



LaurentianUniversity
Université**Laurentienne**

Annual Report 2017-2018

Laurentian University Research Ethics Board

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Stephanie Harris, Office of Research Services

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Introduction

Every year, the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board (LUREB) prepares and submits a report to inform the Laurentian University administration, research community, and other interested stakeholders of its role, achievements, and forward-looking goals. In response to its responsibility to review and approve research projects, the LUREB has and continues to strive in developing a strong research ethics culture within the Laurentian research community and does so by committing to the highest ethical standards as prescribed in the TCPS 2 (2014) and also in keeping abreast of national and provincial legislative and best-practices changes that impact research ethics.

Over the past year, the Office of Research Services and the LUREB has actively continued to refine its policies and procedures to provide clear standard requirements for research submissions. Under the auspices of these policies, procedures and standards, along with protecting the interests of human participants, the LUREB worked diligently with researchers to ensure they maintained their eligibility for national and international research funding as well as ensuring they remain accountable to research ethics principles by means of annual reporting and continuing review of all research projects.

According to the Terms of Reference for the Research Ethics Board at Laurentian University, adopted by the University Board of Governors in 2016, the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board is mandated to present an annual report to the Board of Governors. This report will be sent to Senate for information. Operational data in this report is based on the 2017-18 fiscal year, starting April 1 2017 and ending March 31, 2018.

Chair's Report

The LUREB has completed another effective year in reviewing, facilitating and approving research concerning human participants conducted by Laurentian University researchers and their students and collaborators.

With a broad and diverse complement of 12 members, the LUREB membership works diligently to provide timely, thorough and thoughtful review of all university-based research concerning human participants. We continue to see a significant number of grant-funded projects and collaborative and multi-institutional research projects. When considering file volumes, it is important to keep in mind that REB proposals undergo numerous screening and review handling occasions prior to their final approval. In addition, once approved, researchers must provide annual reports and request modification approval for any changes to their protocols. This multiplies the proposal review work of the Chair and the ORS staff member exponentially.

On an administrative level, we have entered into an Institutional Authorization Agreement with St. Lawrence College in November, 2017, whereby St. Lawrence College Research Ethics Board provides delegated review on behalf of the LUREB of any human participant research files by St. Lawrence College faculty and students in the collaborative programs of Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Bachelor of Business Administration.

We are moving towards an agreement to become a Participating Site with Clinical Trials Ontario. In addition, we continue to work towards the finalization of a harmonized research ethics Reciprocity Agreement between Laurentian University and Health Sciences North.

Our initiatives for the upcoming year will be to continue to refine and consolidate best practices into local policies, to ensure a high quality, consistent and efficient review process and to continue to build ongoing engagement with the research community.

Thanks and gratitude are extended to Vice-chair, Dr. Susan Boyko, who undertook the position of Acting Chair during my recent 6 month sabbatical leave, with noteworthy diligence and impeccable professionalism. I would also like to thank Stephanie Harris, the Research Ethics and Post Award Officer in the Office of Research Services for her important work in facilitating the research review process, and for providing administrative, consulting, training and institutional support to researchers.

On behalf of the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board and the Office of Research Services, we submit the following Report on our activities for the 2017-2018 year.

Rosanna Langer, BA LLB LLM PHD, Associate Professor
CHAIR, Laurentian University Research Ethics Board

Role of Research Ethics Boards

The Laurentian University Research Ethics Board applies the highest ethical standards in its review of all research involving human participants. The primary objective of the LUREB is protecting the rights and promoting the safety and well-being of all research participants by ensuring that all research projects are evaluated based on factors related to participant autonomy, welfare and justice. The LUREB considers whether projects will protect vulnerable populations and distribute the benefits and burdens of research fairly, and strives to ensure that the risks and benefits of the research are evaluated and carefully described, that the autonomy of the participants is respected by means of providing informed consent and the right to cease participation at any time without consequence, and that mechanisms are in place to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of research participants.

The Laurentian University Research Ethics Board in tandem with the Office of Research Services, is responsible for the administration of the research ethics review process at the University in accordance with Tri-Council Policies. To ensure compliance and responsible conduct in research, the LUREB endorses and applies the "*Tri Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2, 2014)*" as a guide throughout the review process. The LUREB is responsible not only for ongoing review of cases, but also for education and professional development in the area of ethical conduct of research involving human participants. Researchers and reviewers are strongly encouraged to consult the TCPS 2 (2014) to better inform the research project and as a means to ensure the application of the highest ethical standards throughout the project, from the start through to completion.

