

## Minutes

IRB August Meeting  
September 26, 2024 03:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

- Present: Jo Morrison; Eric Laws; Jackie Secoy; Becca Brusseau; Alison King; Scott Grether; Tom PlaHovinsak; Ryan Stouffer; Gregg Harbaugh-Schattenkirk; Guest - Tim Coffey
- August IRB meeting minutes approved.
- Report on IRB activity since the May meeting. IRB members were provided with protocol details.
  - Exempt 45 CFR 46.104(d) 2
  - NHSR Determination 1
- Standards and Procedures for Research with Longwood Student Athletes
  - Dr. Morrison explained that this S&P was initially developed because the IRB was seeing a number of student research protocols that targeted student-athletes as the subject population. These were largely submitted by student-athletes to fulfil course requirements and aimed to recruit friends and teammates who were also student-athletes. Concerns were raised about privacy, undue pressure, and the justice principle of the Belmont Report (targeting the subject population because of convenience).
  - Dr. Coffey explained that other NCAA member institutions have had concerns about research involving student-athletes, both HSR that is overseen by the IRB and data collected from wearable technology by coaches that may not be used as generalizable data but is still human subjects data.
  - Dr. Coffey highlighted concerns about privacy: are we protecting student-athletes from their identity being released. We have a small student-athlete pool, just over 300 student-athletes spread over 14 sports. He gave the example: if a researcher is interested in concussion and GPA and we have one golfer (example) who has a concussion and the data are reported as sport and GPA, everyone on campus can identify who that individual is.
  - There are concerns about student-athletes having free will to consent. If recruitment for a study occurs via (or with the knowledge of) coaches, athletics staff, or teammates the student-athlete may not really believe they can decline to consent to participate. Researchers need to be very clear with coaches and athletics staff that there is no penalty for not participating in a research study.
  - Dr. Morrison added that we also considered coercion from the standpoint of teammates or other student-athletes being asked to complete a survey or research study because a teammate needed it for class credit.
  - Dr. Stouffer asked if the coercion we are considering here is different from any other study where students need participants to complete course requirements. Dr. Morrison conceded that it probably is not but with the student-athlete population there is an additional privacy issue because they can be so easily identified from few demographic data. The S&P is not designed to shut down research with student-athletes but to add an additional layer of scrutiny to ensure that the research approved in this subject population is high quality and generalizable.
  - It was clarified that the policy does not affect student-athlete participation in research (e.g. PSYC 101 research pool) for course credit, the S&P is only designed to scrutinize projects that

specifically target student-athletes as a subject population not projects where student-athletes may participate incidentally.

- Dr. Morrison reminded the IRB that the Best Practices for Class Assignments with Human Subjects specifically excludes projects targeted at student-athletes.
- Dr. Laws and Dr. PlaHovinsak discussed language changes in the section of the draft S&P dealing with anonymity of student-athletes. After discussion the IRB agreed on revisions addressing anonymity and the use of demographic information. Examples of demographic information that could be particularly identifying were added.
- Dr. Harbaugh-Schattenkirk raised the point that anyone submitting a protocol should be aware of the risks to privacy and should describe how to mitigate concerns and should clearly indicate how data will be used and reported in consent material. Dr. Morrison responded that the eProtocol does have a section for consent material and process.
- IRB members were concerned about the role of the Intercollegiate Athletics Council (IAC) in the initial draft of the S&P. Dr. Coffey explained that the IAC is a group of faculty members who are regularly dealing with issues that affect student-athletes. In the initial draft of the S&P the IAC would not be approving any research, but would be providing a review of protections for student-athletes and providing feedback to the IRB about this. The language of the S&P was revised to reflect that the IAC would be providing feedback to the IRB but that all feedback to the researcher would come from the IRB. The IAC would not be able to approve or disapprove a protocol. It is the role of the IRB to protect all human subjects and ensure protections are in place that serve the specific population.
- It was asked if other institutions have procedures in place that require research to be approved by an athletics subcommittee prior to IRB review. Dr. Morrison showed policies from Campbell University and Colorado State University.
- It was clarified that the S&P would only apply to projects that specifically targeted Longwood student-athletes only. If the project is aimed at student-athletes from a number of different institutions then S&P will not apply. Dr. Coffey added that the wider the subject recruitment, then the greater you can protect a student-athlete's identity when presenting the results of the study.
- The IRB had a discussion about consent as a process. Dr. Morrison observed that many proposals seem to approach consent as a hurdle rather than an opportunity to connect with prospective subjects or as an ongoing process in projects that have repeated measures. The eProtocol has questions related to the consent process. Dr. Secoy described her method of collecting consent from students in her classes to avoid undue pressure. The IRB revised the language of the S&P to consider undue influence in the recruitment and ongoing consent processes.
- The IRB added a requirement that contact information for the Faculty Athletics Representative is included in consent and study materials in addition to IRB contact information. Dr. Coffey said that student-athletes tend to know who he is in his role as Faculty Athletics Representative and know that his role is to engage with any concerns they have.
- S&Ps for Noncompliance and Research Misconduct
  - This item was tabled due to time.
- Workshops, webinars, and educational events?

- IRB members expressed interest in being informed of educational workshops and webinars that cross the desk of the IRB.
- Meeting adjourned 4:51 pm

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