UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
RESEARCH, SCHOLARLY, AND ARTISTIC WORK COMMITTEE
REPORT FOR INFORMATION

PRESENTED BY: Marjorie Delbaere; chair, Research, Scholarly, and Artistic Work

DATE OF MEETING: December 17, 2020

SUBJECT: Annual Reports from the Research Ethics Boards

COUNCIL ACTION: For Information Only

SUMMARY:

The terms of reference for the Research, Scholarly, and Artistic Work committee state that the committee will receive and report to council the annual reports of the research ethics boards.

At its November 19, 2020 meeting, RSAW met with the chairs of the Biomedical Research Ethics, the Behavioural Research Ethics, and the Animal Ethics Boards as well as with the Director of Research Services and Ethics Office. The reports provided are attached to this report.

Biomedical Research Ethics Board
The Biomedical Research Ethics Board is responsible for the review of all ethics applications involving human participants that include medically invasive procedures; physical interventions and therapies; administration and testing of drugs, natural products or devices; or physiological imaging measures, as well as research projects collective personal health information from medical charts and health records.

The Biomedical Research Ethics Board received 272 new studies for review, and reviewed and approved 544 applications for continuing studies, 145 study closures, and 696 study amendments. These numbers are fairly consistent with previous years.

There were 5 audits or inspections by external agencies in 2019-20, all of which were related to cancer trials, and one of these included a site audit by Health
Canada. Minor concerns that arose through these audits were addressed through a response and corrective action plan, with no critical issues identified.

**Behavioural Research Ethics Board**

The Behavioral Research Ethics Board is responsible for review of all protocols involving human participants which include social, behavioural, and cultural research using methods such as interviews, surveys, questionnaires, observations, psychological, social or behavioural interventions, audio and/or video recording.

The Behavioural Ethics Board received 533 new studies, and reviewed and approved 435 renewal requests for ongoing studies, 246 study closures, and 348 study amendments.

**University Animal Care Committee**

The University Animal Care Committee (UACC) is administratively supported by the Research Services and Ethics Office Animal Ethics Staff, who are overseen by the University Veterinarian.

The UACC reviews and approves any use of animal for research, teaching, production, and testing before animal use is initiated for these purposes. The UACC’s primary responsibilities are to ensure animal welfare, adequate veterinary care, and best practices with respected to animal care and use in compliance with University of Saskatchewan Policy, Canadian Council on Animal Care guidelines, and other applicable regulation. The UACC has 467 active USask protocols, serving approximately 200 principle investigators. Animal Ethics staff provide specialized support for animal users engaged in research, teaching, and testing.

The Canadian Council on Animal Care conducted a full site assessment in May 2019 and issued a serious of recommendations, both serious and regular, and provided deadlines for implementing these recommendations.

With regard to the work of all ethics board, RSAW was impressed, as always, with the volume of work members undertake, both to review protocols and to support research at the U of S, and in work with national regulatory bodies. RSAW also expressed an interest in seeing ethics training be required more broadly.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Annual Report of the Biomedical Ethics Board Activities – Reporting Period May 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020
3. Annual Report of the Animal Care Program and University Animal Care Committee for the Period of November 1, 2019 to October 15, 2020
TO: University of Saskatchewan Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee of Council

FROM: Dr. Gordon McKay, Chair, Biomedical Research Ethics Board (Bio-REB)
Dr. Ildiko Badea, Vice-Chair, Biomedical Research Ethics Board (Bio-REB)
Caitlin Prebble, Human Research Ethics Specialist (Biomedical), Research Excellence and Innovation

DATE: November 19, 2020

RE: Annual Report of Biomedical Research Ethics Board Activities
Reporting Period – May 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020

The **Biomedical Research Ethics Board (Bio-REB)** is responsible for the review of all research ethics applications involving human participants that involve medically invasive procedures; physical interventions and therapies (including exercise and diet interventions), the administration and testing of drugs, natural products or devices, or physiological imaging and measures (e.g. MRI or CT scans, heart rate, blood pressure) and research projects collecting personal health information from medical charts or health records.

The purpose of an ethics review of research is to ensure the rights of the participants are respected and protected and that the procedures followed comply with ethical, scientific, methodological, medical, and legal standards.

**Summary of Activities (May 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020)**
The total number of active Biomedical files is approximately 910. The attached spreadsheet describes the overall number of research studies, amendments, annual renewals and closure reports, protocol deviations/violations and unanticipated problem reports received and reviewed in the past reporting year.