Guided by the TCPS2 (2014) article 2.9, the LUREB adopts a proportionate approach to research ethics review, such that minimal risk research is deemed eligible for delegated review by the full Board. In addition, where the Chair deems that there is insufficient expertise within the committee to evaluate a project, the Chair may solicit an appropriate peer reviewer or reviewers to evaluate the research.

Membership April 2017 – March 2018

In accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, at least two members of any REB should have the “relevant knowledge and expertise to understand the content area and methodology of the proposed or ongoing research, and to assess the risks and potential benefits that may be associated with the research.” (TCPS2 2014, p. 73). With this in mind, the LUREB continues to actively recruit members from a variety of disciplines to ensure broad representation on the LUREB. Moreover, in effort to achieve greater representation and diversity, the LUREB continues to recruit members from the Francophone and Indigenous research communities. Currently, the REB is composed with professional expertise in the areas of law and justice, epidemiology, health care, vulnerable populations, research with Indigenous communities, use of secondary data, community safety issues, nursing, quantitative and qualitative research methods, and social work to name a few.

Our current membership includes:

| Member | Department | Area of expertise |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Rosanna Langer (Chair) | Law and Justice | Law and legal issues, information privacy, program evaluation, vulnerable populations, program evaluation |
| Susan Boyko (Vice-Chair) | NOSM (Adjunct) | Cancer care, adult education, privacy issues |
| Sandra Hoy | School of Social Work | Community research partnerships, marginalized populations, qualitative methods, program evaluation |
| Nancy Lightfoot | School of Rural and Northern Health | Epidemiology Quantitative Methods Mixed Methods |
| Erin Olesen-Schinke | Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and PHD Human Studies (candidate) Community | Community safety issues, confidentiality, vulnerable populations |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| | member/ Student member | |
| Patrick Timony | School of Rural and Northern Health (Student member) | Quantitative and qualitative research methods; survey methods, population-based research, secondary data analysis, epidemiology, francophone populations and health care providers |
| Lori Rietze | Nursing | Organizational analysis, ethnography, advance care planning, end of life care, acute care settings |
| Lea Tufford | Social Work (Barrie) | Social Work, qualitative research, children and families |
| Lisa Allen | Community Member | Program evaluation and Clinical research |
| Lissa Gagnon | Nursing | Oncology care, clinical and pedagogical environments, research partnerships, qualitative and participatory action research processes. |
| Susan James | Midwifery | Research ethics, vulnerable populations, qualitative research processes |
| Tomasz Mrozewski | Desmarais Library | Information systems, data management, informational privacy |
| Nicole Yantzi | School of the Environment | Child-centred research, public health, human-environmental interactions, qualitative research methods |
| Stephanie Harris (Ethics Officer) | Office of Research Services | Administrative support |
| Pauline Zanetti (Secretary) | Office of Research Services | Administrative support |

Administrative Support for the REB

The Office of Research Services provides administrative support for the REB. The Ethics Officer and Administrative Assistant provide on-going and daily administrative support, Romeo support and ethical guidance to the REB and researchers in accordance to the TCPS 2 (2014) and research best-practices.

Meetings

The REB met regularly on the first Friday of each month in 2017-2018, with the exception of January 2018 for a total of 10 meetings. Importantly, and consistent with the TCPS 2 (2014) mandate for proportionate review, a robust volume of minimal risk cases were reviewed by small teams of members between monthly meetings. As shown below, the bulk of the work of the committee involves review of proposal files deemed to be of minimal risk to participants. Please note that the file activity below reflect the fiscal year of April 1st, 2017 to March 31, 2018 exclusively. The files reported in the graph below represent the files that were submitted to the REB each month.

REB Activity in 2017 - 2018

Table a) *LU's REB continuing review activities between April 1st 2017 and March 31, 2018*

| Month | Delegated Review | Full Committee Review | Modifications-Extensions-Exemptions/Final Reports | Total/month |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------------|---|-------------|
| 04-17 | 13 | 0 | 8 | 21 |
| 05-17 | 17 | 5 | 14 | 36 |
| 06-17 | 12 | 0 | 13 | 25 |
| 07-17 | 15 | 2 | 14 | 31 |
| 08-17 | 11 | 0 | 21 | 32 |
| 09-17 | 14 | 2 | 5 | 21 |
| 10-17 | 13 | 4 | 6 | 23 |
| 11-17 | 15 | 2 | 13 | 30 |
| 12-17 | 10 | 3 | 6 | 19 |
| 01-18 | 10 | 2 | 10 | 22 |
| 02-18 | 7 | 4 | 10 | 21 |
| 03-18 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 19 |
| Total | 146 | 28 | 126 | 300 |

