that do not <b>alter the level or nature of risk</b> or affect participant safety, comfort, privacy, or confidentiality.</li> <li>Examples of minor changes include but are not limited to slight increases or decreases of testing time, wording adjustment on a research</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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		<p>human ethics, regulations and guidelines for research and by signing this Agreement, we become eligible to receive Tri-Council funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Panel on Research Ethics - a sub group of the Secretariat of RCR – has asked that the ethics guidelines be applied to both funded and unfunded research (so all human research at the institution, regardless of whether it has Tri-Council funding).</li> <li>• Universities for the most part would be signatories on the Agreement would therefore have a proper REB that follows the TCPS2. Some hospitals do as well however, Niagara Health System does not. We do not have research hospitals in Niagara that have funding from the government (meaning none of our local hospitals have TCPS2 defined REBs). If there was an issue of non-compliance and our researchers were collaborating with the hospital, there could be different rules at each organization. This would differ from two universities involved in a case of non-compliance for example who would have the same processes.</li> <li>• Reviewers should consider these definitions, rules and governance in how we handle permissions from organizations and what kind of review a committee is doing.</li> <li>• Niagara Region Public Health was given as another example of an organization that does not have a TCPS2 defined REB (given they do not get Tri-Council funding for research). Instead they have a Research Review Committee. As such, they can use different criteria in their review and require anyone externally to already have a REB certificate in their hand (if this is their process) before they review the work. This committee would have their own rules and own terms of reference.</li> <li>• In our review, we are not looking at institutional liability, or reputation. Other bodies may look at these things, but we are not meant to.</li> <li>• School boards are another example of a body that is not a signatory, so they can look at things like: what impact will this have on classroom time, what might parents think, how does this reflect on our school etc.</li> <li>• They may also consider the sensitivity of the topic. For example, some Catholic School Boards will not allow some research topics based on community (parent) values. Our REB cannot do this. We cannot consider our own institutional morals and values and instead, only the merits of design and impact on participants.</li> <li>• In terms of voluntary and active consent of all parties, LW pointed out that until about 2002, school boards in this area had not formalized their processes for review so until then, had allowed for passive consent (distributing a letter to the children's parents or guardians explaining the nature of the study and providing a method to retract permission, versus <i>active</i> consent).</li> </ul>	
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		<p>participants to let the researchers know if this is the case and the researcher will go through that institution's process. At that point, it would be up to the participant to decide whether the research topic is something they are allowed to speak about on their own behalf or whether they need to check with someone to confirm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our REB normally tells researchers what typically happens in our experience, but we always advise researchers to call and confirm.</li> <li>• If we require that researchers get permission from every institution/organization they work with (even when it is not required by the TCPS2), it results in a push/pull between permission and autonomy and puts researchers in an uncomfortable position.</li> <li>• Researchers might consider asking their participants... "Can you speak off site as an individual or are you still acting in your capacity as an employee with the topic of our discussion?" Most REBs tell their researchers that the school boards might require approval, so they direct researchers to first ask the school board for confirmation and come back to the REB with that decision.</li> <li>• If the institution/organization does not have a formal REB, there may be a leadership group such as an ethics review committee or research review committee. We should be telling the researcher to first do their homework about these bodies and find out whether review by their body is needed.</li> <li>• Critical inquiry was discussed - the analysis of social structures or activities, public policies, or other social phenomena where the goal of the research is to adopt a critical perspective. TCPS2 Article 3.6 states: "In critical inquiry, permission is not required from an institution, organization or other group in order to conduct research on them. If a researcher engages the participation of members of any such group without the group's permission, the researcher shall inform participants of any foreseeable risk that may be posed by their participation."</li> <li>• Article 3.2 (c): requires researchers to consider all reasonably foreseeable risks that may result from participation. When research is conducted about an organization or a community, researchers should inform prospective participants within that organization or community of the extent to which the organization or community is collaborating with the research, as well as any risk this collaboration may pose to the participant. In critical inquiry, permission is not required from an institution, organization or other group in order to conduct research on them. The fact that the institution, organization or group under study may not endorse the research project should not be a bar to the research receiving ethics approval. If a researcher engages the participation of members of any such group without the group's permission, the researcher shall inform</li> </ul>	
