

## 1.0 Introduction

The Research Ethics Board, as part of its responsibilities, is required to provide an annual activities report to the President and Academic Council. This report covers the Research Ethics Board's activities from July 2012 until June 2013.

## 2.0 Research Ethics Board Responsibilities

The primary mandate of the Research Ethics Board is to ensure the ethical conduct of research involving human participants. The Research Ethics Board reports directly to the President and is responsible for the following:

- Developing and applying policies regarding the ethical conduct of research involving human participants;
- Reviewing all research projects requiring the use of human participants;
- Ensuring that all policies regarding the ethical conduct of research involving human participants remain current;
- Dealing with ethical matters concerning human-based research;
- Ensuring that researchers receive education on the ethical conduct of research involving human participants;
- Providing an annual report on its activities to the President and Academic Council; and
- Participating in continuing education organized by University Research Administrators for the University community in matters relating to research ethics.

## 3.0 Membership and Meetings

<b>Membership</b>	<b>REB Position</b>	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Appointment</b>
Bill Goodman	Chair	Business & IT	Currently Appointed
Manon Lemonde	Vice-Chair	Health Science	Currently Appointed
Joseph Krasman	General Member	Business & IT	Currently Appointed
Stephen Marsh	General Member	Business & IT	Currently Appointed
Shirley Van Nuland	General Member	Education	Currently Appointed
John Samis	General Member	Health Science	Currently Appointed
Toba Bryant	General Member	Health Science	Currently Appointed
Natalie Oman	General Member	Social Science & Humanities	Currently Appointed
Phillip Shon	General Member	Social Science & Humanities	Currently Appointed
Leigh Harkins	General Member	Social Science & Humanities	Currently Appointed
Glenn Brown	General Member	Community Member	Currently Appointed
Susan Donaldson	General Member	Community Member	Currently Appointed
Amy Leach	Chair	Social Science & Humanities	Previously Appointed
Francois Desjardins	General Member	Education	Previously Appointed

In the last year, the Board met for monthly meetings 11 times where quorum was achieved at all meetings. Below is a list of all the dates the Board met:

- July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012
- August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012
- September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2012
- October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012
- November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012
- December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012
- January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013
- February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013
- March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013
- April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013
- May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013

#### **4.0 Administrative Support**

Administrative support for the Board is provided by the Office of Research Services, through funds provided from the Federal Indirect Costs Grant. There are multiple positions that function as Research Ethics Support:

- Ethics and Compliance Officer:  
The Ethics and Compliance Officer provides administrative support to the Board and is responsible for providing ongoing daily administrative support and ethical guidance to the Board and researchers in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans and best practices.
- Research Ethics Administration:  
The Research Ethics Administration maintains all Research Ethics files through updating the Office of Research Services database daily to capture real time workflow, ensure accurate monthly reporting, and to monitor all files are compliant. This position is also responsible for monitoring file renewals, and maintaining all renewals, amendments and closures.

The Ethics and Compliance Officer position is held by Sascha Tuuha. During the 2013 fiscal year, Sascha Tuuha went on maternity leave and the position was held by:

1. Coriline Hall (June 2012 – October 2012), and
2. Margaret Nicoletti (October 2012 – present).

#### **5.0 Regulatory Updates**

Research involving humans at the University is regulated by both the Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans and the United States Federal Wide Assurance program. Research conducted under the auspices of the University is guided by a set of regulations and responsibilities for protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects. During the 2013 fiscal year, there were no regulatory updates.

## **5.1 Training**

During the Winter & Spring semesters of 2013, a number of general workshops were held by the Ethics and Compliance Office to familiarize the research community with the need for research ethics, as well as educating the research community about the research ethics review process at the University.

