



**Laurentian**University  
Université**Laurentienne**

# **Annual Report 2015-2016**

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## **Laurentian University Research Ethics Board**

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**Annual Report – 2015-2016  
for the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board  
Prepared by Rosanna Langer, Chair  
Pauline Zanetti, Stephanie Harirs, Camille Smith,  
Office of Research Services**

## **Introduction**

According to the Terms of Reference for the Research Ethics Board at Laurentian University, adopted by the University Board of Governors in April 2013, 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.

## **Chair's Report**



## Background

All Canadian Universities must comply with TCPS2 (2014) regulations for continuing eligibility to receive and administer research funds from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), or “the Agencies.” (see TCPS2 2014 section “Introduction”)

The Tri-Council Policy requires that Universities develop an Ethical Review Policy and a process, which involved a single university structure, with optional departmental committees to evaluate the research of undergraduate students. The University-level Research Ethics Board is to be responsible for the administration of the ethics review process at the University in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy. The Laurentian University Research Ethics Board (LUREB) is responsible for not only for review of cases, but also for ongoing education and professional development in the area of ethical conduct for research involving human participants.

Fostering a strong and credible university research community and effective research collaborations requires expressed and tangible support at the most senior levels, for the work of reviewing and ensuring the ethical conduct of research.

### Committee membership March 2015 - February 2016:

Laurentian University’s Research Ethics Board operates under the Tri-Council Policy of the three Federal Granting Councils (TCPS2 2014). According to the TCPS2 2014, 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) Researchers at Laurentian conduct their studies in a wide variety of disciplines using a wide variety of methods; therefore, it is important for us to have broad representation on the LUREB.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Area of expertise</b>
Rosanna Langer (Chair)	Law and Justice	Law and legal issues, information privacy, program evaluation, vulnerable populations
Taima Moeke-Pickering (Vice-Chair)	School of Indigenous relations	Indigenous research methodologies
Michael Persinger	Psychology	General scientific knowledge; validity of measurement
Nancy Lightfoot	School of Rural and Northern Health	Epidemiology Quantitative Methods Mixed Methods
Erin Olsen-Schinke	Probation and parole officer District of Sudbury	Community safety issues, confidentiality, vulnerable populations

Stephanie Harris (Administrator)	Office of Research Services	Administrative support
Pauline Zanetti (Secretary)	Office of Research Services	Administrative support
Robin Craig (Administrator)	Office of Research Services	Administrative support
Patrick Timony	School of Rural and Northern Health (Student Rep)	Quatitative 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
Marion Maar	NOSM	Medical anthropology, qualitative and mixed methods research design, indigenous populations
Sadequl Islam	Economics	Quantitative Research
Lea Tufford	Social Work (Barrie)	Social Work, qualitative research, children and families
Aurélie Lacassagne	Sciences politiques	Méthodes qualitatives, récits de vie, theories critiques, populations immigrantes, communautés en situations minoritaires, femmes et meres.
Lissa Gagnon	Nursing	Oncology care, clinical and pedagogical environments, research partnerships, qualitative and participatory action research processes.

### Meetings

The REB met regularly on the first Friday of each month in 2015-2016, with the exception of July and August, for a total of 10 meetings. Importantly, and consistent with the TCPS 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.

### Activity during the 2015-2016 period

**Table a)** Full activities of LU's REB between March 1st 2015 and February 28 2016

Month	Expedited	Full	Modifications- Extension- Exemption	Total/month
03-15	11	1	27	39
04-15	7	3	7	17
05-15	12	3	18	33
06-15	13	3	16	32
07-15	10	0	9	19
08-15	14	0	8	22
09-15	14	4	6	24
10-15	15	3	15	33
11-15	14	3	15	32
12-15	14	3	2	19
01-16	21	2	13	36
02-16	4	4	12	20
<b>Total</b>	149	29	148	Total : 326

**Table b)** Percentage of all processes in 2015-2016

Expedited	Full	Modification/Extension/Exemption
46%	9%	45%

### Comparison of yearly full REB activity between 2010-2016:

**Table a:** Full REB annual activity from 2010-2016

Year	Expedited	Full	Modifications- Extension- Exemption	Yearly total
2010/11	268	28	107	403
2011/12	229	33	113	375
2012/13	182	26	79	287
2013/14	131	24	77	232
2014/15	206	23	99	328
2015/16	149	29	148	326