Table b) File activities as percentage of all processes in 2017-2018

| Delegated | Full | Modifications/Extensions/ Exemptions/Final Reports |
|-----------|------|---|
| 49 % | 9 % | 42% |

Table c) Continuing reviews by activity

| Modifications | Extensions | Final Reports /Exemptions |
|---------------|------------|------------------------------|
| 49 | 36 | 41 (3 Exemptions) |

REB activity by year between 2013-2018

Table a: Annual activity from 2013-2018

| Year | Delegated | Full | Modifications- Extension- Exemption | Yearly total |
|---------|-----------|------|--|-----------------|
| 2013/14 | 131 | 24 | 77 | 232 |
| 2014/15 | 206 | 23 | 99 | 328 |
| 2015/16 | 149 | 29 | 148 | 326 |
| 2016/17 | 124 | 18 | 166 | 308 |
| 2017/18 | 146 | 28 | 126 | 300 |

Delegated reviews

Table a) Percentage of delegated reviews between 2013-2018

| Year | Delegated |
|-----------|-----------|
| 2013-14 | 56% |
| 2014-2015 | 63% |
| 2015-2016 | 46% |
| 2016-2017 | 41% |
| 2017-2018 | 49% |

REB Activity Analysis

In the 2017-18, the Research Ethics Board has reviewed and processed a total of 300 research ethics files. The number of Full Board reviews has increased by nearly 50% compared to last year, but this year we saw a decrease in the number of modification and extension reports submitted and reviewed by the Board. The continuing review is a critical part of the REB process and despite the decrease in modification and extension requests, we have noted that 38 final reports were submitted last year, which indicates that researchers are increasingly committed to completing the REB process.

Annual, extension and modification reports are a critical component in research ethics. Researchers have an obligation to communicate with the REB any changes to their research practices, which often occur once a project commences. As well, under the Tri-Council policies, researchers are expected to renew their certification on a yearly basis to prevent being in violation of their funding terms and conditions and/or institutional research policies. We expect this trend to continue into 2018-2019.

New Application Process and Approval Time

The LUREB strives to maintain timely processing for all submitted projects. This year, for many reasons, we were not able to maintain the regular projected 4 to 6 weeks turnaround time. Faced with the faculty strike, a change in REB Chair to accommodate a sabbatical leave, limited staffing resources, inconsistent availability of reviewers, and heavy workloads of administrators and reviewers, this year, the wait time for project review and approvals increased to take anywhere between 6 to 10 weeks. It is an unfortunate reality, but this is a challenge we endeavour to address with proper resources in place.

REB Review Activity

External Sources

The LUREB primarily reviews applications submitted by Laurentian researchers, however, it is not uncommon for the LUREB to receive protocols from external sources for review. Often, the proposals come from students or Faculty members from other institutions or researchers from other community organizations who wish to involve the Laurentian community as part of their research. In these cases, the files are reviewed and processed in the same manner as those submitted by Laurentian students and faculty. These files are typically sent for delegated review because they tend to be

accompanied by REB certificates from the primary institution. In total, we reviewed 9 applications from external sources. With the majority of external REB application originating from Canadian external institutions, the REB reviewed one file from an Australian institutions and another from the United States.

Total Files Received from External Sources

| Institution | Country |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Flinders University | Australia |
| University of Toronto | Canada |
| St-Lawrence College | Canada |
| University of British Columbia | Canada |
| Arizona State University | USA |
| Université de Hearst (2) | Canada |
| University of Toronto | Canada |
| Public Health Sudbury & Districts (2) | Canada |

Multi-Institutional Projects

While collaboration has been an integral part of research for a long time, the nature of collaboration appears to be evolving from researchers conducting research within one department, faculty or institution to newer areas necessitating partnerships across, not only department, faculties and disciplines but also nationally and internationally. This type of research has instigated and encouraged the development of innovative and groundbreaking strategies in investigating novel and complex areas. Funding agencies, for some, are increasingly structuring requests for proposals to favour the involvement of interdisciplinary research while others favour collaborations that foster a cross-fertilization of ideas, methodologies and interests. There are a number of reasons why researchers collaborate but the idea is most certainly not foreign to the researchers here at Laurentian. This year, the REB reviewed 36 projects that involved collaborations with other institutional partners as highlighted in the table below.