## **5.2 Standard Operating Procedure Development**

A Research Ethics Board Subcommittee, comprised of 3 Members and Ethics and Compliance Officer was formed for the purpose of establishing new standard operating procedures and revising the University's Research Ethics Policy in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. The Subcommittee finished their duties in February 2013 and all standard operating procedures along with the research ethics policy have been approved by the Board as of May 2013. Below is a list of the standard operating procedures that were created, approved and are currently being implemented:

### *100: Research Ethics Board Administration*

- 101 REB Meeting Administrations*
- 102 Documentation and Document Management*
- 103 Signatory Authority*
- 104 Membership, Composition, Roles & Responsibilities*
- 105 Training and Education of REB Members and Staff*
- 106 Disclosure and Documentation of Conflicts of Interest*

### *200: Research Ethics Board Operations*

- 201 REB Submission Requirements*
- 202 Criteria for REB Approval*
- 203 Activities Requiring REB Approval*
- 204 Delegated Review*
- 205 The Full Review Process*
- 206 Multi-jurisdictional Research (MJR)*
- 207 Ongoing Review of Approved Research*
- 209 Study Completion*
- 210 Noncompliance*

## **5.3 Research Ethics Application Form Revision**

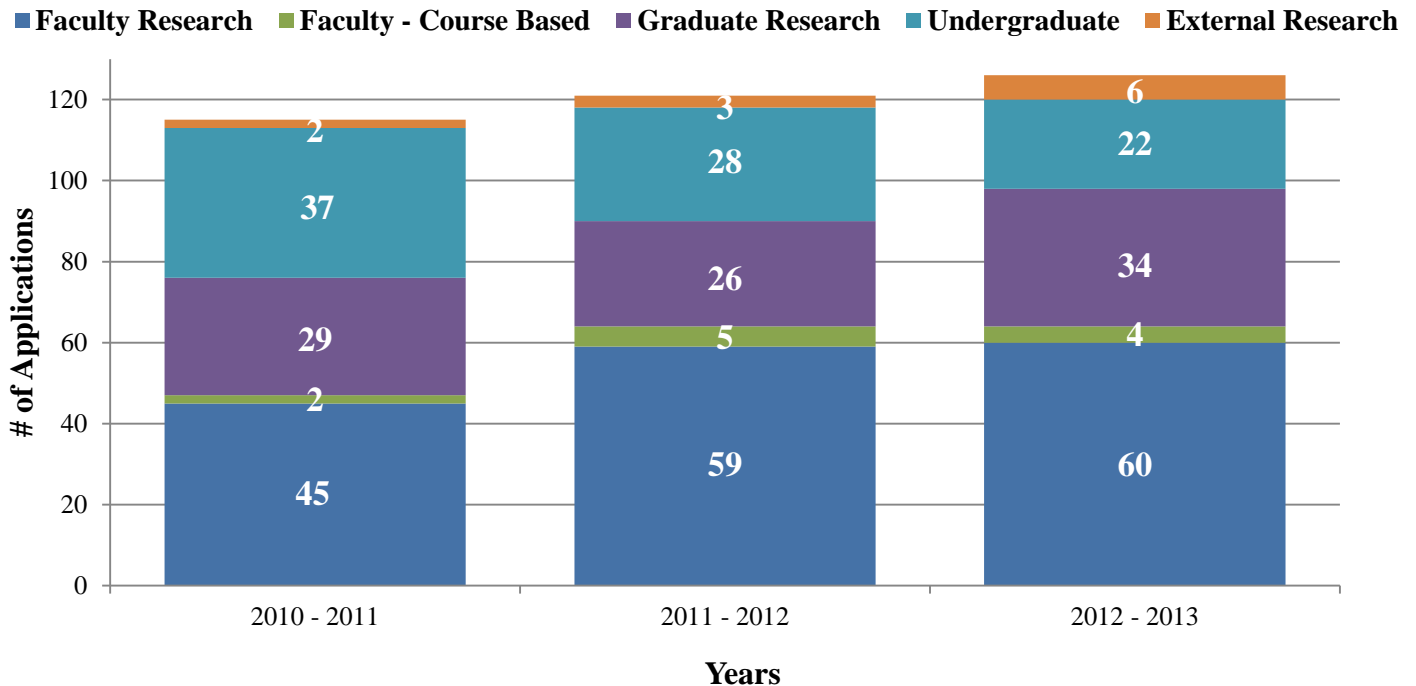
A Research Ethics Subcommittee, comprised of 3 Members and Research Ethics Administration, was formed for the purpose of revising the Research Ethics Application Form to be in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans and to be more researcher-friendly. After many months of discussion, modification and pilot testing, the Research ethics application form has been approved by the Board and has been implemented as of June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

## 6.0 Research Ethics Board Activities

In the 2013 fiscal year, there was a 4.13% increase from 2012 to 2013 in the overall number of Applications received. Faculty research has been steadily increasing with the largest jump of 31.1% from 2011 to 2012. Graduate Research has increased from 2012 to 2013 by 30.8%, however Undergraduate research has been in decline.