**Review of research**

**New submissions:** 272 new studies were submitted for review to the Bio-REB in this reporting period. Of those, 37 (13%) were considered exempt from human ethics review, as they did not meet the definition of research as defined by the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans (TCPS2 2018). 51 (19%) of the reviewed research studies were “above minimal risk” and required full board review. 184 (68%) of the studies were considered to be of minimal risk.

Research studies that involve greater than minimal risk must be reviewed by the REB at a face-to-face meeting. The REB reviews above minimal risk studies at regularly scheduled meetings. A deadline for submission precedes each meeting by approximately two weeks.

The Chair holds the primary responsibility of reviewing minimal risk research and consults with the Research Specialist on all delegated reviews. Delegated review refers to review and approval...
by the Chair alone or with the assistance of one or more REB members or the research specialist and the Chair. The timeline for review and approval of a delegated review can be as short as 1 week for retrospective studies with no participant contact and up to 4-6 weeks for prospective minimal risk studies with participant contact. For both above minimal risk and minimal risk studies, efforts will continue to be made to increase efficiencies and to reduce further the review to approval timeline. A contributor to the timelines is the soft roll out that requires resources to enter data into UnivRS. Once fully implemented the researcher will perform this function.

Amendments to on-going studies: Amendments to approved studies are reviewed by either the Chair or the Vice-Chair depending on workload, complexity, and risk level of the amendment. Amendments representing more than minimal risk to study participants are reviewed at a full-board meeting, according to regulatory requirements set out by Health Canada and the U.S FDA as well as the USA Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) and the REB’s Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Changes that are administrative in nature, do not affect the risk/benefit ratio to participants or simply update information already present in the consent are reviewed by the Chair or Vice-Chair only. There were 612 requests for delegated amendments while 38 amendments were reviewed by the full board.

For amendments requiring full-board review, all board members are able to access material relevant to the amendment via Share Point. The Vice-Chair is responsible for the presentation and review of these amendments at the meeting.

Review and re-approval of on-going studies: As per the TCPS2 2018, the REB has the discretion to set the continuing review period to any time period within the scope of one-year, depending on the nature of the study and the risk/benefit ratio, but the default period remains one year. In order to make the renewal process simpler for researchers, and encourage early application for renewal submissions, the RSEO began working on a plan for changing the renewal process to maintain a fixed expiry date for each application, rather than an expiry date based on the date of the approval of the renewal application. In this way renewal does not impose an arbitrary shortening of the review time period. This process revision was started within this reporting period. It has now been completed but was put into practice in the next reporting period. There were 462 renewals processed through delegated review during this reporting period, while 82 renewal requests required a full board review as required specifically by sponsors, regulatory authorities and the REB’s SOPs. A total of 145 studies were completed and closed during the reporting period.

There were 11 local unanticipated problem reports and 59 protocol deviation/violation reports received during this reporting period. All Data Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) reports (total number not tracked) are reviewed by the Chair of the REB and reported to the full board by way of a monthly summary report. In order to be reportable an event must be unexpected, possibly related to participation in the research and suggests that the research places research participants or others at a greater risk of harm.

Review and exemption of “Quality Assurance/Improvement” studies: A total of 37 submissions were deemed to be exempt from research review. Often, for example they were assessed as “Quality Assurance (Q/A) or Quality Improvement (Q/I) Studies.” In addition, the
Bio-REB Chair/Vice-Chair makes a determination that a project is outside the scope of research requiring review (as defined by the TCPS2 2018) via email correspondence or tele-conference several times per week. The reporting of EXEMPT applications is confounded by the lack of a formal application in numerous instances and as such only those for which a formal application was received are counted and tabulated, but this is only formalized into an exemption ruling when an application is submitted to the REB.

The main concern in regard to this category of projects remains unchanged from previous reporting years; while it is not usually appropriate to review these projects with a research lens, they are not all free of risk to participants nor exempt of the requirement to be conducted in an ethical manner and in keeping with the Saskatchewan Health Information Protection Act (HIPA). The REB often takes the approach of providing a number of suggestions in keeping with these requirements to accompany the exemption letter.

**Harmonized Review**

- As full reciprocity was agreed upon in the province, within the previous reporting period, there were no research ethics applications handled through the provincial harmonized review process in this year. This marks the end of harmonization as we have moved into full reciprocity.
- The RSEO continues to work with administrators from the UofA and UBC under the Western harmonization of research ethics review between the three institutions. While there is a formal reciprocity agreement in place between the western provinces, more work needs to be done to facilitate ease of review across these provinces, in particular, for multi-site research.