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		<p>participants of any foreseeable risk that may be posed by their participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This means that when there could be a risk to participants they should be informed whether the organization has been asked for permission or not and whether they are opposed to the research or not. If they are opposed, it does not mean the research cannot take place, but the REB needs to make sure the participant is given this information before they decide whether or not to participate. An example of this would be research done on a call centre. A researcher could indicate to the participant that the organization said they do not wish for the research to take place however, the researcher could meet off site with individuals who want to participate, while also including other risk mitigation strategies (pseudonyms etc.). The researcher should also be clear to the participant that if there is a breach in confidentiality, they may lose their job. It is not up to the REB to say a researcher cannot do the research (because then critical inquiry would never be done), but we do need to ensure all the possible risks are on the table for the participants to consider. If they choose to participate after being informed about all the possible risks, it is their choice to assume the risks.</li> <li>• Researchers engaging in critical inquiry need to be attentive to risks, both of stigmatization or breach of privacy, to those who participate in research about their organization. In particular, prospective participants should be fully informed about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the views of the organization regarding the research, if these are known</li> <li>○ whether or not the permission of the organization has been obtained</li> <li>○ the possible consequences of participation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• REBs should concern themselves with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the welfare of participants</li> <li>○ risks from third parties (e.g., authoritarian regimes, gang leaders, employers) on account of involvement in research</li> <li>○ security of research materials in the field and in transit</li> <li>○ researchers honouring commitments to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants to ensure that their human rights, and the ethical principles are not compromised</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The key concept here is that the REB closely examines the risk to the participant – not the organization.</li> <li>• LW provided some sample statements that reviewers can consider using in their reviews. Example 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Researchers should seek permission from school boards in order to access school teachers, staff, children and parents; during school time; on school property; or through the use of school researchers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
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		<p>colleague is asking a fellow colleague (on the same level with no power dynamic or risk to the participant), there should be no feelings of obligation, undue influence or coercion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The REB can help work in safeguards such as saying in the formal recruitment process, “you should not feel obligated to participate if you changed your mind since we last spoke. I can still complete the project should you not wish to participate anymore etc.” However, this should not be problem when there is no risk.</li> <li>• What the REB should be doing is putting all the risks in the consent form and allowing participants to decide whether or not they want to participate. The REB should not be saying researchers cannot recruit their friends or acquaintances. If that friend or acquaintance is truly the best suited to participate and we limit this person from participating, we would be shaping the research.</li> <li>• LW encouraged the Board to look at proportionate risk. The REB cannot say that researchers cannot talk to anyone about their research or develop relationships before ethics clearance is in place. But we can say that researchers can not formally recruit and consent people prior to clearance.</li> <li>• Another example would be practitioner research in the classroom. There is a whole school of thought that people should only be doing research on their own students because they have trust with those students. This type of research would not be possible if we disallowed all research that involves some form of personal relationship.</li> <li>• The REB can comment if there are relationships involving power dynamics. An employer asking an employee for example.</li> <li>• Members discussed whether students can develop handbooks without REB clearance. For example, can you go to teachers for a needs assessment without REB clearance? Asking questions such as, what are the top 5 things that need to be in a handbook? Are present in this handbook? LW confirmed that this would be an expert consultation versus human participant research.</li> <li>• LW mentioned another grey area: a Brock researcher was researching a skate polymer (which involved humans skating on a treadmill to collect data on the strap). This became a large debate at an ethics conference about whether REB clearance was needed or not.</li> <li>• A few final notes were discussed with the Board:</li> <li>• REB approval applies to the ethical acceptability of the research and does not, in itself, constitute authorization for the research to proceed. Just because our Board gives clearance does not mean the organization is required to let the researcher in.</li> <li>• REB (ethical) approval is not contingent on school board permission. Our REB should be saying yes or no regardless of their decision.</li> </ul>	
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3	<b>Adjourn</b>	<b>Meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.</b>	Motion to adjourn: N/A Seconded: N/A