| Partner Institution | Projects |
|---|-----------------|
| University of Calgary | 2 |
| University of Ottawa | 1 |
| Wkwemikong Health Centre | 1 |
| Public Health Sudbury and Districts | 6 |
| Université de Laval | 1 |
| Saskatchewan Health Quality Council | 1 |
| University of Saskatchewan | 2 |
| First Nations University | 1 |
| North Bay Regional Health Centre | 1 |
| McMaster University | 1 |
| University of Toronto | 3 |
| Nipissing University | 1 |
| Athabasca University | 1 |
| Health Sciences North | 4 |
| University of British Columbia | 1 |
| St-Lawrence College | 1 |
| Carleton University | 1 |
| North East Local Health Integration Network | 1 |
| University of Waterloo | 1 |
| Science North | 1 |
| Unknown | 22 |
| Health Sciences North Research Institute | 2 |
| Algoma District Medical Group | 1 |

Many of these projects consist of more than one collaborator with the majority of these projects involving health and health care research. The 22 unknown files represent existing collaborations in various research projects but the researchers did not register their institution.

Northern Ontario School of Medicine

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine continues to be one of the main drivers of exciting and innovative research at Laurentian University, and as such, the LUREB continues to see significant activity in the submission of new ethics protocols from their

students, residents, faculty and other researchers. While medical residents are postgraduate learners who are also licensed physicians, in conducting a research project they do so under the supervision of NOSM faculty and therefore are required to undertake ethics review through LUREB. In order to continue to accommodate and facilitate ethics activity from NOSM students, faculty, and researchers, the LUREB will continue to recruit new members with research expertise in the biomedical sciences, clinical trials, and public health.

Table a: Summary of 2017/18 Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) REB file activity

| Month | Delegated Reviews | Full Committee Reviews | Modifications-Extensions-Exemptions | Total by month |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| 04-17 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| 05-17 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 8 |
| 06-17 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 12 |
| 07-17 | 5 | 0 | 3 | 8 |
| 08-17 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| 09-17 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 4 |
| 10-17 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 11-17 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| 12-17 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 7 |
| 01-18 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 02-18 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 6 |
| 03-18 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Totals | 35 | 4 | 22 | Total: 61 |

Table b: The percentage of REB activity generated by NOSM in 2017-2018 (n=)

| Delegated | Full | Modifications/Extensions/Exemptions |
|-----------|------|-------------------------------------|
| 23% | 1% | 17% |

Review Activity by Dept.

In this year's Report, we decided to provide a greater picture of the REB proposals by including submissions by academic department and program. The graph below demonstrates this activity:

| Department | Submissions total |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Accounting | 2 |
| Biology | 3 |
| Commerce and Administration | 2 |
| History | 2 |
| Études françaises | 1 |
| Economics | 1 |
| Administration | 1 |
| Goodman School of Mines | 1 |
| Human Studies | 1 |
| Humanities | 1 |
| Indigenous Studies | 2 |
| Interdisciplinary Health | 4 |
| Marketing and Management | 3 |
| Mathematics and Computer Sciences | 4 |
| Modern Languages and Literature | 1 |
| Nursing | 10 |
| Orthophonie | 6 |
| Physics | 1 |
| Political Sciences | 1 |
| Psychology | 14 |
| School of Architecture | 3 |
| School of Education | 3 |
| School of Human Kinetics | 9 |
| School of Indigenous Relations | 5 |
| School of Rural and Northern health | 9 |
| School of Social Work | 9 |
| School of the Environment | 2 |
| Science Communications | 5 |
| Sociology | 1 |
| Women's Studies | 1 |
| Unidentified | 21 |

The unidentified files as described above are submissions made at the Faculty level or through research centers. In 2017-18, the departments of Human Kinetics, Psychology, and Nursing, as well as the School of Social Work and the School of Rural and Northern had the most projects submitted for REB review with these submissions totaling approximately 17% of total projects submitted. This year we have seen submissions from other departments, such School of Architecture, Marketing and Management and Mathematics and Computer Sciences.

Funded Research Ethics Applications

Academic research can be intense, stimulating and rewarding. For many of our researchers at Laurentian, their research goals cannot be accomplished without first seeking funds to support their work. Research funding comes from a variety of sources including government, both federal and provincial, as well as from industry and other organizations who share the same passion as researchers and who wish to support ground breaking results. This year, the REB reviewed 20 funded research proposals. Most of these received funding from sources in government (e.g. SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR), Health Sciences including Public Health, and industry grants. In addition, allocations from federal and provincial granting agencies and research contracts fund internal grant funds such as the Laurentian University Research Fund (LURF), and the Advancing Indigenous Research (AIR) Fund.

