

## Minutes

### IRB Meeting

January 30, 2025; 3:30 – 5:00 pm

- Present: Jo Morrison, Eric Laws, Larry Collins, Alison King, Tom PlaHovinsak, Ryan Stouffer, Greg Harbaugh-Schattenkirk, Julia Maserjian
- Membership update
  - The IRB welcomed Julia Maserjian as the community member of the Longwood IRB. We are grateful for her service.
- Approval of the minutes from the December 5<sup>th</sup> 2024 meeting
  - Minutes approved
- Report on IRB Activity: Protocols Approved Since December 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting
  - Exempt 21
  - Not HSR Determination 1
  - Number of active protocols 34
  - IRB Members asked about access to read approved protocols. Dr. Morrison
- Discussion Item: Clarification on Student Evaluations and FERPA
  - The Registrar confirmed that Student Evaluations of Instructors are not FERPA protected educational records.
  - Researchers should obtain evaluations directly from faculty members with their consent.
- Discussion Item: Pedagogical Research and FERPA
  - While institutions can release identifiable student records for research without consent, this does not apply to individual faculty members conducting research. The use of student records in research must have one of three purposes: (A) Develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (B) Administer student aid programs; or (C) Improve instruction (34 CFR 99(a)(6)(i)).
  - If individual faculty research using student educational records can be shown to meet one of these criteria/purposes then the research may qualify for an exception for the requirement of obtain consent from the student. At present there is no University designation or process for designating research by individual faculty members as meeting any of these criteria. Therefore the IRB requires faculty members to obtain the consent of student for the use of the educational records in research.
  - The IRB discussed the power differential between faculty and students and agreed that obtaining an exception of consent might be more beneficial than asking for consent, as it could potentially protect students from harm. This could be particularly valuable in the context of longitudinal research.
  - The IRB agreed that the decision that a study meets the criteria for an exception should not be made by the IRB. The IRB would only require documentation of the exception to be submitted in the proposal.
  - The IRB discussed and agreed that there is a need for a clear procedure and criteria for accessing identifiable student educational records. The IRB believes that Deans are best placed to determine if a research project meets the criteria for an exception. Exceptions are granted by the institutional FERPA official (Registrar).

- The IRB recognized the need for safeguards to prevent the misuse of identifiable data, again seeing a key role of Deans in the determinations of appropriate use of the data.
- The group discussed the dissemination of research findings and the potential misuse of data. They agreed that the findings should be shared with colleagues, either through an annual conference or a website, and that the data should be secured. They also discussed the need for notification of faculty whose data are being used and the potential for research misconduct.
- While the IRB is responsible for investigating research misconduct, it is not the role of the IRB to determine if the proposed research meets FERPA requirements.

#### Next Steps and Action Items

- Dr. Morrison will work with the eProtocol vendor to provide IRB members viewer access to proposals on the eProtocol system.
- Summarize discussion points and recommendations regarding FERPA exceptions and send them to the institutional compliance official.

Next meeting: Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 – 5:00 pm on Zoom  
Zoom recording deleted 2/19/2025