## Discussion

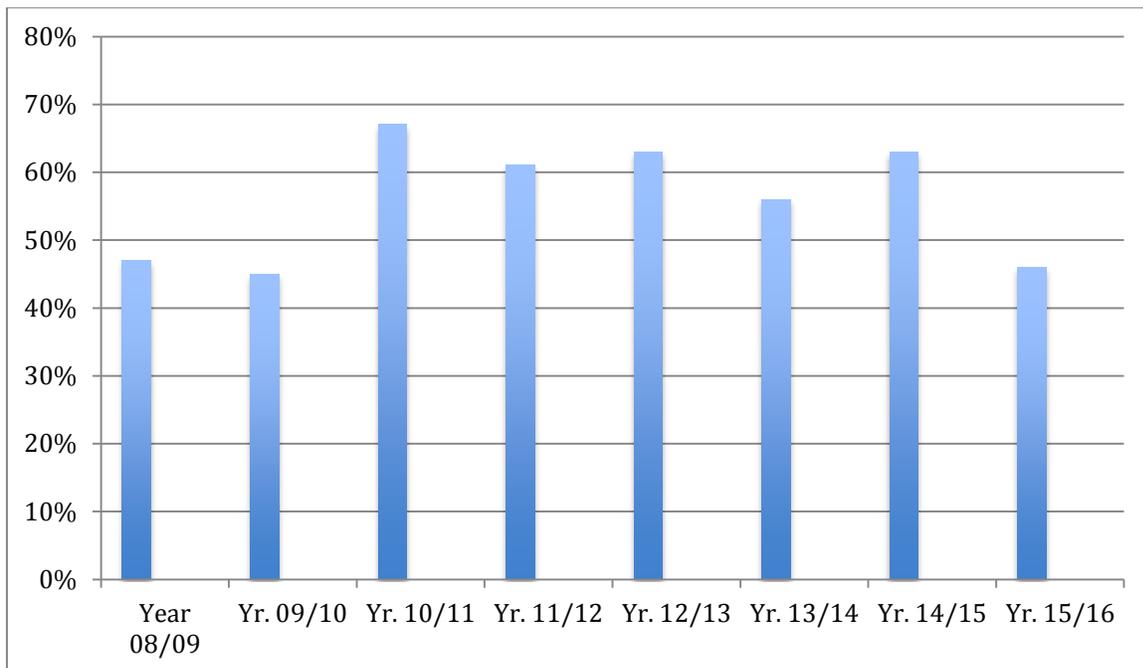
There has been a significant increase in overall REB activity since 2012. This reporting year in particular, there have been a significant increase in modification and extension request in comparison from previous years. This increase coincides with the overall growth of submitted applications the years prior requiring renewals, extensions or modifications. We expect this upward trend to continue into 2016-2017, and as a result will continue to recruit new members to assist with the distribution of an increased workload.

### Expedited reviews:

**Table a)** *Percentage of expedited reviews between 2008-2015*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Expedited</b>
2008-09	47%
2009-10	45%
2010-11	67%
2011-12	61%
2012-13	63%
2013-14	56%
2014-2015	63%
2015-2016	46%

**Graph a)** *Percentage of expedited reviews between 2008-2016*



## Discussion

As noted above, the majority of reviews conducted by REB members and the Chair involve research proposals involving a minimal risk to human participants. Guided by the TCPS 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.

### Increased REB activity from The Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM)

**Table a:** *Summary of Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) activity during the 2015-2016 period*

Month	Expedited	Full	Modifications- Extension- Exemption	Total by month
03-15	3	0	1	4
04-15	1	0	0	1
05-15	2	0	1	3
06-15	4	0	1	5
07-15	2	0	1	3
08-15	6	0	4	10
09-15	4	0	1	5
10-15	3	0	2	5
11-15	3	0	0	3
12-15	1	0	2	3
01-16	4	0	0	4
02-16	1	0	2	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Total: 49</b>

**Table b:** *The percentage of REB activity of 2015-2016 generated by NOSM (n=326)*

Expedited	Full	Modification/Extension/Exemption
10.4%	0%	4.6 %

## Discussion

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 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 receive ethics review through LUREB.

Additional LUREB activity generated by NOSM comes in the form of requests for amendments or extension to existing approved protocols. These requests are sent to the LUREB Chair, who, after evaluating the request and often revisiting the original project file, determines whether or not to approve the amendment or extension. Furthermore, these protocols are often complex by design, involving multi-site or multi-institutional partnerships, and focus on vulnerable populations, including First Nations communities and the elderly, or deal with sensitive secondary data such as patient health records. 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.

