

**Minutes of the Institutional Review Board
February 19, 2016**

Members present: Tim Beyer, Lisa Ferrari, Tatiana Kaminsky (chair), Jung Kim, Mita Mahato, Sarah Moore, Brad Richards, Barbara Warren.

Guest: Andrew Gardner

Kaminsky called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. She reminded the group that our goal was to discuss the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between SOAN and the IRB, and offered Gardner a chance to summarize the history and background of the MOU. Gardner explained that the MOU had been created as a way to standardize expectations for IRB members with regard to research methodologies and norms in ethnographies and oral histories. (E.g. Researchers immersing themselves in natural social environments, frequent use of verbal consent, use of interviews in which there is often not a clear plan for where the conversation might lead.) The draft had been considered by his departmental colleagues in the fall of 2014, and he noticed it being applied by IRB in some cases last semester. He solicited input on issues that could be clarified or refined.

Ferrari wondered whether the MOU was still an adequate statement of what the department would like to see. She noted that the MOU was drafted prior to Gardner's letter to the IRB last April, and asked if the MOU would be sufficient to address the concerns in the letter.

Gardner wants SOAN to review the draft again to revisit and finalize it, and felt that his letter was a separate issue. The letter was intended to help IRB and others on campus see where "frictions" arise, and highlight creative pedagogic activities that cannot be done under current "clinical" guidelines.

Ferrari acknowledged "methodological loggerheads" and tension between what's appropriate to protect human subjects and the desire to pursue disciplinary research, and wondered how we all proceed. Should we be using the current MOU as a first step, pursuing a different kind of MOU, or something else? Gardner thought the current MOU was a useful first step in getting protocols through the IRB system with greater ease. Noted again that his letter was a separate issue that could be explored after the MOU.

Kaminsky pointed to section 1.b.3 of the MOU as getting at the crux of an issue the IRB has had: Whether students are adequately prepared to handle the challenges and difficulties that might arise when interviewing people going through traumatic issues, and whether students have a realistic sense of the possible issues that could arise. There's a need to protect both the students and the subjects. Moore concurred. Gardner and Kaminsky discussed the value of including expectations for an analysis of these risks in the MOU, so that both researchers and reviewers knew what was expected. Ferrari proposed some specific modifications to the MOU: striking "when possible" from the discussion of risk in 1.b.3. This was seen as an improvement by Kaminsky and Moore, though Moore wanted to make sure researchers had a plan for dealing with potential

adverse incidents as well as a notion of possible risks. Ferrari noted that such a plan would give confidence that the student had adequately considered risks (typically in consultation with their advisor) and was preparing for them appropriately.

Kaminsky suggested moving forward with an updated MOU as a first step, and addressing the larger issues from the letter in the future. Gardner agreed, and will put a discussion of the MOU on their departmental agenda. He offered to revise the risk section to address IRB's concerns as part of that process, and to get an updated draft back to IRB after departmental consideration.

Richards asked whether we should use the current MOU draft when considering SOAN protocols this semester. Beyer noted that we could gather valuable feedback about the MOU if we were to apply it despite it being unapproved and in draft form. This suggestion was met with approval by all present, and it was noted that incoming protocols would ideally address risk in greater detail despite it not yet being codified in the MOU.

Moore recalled that in addition to risk, there were concerns last semester about the level of detail in the proposed interview questions students intended to ask. Gardner said that he teaches them not to formulate specific questions ahead of time, to avoid "preselecting" a course for the conversation. The group noted that better information about the categories of questions to be asked would help inform our notions of risk when evaluating protocols. Ferrari commented that the protocol's discussion of resources for dealing with adverse events also helps us anticipate whether the plan for dealing with issues matches the kinds of issues that might arise.

Moore emphasized the importance of finding a solution that works for SOAN as well as for IRB – one that reasonably suits our needs but isn't so "onerous" that it interferes with research. Gardner was appreciative, but noted that the IRB process we're envisioning already steers his students away from the "ragged fringes of society". He sees the MOU as an effort to create a "workable middle ground", but that hopes we can continue to discuss the "grander issues" raised in his letter.

Gardner, in his role as Faculty Senate liaison, asked if there was anything the committee would like him to report in addition to today's discussion. Kaminsky reported our progress with respect to integrating the CITI training materials.

Kaminsky noted the need for another business meeting to discuss CITI modules, and also the need to end our current meeting to accommodate committee members who teach at 11:00.

Adjourned at 10:43.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Richards