

# ANNUAL REPORT

Institutional Review Board

University of North Alabama  
Florence, Alabama

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Committee Chair

August 31, 2023  
Datesubmitted

Submitted to: Dr. Kristy Oden  
Chair, Shared Governance Executive Committee

# UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

## ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

### I. Executive Summary

As of the end of July 2023, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) received 113 proposals and 22 modifications submitted to the committee during the 2022 period. The IRB approved 113 protocols and 22 modifications. Three proposals remain pending and an investigator withdrew a protocol. Among the three protocols pending, we had only one research proposal requiring full review, but the research still needed to submit a required document (gatekeeper letter). The IRB rejected two proposals submitted by investigators from other institutions; the two proposals failed to meet ethical, regulatory, or methodological standards. So, the IRB had no proposal requiring full review during this period.

### II. The Committee's Charge

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
  
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. Committee Members/Leadership Meeting

1. November 10, 2022
  - a. Elected Dr. Jill Simpson as IRB vice chair
  - b. Decided to remove the COVID restrictions of collection including physical presence or contact
2. November 14, 2022
  - a. Discussion of procedures for reviewing a substantial number of research proposals from a research method class in a graduate program.
  - b. Based on the definition of research (development, testing, and evaluation) designed to develop or contribute to most studies in the class are not considered

research. However, since most research subjects in the class are students under 18, the IRB had to review the protocols.

- c. However, considering the extensive number of proposals (60) from a class, it appears necessary to implement detailed guidelines for the course.
- d.

- c. Implemented and improved IRB submission systems utilizing Canvas.
  - i. Provided specific guidelines indicating requirements, steps, and procedures for research proposal, modification, and renewal submission.
  - ii. Set up I to secure documents stored on Canvas.
  - iii. Utilized the system to communicate with researchers when revisions are needed and keep researchers informed about the status of their submissions, modification and renewals.
- d. Listed a prisoner represent9Rmebe n B30041th appesauideroundhup res w3(he)4(ant9R

Alexander granted approval for compensating the IRB chair. The decision aims to enhance the recruitment of a diverse pool of candidates, mainly including tenured faculty members, after considering the time-consuming role requiring significant expertise.

- ii. Successfully recruited tenured faculty members acting as chair and vice chair.
- d. Lack of central location for important documents and files to be retained.
  - i. While not flawless, resolved and addressed the issues when utilizing Campus as a submission system during this term.
- e. The current IRB protocol submission process is unnecessarily tedious, requiring multiple documents to be sent via email and managed solely by the IRB chair.
  - i. While not flawless, resolved and addressed the issues when utilizing Campus as a submission system during this term.
  - ii. Continually implemented and improved IRB submission systems using Canvas.

#### VI. What does the Committee plan to accomplish?

- a. The new chair, vice chair, and current committee members plan to accomplish short and long-term goals and objectives.

#### VII. **What are the Committee's weaknesses?**

- a. During the term (2022-23), the committee made tremendous endeavors to resolve the identified issues and concerns in the ~~roles~~ responsibilities of the committee. However, there are some common areas for improvement (e.g., the substantial workload of initially reviewing research proposals assigned to the IRB chair and vice chair and certain limitations of Canvas when utilizing it as a submission system of the IRB).

#### VIII. Comments

It is my great honor and privilege to collaborate with dedicated colleagues, mainly thanks to Dr. Williams, Dr. Simpson, IRB members, and researchers at UNA.