



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

# Annual Report 2016-2017

---

## Laurentian University Research Ethics Board

Rosanna Langer, Chair  
Pauline Zanetti, Stephanie Harris,  
Office of Research Services

9/13/2017

# Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Chairs Report .....	4
3. The Role of Research Ethics Boards.....	6
4. Committee Membership 2016/17.....	7
5. Administration Support for the REB.....	9
6. Meetings:.....	9
7. REB Activity in 2016/17:.....	10
8. Delegated Reviews:.....	11
9. New Application Process:.....	11
10. REB Review Activity:.....	12
11. Undergraduate Research Ethics Committees:.....	16
12. Summary of reported UGREB Activity.....	17
13. REB Professional Development Sessions.....	18
13. Addendum Report March 2017 to April 2017.....	19



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

## Introduction

This report is published annually to inform the Laurentian University administration, research community, and other interested stakeholders of the roles, achievements, and forward-looking goals of the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board (LUREB). In addition to the research activities themselves, fostering a strong and credible university research community and effective research collaborations also requires expressed and tangible support at all levels. Over the past year, the Office of Research Services has successfully implemented the Process Pathways Romeo research database and the LUREB has actively continued to refine its policies and procedures to provide clear standard requirements for research submissions. The latest additions include the improved Guidelines for Submission policy and the Research Self-Declaration of Emerging Ethics Requirement policy, both of which were implemented in the Fall of 2016.

The LUREB has continued to be responsive to inquiries from our research community and has kept abreast of national and provincial legislative and best-practices changes that impact research ethics. 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 2016-17 fiscal year, starting April 1 2016 and ending March 31, 2017. The previous LUREB Annual Report reported on activities during the time period of March 2015 to February 2016. In order to normalize the reporting time period to the university fiscal year, this report will report on the period March 2016 to February 2017, with an addendum detailing activity Tables for the period March to April 2017. The subsequent Annual Report will report on the time period of April 2017 to March 2018.

## Chair's Report

The LUREB Annual Report documents and reports on the activities of the REB including types and volumes of files considered by the committee over the course of the fiscal year. This year, we endeavour to feature some of the more finely-textured information now being documented and made available through the ROMEO research platform, such as collaborative research partnerships and multi-institutional research projects, and human participant research activity by Department or unit.

We have generated and approved a number of policies and Standard Operating Practices (SOPs) this year to support the increasing complexity of our work. Foremost, the LUREB revised its Terms of Reference in 2016 (final approval in Jan. 2017) to incorporate and reflect new realities such as the role of the Vice-chair and the Appeal process and to remove operating practices to other policy documents. Other policy documents approved this year address such issues as: Initial review criteria for REB Approval; REB Submission requirements & administrative review; Delegated review of files deemed minimal risk; Continuing review practices; Delegation of signing authority in certain instances; Non-compliance; and Researcher conflict of interest. These policies dovetail with existing Laurentian and REB policies and fill some significant gaps in research ethics review. More work continues to be done on developing and posting guidelines and resources (for e.g. on secure data management) on the REB webpage.

Efforts towards establishing collaborative institutional harmonization and delegation agreements on shared research ethics files continue to be ongoing.

In addition to the professional development support offered by Stephanie Harris from the Office of Research Services, I have given a number of research ethics presentations including the following: *Maamwizing Conference on Indigeneity in the Academy, Panel on research ethics*, November, 2016; *Conducting Ethical Research: Process and Design*, LU Research Week, March, 2017, *Razor's Edge: Fostering Research Ethics in a Time of Regulatory Primacy*, presentation at the Northern Constellations Medical Conference, April 2017, and a presentation at the invitation of the LU Faculty of Management.

Finally, I am gratified to report that the LUREB members have elected me to serve another 3 year Term of Office as Chair of the Laurentian University Research Ethics Board for the Term July 2017 - June 2020. At the time of the release of the Annual Report, approval of this appointment by the REB-Liaison Committee of the Laurentian

University Board of Governors remains pending. I look forward to continuing to provide a high calibre of policy support and leadership within the Laurentian University research community.

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 2016-2017 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 March 2016 – May 2017

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. 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, quantitative and qualitative research methods, anthropology, and social work to name a few.

