

Annual Report
of the
Nipissing University Research Ethics Board

December 15, 2016

Dr. Harley d'Entremont
Provost and Vice-President, Academic and Research
Nipissing University

Dear Dr. d'Entremont:

As NUREB Chair, for the 2015-2016 academic year, I am pleased to submit the NUREB's 2015-2016 Annual Report through you to the Board of Governors.

Highlights

This was a busy year for the REB with the REB receiving and processing a total of 180 protocols, which is down in number from the 2014-2015 academic year. The number of protocols received from faculty researchers, undergraduate and graduate researchers as well as administrators remained steady from the 2014-2015 academic year at 96 protocols in both the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 academic years. The number of modifications requested dropped down from the 61 of 2014-2015 and returned to a level of 26 such requests. This number is similar to the number received in previous years. The number of requests for renewal remained steady at 44 (compared with 46 in 2014-2015). Where we did notice a dramatic increase from previous years is in the number of final reports submitted. Researchers submitted 68 final reports in 2015-2016 compared with just 34 in 2014-2015. This increase may reflect the fact that the ROMEO system automatically reminds researchers when renewals are due and when a final report is expected. Finally, we have also adjusted our protocol review procedures and eliminated the protocol submission deadline. Currently, researchers can submit protocols at any time and they are reviewed as soon as possible. The reviewers are provided with two weeks in which to complete their review. The chair then makes a final decision after the reviews come in and the final decision is communicated with the researcher(s) in a timely basis after the final decision is reached. This has made life much easier for researchers as they can now submit protocols as soon as they have

them completed and expect feedback on these protocols in a reasonable (up to four week) time frame. The ROMEIO system makes all of this possible and we continue to seek ways to fine tune its use and effectiveness.

The average turnaround time for decisions (based on minimal risk applications) was 15 working days. This has decreased since 2014 -2015; where the average turnaround time was 45 – 60 days. This is attributed to the Romeo system and the delegated review process. Five (5%) percent of protocols were accepted 'as is', meaning there were no revisions/clarifications required. Approximately eighty (80%) percent of new applications required some form of revision/clarification with about fifteen (15%) percent requiring multiple rounds of revision/clarification prior to ethics approval.

Number of Proposals Reviewed and Approved

In 2015-2016 the Research Services Office (RSO) received 110 new applications including 14 institutional approval requests (researchers from outside Nipissing University). The average applications received is at a rate of 11 per month (not including renewals, modifications or final reports). In addition to the new applications received, the RSO processed 44 renewals, 26 modifications and 68 final reports.

In order to appreciate the volume of REB submissions, the number of new applications (110) must be multiplied by three, which is the number of times, on average, an application crosses the desk of the Ethics Administrator in a one year period. This includes the initial submission, one round of clarification/revision (on average) and the submission of a continuing (renewal)/final review. Furthermore, the annual number of applications to modify ongoing research protocols (26) must be considered. Thus a more accurate reflection of the volume of applications processed in 2015-2016 is $(110 \times 3) + 26 = 356$.

The chart found below presents a summary of the proposals received in the 2015-2016 academic year. The same information from the previous year (2014-2015) is also provided for comparison.

| PROTOCOLS RECEIVED | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Faculty – research, course assignments Graduate students, Undergraduate students and Administration | 96 | 96 |
| Institutional Approval | 17 | 14 |
| Renewals | 46 | 44 |
| Modifications Requested | 61 | 26 |
| TOTAL | 220 | 180 |
| Final Reports Rec'd | 34 | 68 |

Additional Highlights: 2015-2016

Future Developments

Members continue to benefit from the use of the ROMEO system, which has been in effect from May of 2015. We are continuing to work on fine-tuning the ROMEO system and are actively seeking ways to streamline the review process. Feedback from the Nipissing University research community is accepted and appreciated.

Ongoing Concerns

Ethics Education

As in previous annual reports, we continue to seek additional support to fulfill our mandate to oversee all approved research with human participants carried out at Nipissing University. While the ROMEO system and its use by all researchers at Nipissing is making this oversight somewhat easier, there still exists a need for additional administrative support. While ROMEO has eliminated many of the time consuming day-to-day activities of the Ethics Administrator, an Ethics Advisor who can provide education to Nipissing University researchers in the form of workshops etc. would still greatly benefit the research ethics environment at Nipissing University. Thus, we



continue to recommend that an Ethics Advisor be appointed who can provide ethics education to faculty, staff and students in the form of workshops etc.

We express our sincere thanks to Martee Storms, the Ethics Administrator, for her work in providing administrative support to the NUREB.

This report was approved by NUREB following its meeting on December 15, 2016. Should you have any questions or need any additional information about the information provided in this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dana R. Murphy'.

Dana R. Murphy, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Psychology
Chair, Nipissing University Research Ethics Board, 2015-2016