**Events in 2019-20**

Audits and Monitoring: There were 5 audits or inspections by external agencies conducted in 2019-20. The 5 visits were all related to cancer trials and involved both the Canadian Cancer Trials Group (CCTG) and the Children’s Oncology Group (COG) based studies. Included in these 5 was one that involved a site audit by Health Canada. The studies audited by COG consisted of site monitoring visit in Saskatoon of 4 studies: Bio 12-215, Bio 18-111, Bio 16-134, and Bio 328. There were minor observations which were addressed through a response and corrective action plan. The CCTG visits included the annual site visit in Regina of studies that the Bio-REB has ethical oversight on. In all cases the studies were shown to be in compliance and minor concerns that were raised were appropriately handled. The observations were corrected and found acceptable by CCTG and did not require any further follow up with the RSEO. CCTG also conducted a pre-inspection audit in Regina, of one study that the Bio-REB has ethical oversight on. No critical issues were identified. Alliance (a study sponsor) conducted an audit of Bio 14-228, which was deemed acceptable and the minor observations were responded to by the Allan Blair Cancer Centre (ABCC) and accepted by Alliance. As mentioned, Health Canada conducted an inspection on one study, Bio 12-028 and a compliant (C) rating was issued with no further action required.

The Bio-REB continues to be the REB of Record for the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. The current process involves the review of the same study at two different sites, Saskatoon and Regina, presented from two or three different administrators. The administrative workload that
arises from ensuring the duplicated files are processed appropriately, yet in tandem, is considerable. This burden may lessen when the REB compliance modules become accessible to the research community in UnivRS.

**Bio-REB meetings, membership, and support structure:**
The daily work of the Research Ethics Office for the biomedical portfolio is carried out by an ASPA II FTE and an APSA I FTE. There is also 1 CUPE FTE providing administrative support to the entire Human Ethics side of the RSEO. In addition, due to the nature of the soft rollout of the UnivRS system, extra data entry support has been required. Between May 1, 2019 and April 30, 2020 there has been between 0.2 FTE and 1.2 FTE to provide extra administrative support and help reduce the backlog of applications requiring data entry by the ethics office.

The Bio-REB continues to meet twice per month, through two separate REB’s (Bio-REB I and II). The past twelve months have seen a number of changes in the membership of the Bio-REB but remains fully compliant in its membership.

REB Members are volunteers, typically with a three-year appointment. The average workload of each member is a monthly meeting lasting 2 to 3 hours, with 4 to 8 hours of preparation prior to the meeting, reviews of minutes and of other issues arising post-meeting, as well as reviews of delegated research studies. The Chair and Vice-Chair with administrative assistance from the RSEO staff ensure consistency in the operations of the two REBs.

Representation on the various REBs is reasonably well distributed but as expected the majority of membership does come from the biosciences including, Medicine, Agriculture and Bioresources, Pharmacy and Nutrition, Kinesiology, and the School of Public Health. Some medical sub-disciplines continue to be inadequately represented on the REB and there is a need to recruit additional clinicians in selected areas (e.g. family medicine, oncology and medical genetics) in order to ensure a broad range of clinical expertise, manage conflicts of interest and distribute the burden of serving on the REB among all groups engaged in research. Both Bio-REB I and II meet the membership requirements of the TCPS2 2018, ICH-GCP (Health Canada, Division 5) and OHRP (US).

**Educational Activities:**
Institutions with research ethics boards are required by the TCPS2 2018 to ensure that REB members and staff are educated in research ethics. Bio-REB members are required to complete the TCPS2 2018 on-line tutorial and are also encouraged to complete other ethics education training modules such as those offered by the Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP) Training Module for Federal Wide Assurance Compliance, and the McMaster University Chart Review Tutorial. REB members and administrative staff require training to keep abreast of changing regulations and new developments in research ethics. How best to educate REB members continues to be a challenge. New REB members learn to review studies ‘on-the-job’ and by consultation with each other and the Research Ethics Office.
Research Ethics Conferences:
  - REB West Conference in Kelowna, BC (June 20-21, 2019) was attended by the CUPE FTE Coordinator and the Associate Director of RSEO
  - Personnel were scheduled to attend the CAREB Conference 2020 in April; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this conference was cancelled and will be rescheduled for 2021

Research Ethics and Education for the Research Community: The RSEO continues to emphasize communication and education about research ethics and integrity. A number of Canadian universities have made research ethics training mandatory for researchers doing research with human participants. At present graduate and undergraduate students submitting ethics applications are required to complete the TCPS2 2018 tutorial. Graduate and undergraduate students submitting retrospective ethics applications are required to also complete the McMaster Chart Review Tutorial. The mandate to extend the requirement for all researchers to complete TCPS2 core training is still pending with the RSAW.