Our current membership includes:

<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
Susan Boyko (Vice-Chair)	NOSM (Adjunct)	Cancer care, adult education, privacy issues
Michael Persinger (term completed in April 2017)	Psychology	General scientific knowledge; validity of measurement
Nancy Lightfoot	School of Rural and Northern Health	Epidemiology Quantitative Methods Mixed Methods
Erin Olsen-Schinke	Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and PHD Human Studies (candidate) Community member/ Student member	Community safety issues, confidentiality, vulnerable populations
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
Marion Maar	NOSM	Medical anthropology, qualitative and mixed methods research design, Indigenous populations, research partnerships
Sadequl Islam (term completed in January 2017)	Economics	Quantitative Research
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
Tomazs Mrozewski	Desmarais Library	Information systems, data management, informational privacy
Amadeo Parassenti	NOSM	Medical and bio-medical research and clinical trials
Stephanie Harris (Administrator)	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 and ethical guidance to the REB and researchers in accordance to the TCPS 2 (2014) and research best-practices. As applications for research involving human participants continue to increase, the Romeo research database has been increasingly helpful with the management and monitoring of each individual project. The system is designed to automate responses to researchers in informing them of the process and status of their application, and sending researchers automatic reminders when their project requires renewal so to avoid research misconduct issues as they relate to expired REB certificates. It has become a repository for all documentation pertaining to the project, thus increasing the efficiency in project management for both administrators and researchers.

## Meetings

The REB met regularly on the first Friday of each month in 2016-2017, with the exception of January 2017 for a total of 10 meetings. The Committee also undertook several training sessions patiently facilitated by Stephanie Harris, the Ethics and Post Award Officer, on working within the new ROMEO platform. 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.

## REB Activity in 2016 - 2017

**Table a)** Full proposal activities of LU's REB between March 1st 2016 and Feb 28, 2017

Month	Delegated Review	Full Committee Review	Modifications- Extension- Exemption	Total/month
03-16	13	1	16	30
04-16	19	3	12	34
05-16	9	2	12	23
06-16	11	1	21	33
07-16	14	0	9	24
08-16	12	0	15	27
09-16	6	3	14	23
10-16	9	2	14	25
11-16	4	3	12	19
12-16	10	1	18	28
01-17	7	0	9	17
02-17	10	2	14	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>308</b>

**Table b)** File activities as percentage of all processes in 2016-2017

Delegated	Full	Modification/Extension/Exemption
41%	5%	54%

## REB activity by Year Between 2012-2017

**Table a:** Full REB annual activity from 2012-2017

Year	Delegated	Full	Modifications- Extension- Exemption	Yearly total
2012/13	182	26	79	287
2013/14	131	24	77	232
2014/15	206	23	99	328
2015/16	149	29	148	326
2016/17	124	18	166	308

## Delegated reviews

**Table a)** *Percentage of delegated reviews between 2012-2017*

Year	Delegated
2012-13	63%
2013-14	56%
2014-2015	63%
2015-2016	46%
2016-2017	41%

In the 2016-17, the Research Ethics Board has reviewed a total of 308 research projects, a slight decrease from the previous year. The number of Full Board reviews has remained fairly consistent in the last few years, but this year the increases were in the number of modification and extension reports submitted and reviewed by the Board. The significant increase in modification and extension requests as well as in annual reporting suggests that researchers are actively completing the annual reporting requirements to maintain their certification.

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 2017-2018.

## New Application Process and Approval Time

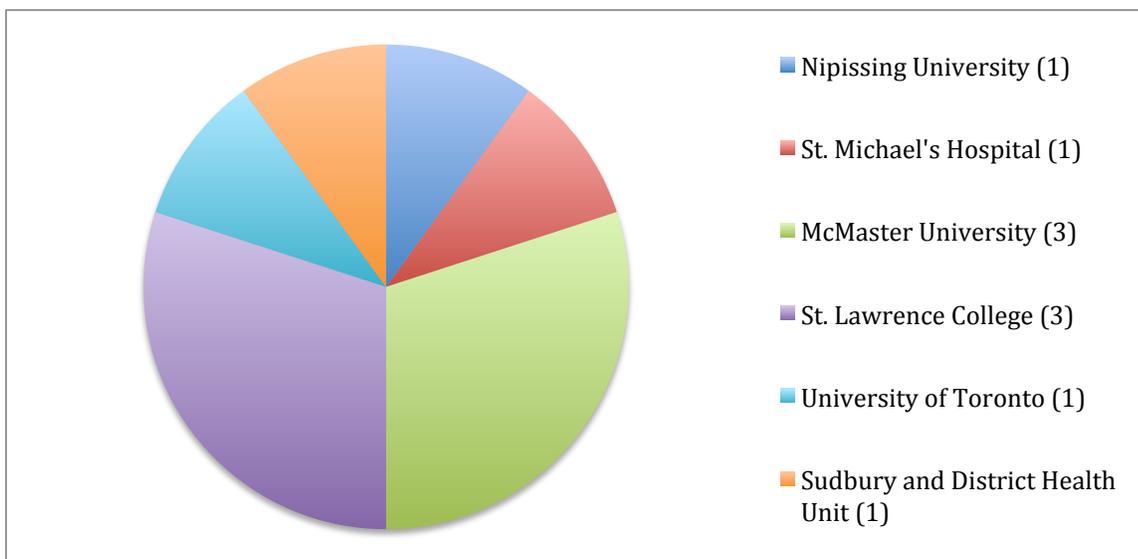
The LUREB strives to maintain timely processing for all submitted projects. This year, for many reasons, we were not able to maintain the regular projected 4 to 6 weeks turnaround time. Faced with the university research community as a whole adapting to new processes within Romeo, limited staffing resources, 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 10 applications from external sources.