### **Departmental REBs:**

All Undergraduate Research Ethics Boards (UGREB) are considered as delegated REBS. Their obligations are managed through the policy that follows:

*In conformity with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, the Laurentian University REB is ultimately responsible for the ethical review of research involving human subjects conducted by its personnel. The REB delegates this authority to Departmental Ethics REBs in the case of the review of undergraduate students' course-related activities. There are two exceptions to this delegation:*

*1) Research conducted by undergraduate students which is part of a faculty member's own research program must be reviewed by the University REB.*

*2) If a project is deemed GREATER THAN MINIMAL RISK by the departmental REB, it must be reviewed by the University REB.*

*If a Departmental REB is doubtful about the risk involved in a proposal, it will consult the Chair of the University's Central REB.*

Officially, there are 12 UG REB (including Huntington, Thorneloe, The University of Sudbury, l'Université de Hearst, and NOSM) at Laurentian University. Some schools/departments no longer have a research component in their undergraduate curriculum and therefore have no review activity to report this year.

### **Summary of reported UGREBs**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Cases reported (as of June 2016)</b>
Human Kinetics	16
Psychology/Psychologie	30
Philosophy	No report submitted

School of Architecture	Nothing to report
School of the Environment	1
School of Education /École des Sciences de l'Éducation	Nothing to report
Orthophonie	4
School of Indigenous Relations	Nothing to report
Comité d'éthique de la recherche de l'Université de Sudbury	Nothing to report
Études françaises	1
Huntington	7
Thorneloe	No report submitted
Geography/Géographie	No report submitted
Sociology/Sociologie	No report submitted
School of Social Work / Service Social	Nothing to report
Commerce and Administration/Commerce et Administration	No report submitted
Université de Hearst	13
The School of Nursing	Nothing to report
History/Histoire	2
Library	Nothing to report
NOSM	5
Marketing and Management	42
Accounting	No report submitted
School of Northern Development	No report submitted
Total:	121

### **Multi Institution Collaboration Research**

This year, we had a total of 50 human ethics research projects that were multi-institutional collaborations. The top five collaborating institutions were University of Toronto, Health Sciences North, the Institution of Clinical Evaluative Sciences, Dalhousie University, and First Nations University of Canada, Regina. As Laurentian continues to grow its research network to include a broader external network of researcher, this year we saw seven of the collaborative projects involved international institutions. As we continue to reach out and increase our research capacity at Laurentian, it will not be surprising to see ongoing upward trends in multi-institution collaboration research.

## **ROMEIO**

Despite a few delays in getting the database set up and ready to go, the Office of Research Services have successfully launched ROMEIO in June 2016. Researcher, faculty, and students are now able to submit their applications, amendment or extension requests on-line through the ROMEIO portal and monitor the progress of their application as it makes its way through the workflow process. LUREB members will also be granted special access to the portal, which will allow them to review submitted applications and make comments and suggestions for revisions and interact virtually with other members of the board. The ROMEIO system represents a significant upgrade to our current record-keeping practices and will allow for more rigorous and continual post-approval monitoring of active ethics protocols, bringing the Board into compliance with the recommendations outlined in Laurentian's last Tri-council audit. Lastly, the ROMEIO system will permit us to generate more accurate and comprehensive annual activity reports.

### **Changes in Ethics Position**

The ORS has finally hired Stephanie Harris as the Post-Award Officer who was tasked with assisting both the LUREB and the ACC (Animal Care Committee) with the various administrative and monitoring functions. Stephanie supports the work of the LUREB Chair, pre-screen new ethics applications, ensure post-award compliance, develop training materials, and facilitate educational presentations for researchers, faculty and students. Stephanie is also responsible for managing and directly the workflow of ROMEIO's certification portal.

### **LUREB Ethics Professional Development Sessions and Consultations**

During the 2015-2016 period, the Chair of the LUREB, Research Activities Manager and Post-Award Officer facilitated presentations regarding research ethics for the School of Social Work and a series of webinars for the Nursing programs. Both the faculty members and students appreciated this opportunity to interact directly with members of the Board 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 ethics in their current research projects. These individual face-to-face meetings are always greatly appreciated and reflect the LUREB's proactive and participatory approach to facilitating ethically-robust human participant research at Laurentian. For the upcoming year, the Post-Award Officer, is planning some additional educational sessions, which will include various topics around ethics and the REB process. A schedule and topics should be defined and developed in the early Fall 2016.

### **Recruitment and retention of new members to the LUREB**

The LUREB will continue with its efforts to recruit more members to the Board who have extensive academic and research experience in various fields considering the vast diversity of topics being researched at Laurentian. We've had a few members step down from the committee and as a result, the REB is actively recruiting new members. A letter to Faculties and Departments has been send in hopes to recruit by the Fall 2016.