Undergraduate Research Ethics Committees

All Undergraduate Research Ethics Committees (UGREBs) are considered as delegated REBS. Under the *General Policies for research with human participants requiring research ethics review at Laurentian University (April 2017)*, the scope of their obligations are determined as follows:

1. Undergraduate student research projects that involve non-intrusive and minimal risk research activities may be approved by a sanctioned departmental ethics committee who may consult or refer cases to the LUREB and shall maintain all file records and report to the LUREB annually. All applications to departmental REBs identified as exceeding minimal risk shall be evaluated by the LUREB.
2. Undergraduate student research projects assigned uniformly to an entire class, and involving human participants, human biological materials and/or personal information shall

be submitted to departmental ethics committees as a single submission, under the supervision of a faculty member. The departmental ethics committee may consult or refer cases to the LUREB. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to ensure that REB approval and reporting timelines remain current.

As indicated in the Table below, we request REB activity from each department at Laurentian University with historical or new undergraduate research activity. Some departments have very intensive undergraduate research activity and provide reports in great details while others have nothing to report. Here are the activities reported for the 2017-18 year:

Summary of Research Activity by UGREBs

| Department | Chair | Status |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| English | Philippa Spoel | Nothing to Report |
| Film | Hoi Cheu | No UGREB |
| Études françaises | Renée Corbeil | No Report |
| Modern Languages and Literatures | Normand Cheadle | No Report |
| Music | Charlotte Leonard | NO UGREB |
| Philosophy | Alain Beaulieu | Nothing to Report |
| Economics | Hassan Bougrine | No Report |
| History | Todd Webb | Nothing to Report |
| Law and Justice | Charlotte Neff | Nothing to Report |
| Northern and Community Studies | Darrel Manitowabi | No Report |
| Political Science | Alan Shandro | No UGREB |
| Psychology | Joël Dickinson | 26 Applications |
| Sociology | Parveen Nangia | 4 Applications |
| Gerontology (Huntington) | Krishnan Venkataraman | 5 Applications |
| Human Kinetics | Olivier Serresse | 4 Applications |
| Indigenous Relations | Susan Manitowabi | NO UGREB |
| Midwifery | Susan James | Nothing to report |
| Nursing | Sylvie Laroque | Nothing to report |
| Orthophonie | Chantal Mayer-Crittenden | 5 Applications |
| Rural and Northern Health | Elizabeth Wenghoffer | No undergraduate program |
| Social Work | Stéphane Richard | Nothing to Report |
| Accounting | Yves Robichaud | Nothing to report |
| Finance and Operations | Mohamed Dia | No Report |
| Marketing and Management | Natalya Totskaya | 27 Applications |
| Sports Administrative | Anthony Church | Nothing to Report |
| School of Architecture | David Fortin | Nothing to Report |
| Biology | Mazen Saleh | No UGREB |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Chemistry and Biochemistry | Eric Gauthier | No UGREB |
| Earth Sciences | Doug Tinkham | No Report |
| Engineering | Markus Timusk | Nothing to Report |
| Forensic Sciences | James Watterson | No Report |
| Math and Computer Sciences | Youssou Gningue | No Report |
| Environment | Brett Buchanan | No Report |
| Physics | Eduardo Galiano-Riveros | No Report |
| School of Education | Georges Sheppard | Nothing to Report |
| École des Sciences de l'éducation | Athanase Simbagoye | Nothing to Report |
| Library | Dan Scott | No undergraduate program |
| U de Hearst | Lyne Poliquin | No Report |
| NOSM | Penny Moody - Corbett | No UGREB |
| School of Northern Development | Charles Daviau | No Report |
| Thorneloe | Susan Moores | No UGREB |
| Indigenous Social Work | Susan Manitowabi | No Report |
| St-Lawrence College | Anthony Wright | 1 Application |

LUREB Ethics Professional Development Sessions and Consultations

During the 2017/18 period, the Chair of the LUREB, and Research Ethics/Post-Award Officer facilitated presentations by invitation. Both faculty members and students appreciated these opportunities to interact directly with members of the Board and Office of Research Services as well as pose questions relevant to their own research protocols. The Chair, Research Activities Manager and Post-Award Officer have also routinely met with individual researchers, faculty members and students regarding their ethics applications or to address emerging ethical issues in their current research projects. These individual face-to-face consultations also appear to be greatly appreciated. The Post-Award Officer prepared and delivered a series of Research Ethics and Romeo training sessions available to all students and faculty, including monthly "Romeo Days" during which researchers can drop in without an appointment for Romeo support. For the upcoming year, the Post-Award Officer is planning additional educational sessions, which will include various topics around ethics and the REB process as well as continued monthly Romeo sessions. Moving forward, the LUREB and its administrative support staff remain ready to assist local researchers in facilitating ethically-robust human participant research at Laurentian.