Total Files Received from External Sources



## 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 25 files that involved collaborations with a variety of institutional partners as highlighted in the table below. Many of these projects consist of more than one collaborator.

<b>Name of Collaborating Institution</b>	<b>Number of projects</b>
Elder Abuse Ontario	1
School of the Art Institute of Chicago	1
Ottawa Children's Treatment Center	1
St-Thomas University	1
University of New Brunswick	1
McMaster University	3
University of Waterloo	1
Athabasca University	1
Women's College Hospital	1
Health Sciences North	1
Algoma District Medical Group	1
University of Calgary	1
University of Saskatchewan	1
Charles Darwin University	1
Sudbury and District Health Unit	2
Trent University	1
University of Winnipeg	1
Clayton State University	1
University of Exeter	1
Lakehead University	1
Queen's University	1
Dalhousie University	1
University of Toronto	1
Chigamik Community Health Center	1
Wkwemikong Health Center	2
White Owl Native Ancestry Association	1
Wilfred Laurier University	1
Public Health Ontario	1

## 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 2016/17 Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) REB file activity

Month	Delegated Review	Full Committee Review	Modifications-Extension-Exemption	Total by month
03-16	0	0	0	0
04-16	0	0	0	0
05-16	0	0	0	0
06-16	0	0	0	0
07-16	0	0	1	1
08-16	3	1	3	7
09-16	5	0	0	5
10-16	8	0	2	10
11-16	4	2	1	7
12-16	6	0	0	6
01-17	3	0	1	4
02-17	4	0	0	4
Totals	<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Total: 44</b>

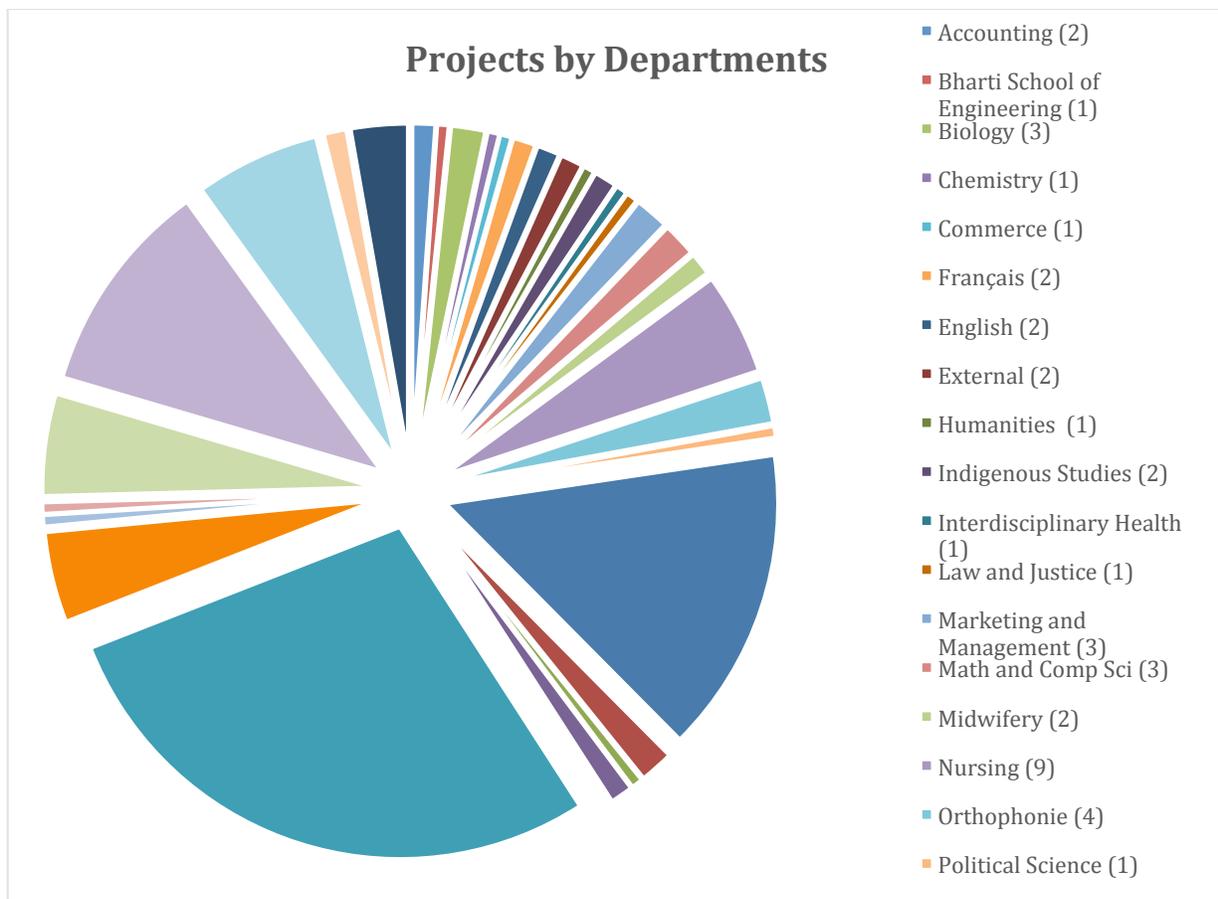
**Table b:** The percentage of REB activity generated by NOSM in 2016-2017 (n=308)

