

Date: June 5, 2024

To: Members of the UO Human Subjects Research Community

From: Jessica Price, Assistant Vice President for Research Integrity

Re: Research Compliance Services' IRB-Related Concerns

On July 1, 2022, Anshuman Razdan became UO's Vice President for Research and Innovation (VPRI). On December 1, 2022, Jessica Price received a .5 appointment to oversee a new office within VPRI, Research Integrity. Research Compliance Services (RCS), which supports the work of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure the protection of human subjects in research, became a part of the Research Integrity Unit.

Researchers, including faculty and students, expressed concerns about difficulties navigating IRB processes. Those concerns included the length of time it took to receive approval to proceed with human subjects research, the absence of uniformity in the kinds of questions asked and the nature of restrictions imposed on research, and more. The Office of the VPRI and the Research Integrity unit fielded those concerns.

On March 13, 2023, VPRI convened a four-person Faculty Work Group comprised of researchers from units frequently engaged in human subjects research. The goal of this group was to examine human subjects research review processes, identify the causes of concerns, and make recommendations. Those recommendations, along with responses from RCS, are attached here. Additionally, on October 1, 2023, VPRI appointed Deanne Unruh as Associate Vice President for Research, with a priority of providing a consistent, independent, and proactive faculty researcher lens to administrative changes impacting human subjects research.

We are now in the midst of a concentrated effort to enhance the work of RCS, examine risk tolerance while ensuring uninterrupted compliance, empower the research community with additional educational tools, and create transparency to promote consistency and quality improvement in the way protocols are processed. By this time next year, we expect to launch a dashboard with data to allow you to see how the processing of protocols stacks up against the processing times for other years and for other units. VPRI aspires to provide best in class service to researchers. While we have taken immediate steps to address some of the most pressing concerns, this is only the beginning of a multi-year effort to make the work of our Research Compliance Services, in support of the IRB, the best of its kind.

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