Undergraduate Research has been in decline due to the changes in fourth year thesis projects. Within the Faculty of Business and Information Technology, the fourth year capstone project has significantly changed as the Course Instructors have decreased the need for primary research within the project scope. Therefore, our interpretation of the decline is not one that is negative but rather naturally cyclical as this is a normal trend.

### Application Submissions by Type June 2010 - July 2013



#### Research Ethics Administration Workload:

The Office of Research Services processes both new applications as well as requests for ongoing research (renewals, amendments & closures). To better understand the workload of the Research Ethics Administration, the number of new applications needs to be multiplied by 7, which is the average number of touch points an application is handled by the Research Ethics Administration before approval is granted.

The Touch Points system gives an accurate depiction of the true workload of the Research Ethics Administration and the Board. There are 7 touch points in the current review system for new applications:

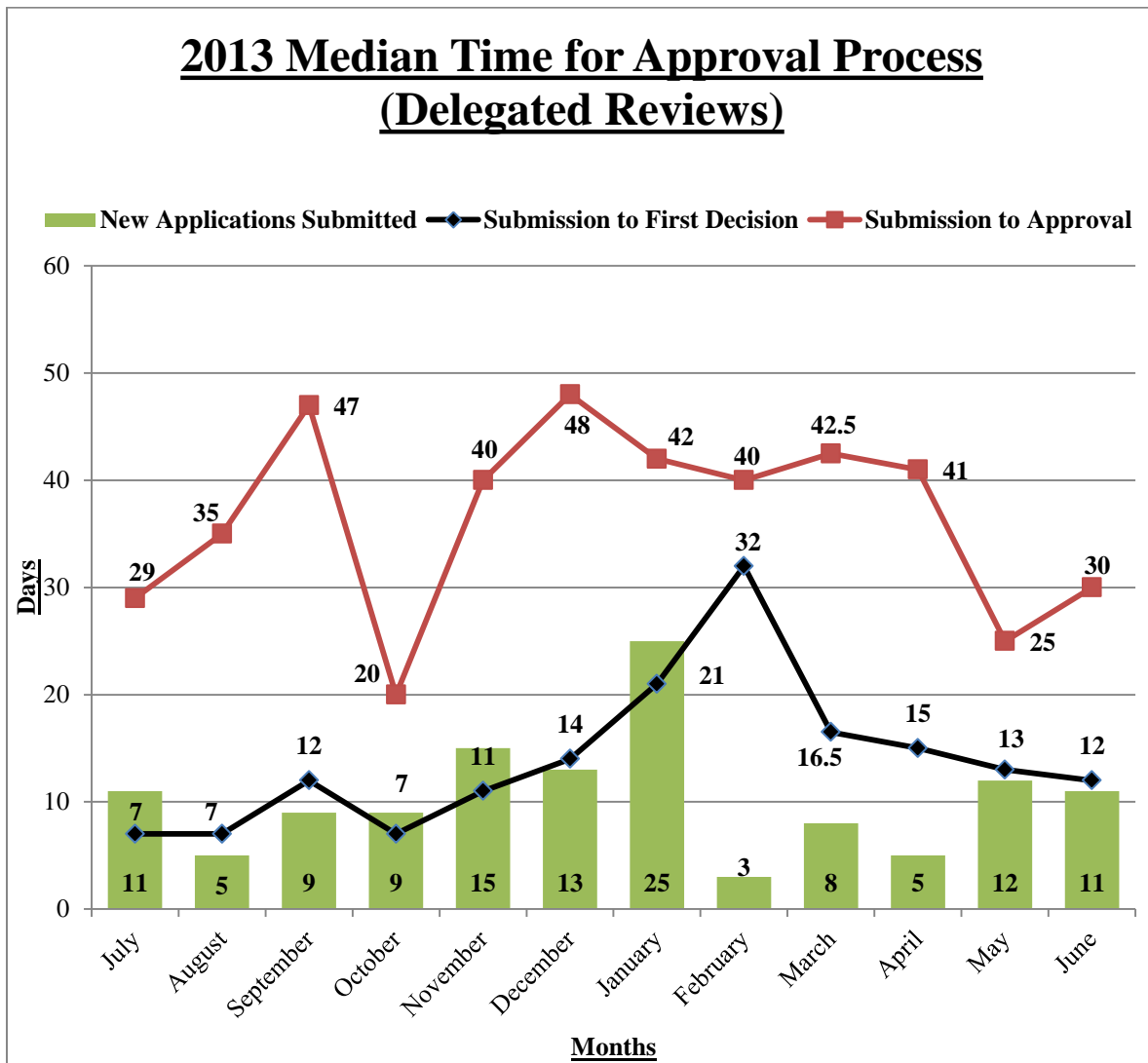
- 1) Application received & processed,
- 2) Sent to delegated reviewer,
- 3) Draft clarification letter,
- 4) Chair approves clarification letter,
- 5) Researcher receives clarification letter,
- 6) Researcher responds to clarification letter, and
- 7) Chair approves application.