Delegated	Full	Modification/Extension/Exemption
11%	1%	3%

## 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 from the reporting programs.

Human Kinetics had the most projects submitted for REB review, with 51 in 2016-2017, followed by Psychology, with 27 projects. The Faculty of Health (Human Kinetics, Social Work, Indigenous Relations, Nursing, School of Rural and Northern Health, Orthophonie) was the faculty with the most projects, with 100. Ancient Studies, Biomolecular, Communication Studies, History, Earth Sciences, École des sciences de l'éducation, Economics, Gerontology, Library, MBA, Modern Languages, Music, Philosophy, Radiation Therapy, Sports Administration, Theatre, Women's Studies had no reported applications for REB.



## 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 30 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).

## 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 2016-17 year:

## Summary of Research Activity by UGREBs

<b>Department</b>	<b>Cases reported for this year</b>
Human Kinetics	8
Psychology/Psychologie	33
Philosophy	No report provided
School of Architecture	No report provided
School of the Environment	No report provided
School of Education /École des Sciences de l'Éducation	Nothing to report
Orthophonie	Nothing to report
School of Indigenous Relations	Nothing to report
Comité d'éthique de la recherche de l'Université de Sudbury	No report provided
Études françaises	4
Huntington	No report provided
Thorneloe	No report provided
Geography/Géographie	No report provided
Sociology/Sociologie	No report provided
School of Social Work / Service Social	No report provided
Commerce and Administration/Commerce et Administration	No report provided
Université de Hearst	14
The School of Nursing	No report provided
History/Histoire	6
Library	No report provided
NOSM	5
Marketing and Management	25
Accounting	No report provided
School of Northern Development	No report provided
<b>Total:</b>	<b>95</b>

## LUREB Ethics Professional Development Sessions and Consultations

During the 2016/17 period, the Chair of the LUREB, and Research Ethics/Post-Award Officer facilitated presentations by invitation, and developed and delivered a series of webinars for the collaborative Nursing programs. 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. While attendance for each session was low, all who did participate were grateful for the learning opportunity. For the upcoming year, the Post-Award Officer is planning additional educational sessions, which will include various topics around ethics and the REB process. A schedule and topics should be defined and developed in Fall 2017. Moving forward, the LUREB and its administrative support staff remain ready to assist local researchers in facilitating ethically-robust human participant research at Laurentian.

## Addendum Report March 2017 to April 2017

As noted at the outset, the LUREB endeavors in this reporting period to advance our reporting cycle to better correspond with the university fiscal period of April to May. This requires us to provide additional reporting on the LUREB activities for March 2016 to April 2017. The following Tables are provided:

**Table a)** *Full proposal activities of LU's REB between March 1st 2017 and April 30, 2017*

Month	Delegated Review	Full Committee Review	Modifications-Extension-Exemption	Total/month
03-17	12	4	11	27
04-17	12	2	7	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>48</b>

**Table b)** *Summary of REB file activity of NOSM between March 1st 2017 and April 30, 2017*

Month	Delegated Review	Full Committee Review	Modifications-Extension-Exemption	Total/month
03-17	3	0	0	3
04-17	3	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>