- During the 2013 fiscal year, there were 126 new applications and 201 requests for ongoing research received. Therefore, using the touch points metrics system, a more accurate reflection of the volume of applications processed in 2013 is:  $(126 \times 7) + 201 = 1083$ .

In conclusion, the volume of applications processed in 2013 increased by a total of 6.28%.

### 6.1 Reviewer Breakdown & Activities

During the 2013 fiscal year, each Board member conducted on average 10 delegated reviews. Below is a graph showcasing the median time for new applications to be reviewed and approved.



## **7.0 Education and Training**

Several training opportunities were offered for Board members (e.g., provincial and national CAREB conferences, and Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 Conference. The majority of conferences were attended by Board Administration, and/or Board members.

### **7.1 “In House” Presentations for the Research Ethics Board:**

Several in-house presentations were organized by the Ethics and Compliance Officer:

- Brock University Research Ethics Board member Lori Walker, Manager spoke with the UOIT REB regarding and confidentiality and anonymity within secondary use of data during the June 2013 UOIT Research Ethics Board retreat.

### **7.2 External Education and Training for UOIT’s Research Community**

The following educational opportunities were held by the Ethics and Compliance Officer for the University’s research community:

- Capstone Programme (October 2012)
- Faculty and Student Researchers (Fall 2012 and Winter 2013)
- New Faculty Orientation August 2012 )
- Educational workshop for Board Members (June 2013)

## **8.0 Ongoing Issues and Actions:**

Over the last year, the Board considered/decided upon the following issues:

- Should the Board concern itself with liability?
- What is the role of the Board with respect to scholarly review?
- How can a researcher consent someone with changing capacity?
- The new Tri-Council Policy Statement does not require permissions; how should the University’s Board handle student research projects that require offsite permissions?
- With whom should multi-institutional agreements be made?
- Should researchers who choose to use Survey Monkey include a disclaimer on their consent form, indicating that the data collected may be subject to United States Patriot Act?
- Should researchers who choose to utilize the internet for research include a disclaimer that states that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed while data are in transit over the Internet?

## **9.0 Concerns and Recommendations**

As there are many first-time researchers applying to receive ethics clearance at the University, the Board recommends that there be more training resources made available to the researcher population. Whether this is in the form of a workshop, online tool or educational pamphlets, the concern of the Board is that researchers need to have a deeper understanding and appreciation for the need of ethics within their research.

## **10.0 Future Directions and Considerations**

The Board has made tremendous strides over the last few years and continues to grow in its capacity as an Institutional Research Ethics Board.

In particular, the Board has focused on improving the transparency of its processes and establishing standards to maintain consistency with the development and use of Standard Operating Procedure and posting of all meeting and submission dates.

Ongoing workshops will be held by the Research Ethics Administration to address the need for research and ethics training within the research community. It is expected that the Office of Research Services will be updating its website accordingly to include additional educational resources and information for researchers.

It is anticipated that future initiatives will continue to refine and consolidate best practices, to ensure a consistent, high quality, efficient review process.