The RSEO receives specific requests from Departments, Colleges, Faculty and researchers for education and training in research ethics. Throughout the past year, Dr. Gordon McKay, Dr. Ildiko Badea, Dr. Beth Davis, and Caitlin Prebble met face-to-face or through tele-conference with researchers to aid in the development of research projects and to discuss ethical issues arising from research.

Caitlin Prebble worked with the Behavioural Research Ethics Specialist, Nick Reymond to offer monthly workshops that are open to researchers, students, and staff to sign up for. This included a general research ethics presentation with time available to go over specific questions and applications.

Research Ethics Committees (RECs)
The Bio-REB oversees one Research Ethics Committee (REC) operating at the College level, the Kinesiology REC, which reports jointly to the Biomedical and Behavioural REBs. The Kinesiology REC submits a report annually to the Bio-REB. A full report from the College of Kinesiology REC was received by the Research Ethics Office and found no issues with activity.

Success, Issues arising and challenges in the coming year:
1. The RSEO recognizes the essential contribution of its Board members and will continue to pursue opportunities to meet their educational needs and to recognize their contributions on behalf of the University.
2. The University of Saskatchewan has signed the Tri-Council MOU that requires researchers receiving funding from SSHRC, CIHR and NSERC to maintain continuous research ethics approval in order to receive their research funds. The RSEO now has a systematic process in place to ensure continuous ethics approval for the life of a research project. This process has been in full operation and has dramatically reduced non-compliant research. We will continue to monitor and hold this process in place.
3. The REB continues to work intra- and inter-provincially to explore practical solutions to REB reviews being shared across provinces, especially for multi-site research and the development of common application and consent forms to facilitate cross-provincial review.
4. In May of 2019, the RSEO was notified that materials were being deleted from the ethics website. The staff in the RSEO created Knowledge Base articles for Human Research Ethics to ensure the information would continue to be available in the searchable database. There are currently 17 main articles with 27 sub-pages. The staff maintains the articles to ensure the updated forms and information are/is always available.

5. The ethics office continues to stay involved at the national level with Health Canada, redetermination process for product licensing agreement and membership on the Board of Pharmaceutical Sciences that advice Health Canada on difficult issues (Gordon McKay, Chair of Biomed REB).

6. There was an allegation of confidentiality breach for a biomedical ethics file, which was moved on to the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) committee. The outcome was that the study team underwent mediation training, and no further action was necessary (December 2019 – February 2020).

7. The Chair of the Biomedical REB attended a national teleconference of a Health Canada consultation on Clinical Trials related to COVID-19 (15-Apr-2020) aimed at facilitating rapid launch of research trials in a timely manner.

8. The Biomedical Ethics team met with staff from the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (SCA) (12-Mar-2020) to discuss data access coordination and how best to direct researchers who wish to work with cancer patients and their information.

9. The RSEO recognizes that research dollars are sparse and has been able to hold its current fee structure, for industry-sponsored studies, the same over an extended period (7 years). This year the rates were increased, effective January 1, 2020, from $3500 per review to $4000 per review, and remained the same at $2000 per review for each subsequent research site.

10. One of the major challenges of this year, was the COVID-19 pandemic. In early March, 2020 the University of Saskatchewan shut down and all personnel in the ethics office began working from home. It was a challenge to move everything online to home offices, but was made possible by the UnivRS system, through which all of the ethics workflows are completed in the online database. The twice-monthly REB meetings were held via teleconference, which was well accepted by the members, and although it is not the preferred way to meet, it has gone well. Other regular administrative meetings with the ethics office were held via WebEx or Microsoft Teams.

11. The biomedical office began to receive applications for research related to COVID-19 in March of 2020, and worked after hours and over the weekends to expedite the reviews of these applications. We are pleased to report that we were able to respond in a rapid fashion to ensure researchers could get started on their novel research in this area.

12. On May 28, 2019, representatives from the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA), including the Chair of the Research Ethics Board (REB), the Research Contracts Specialist, and the Research Approval Coordinator were in Saskatoon for a workshop hosted by CTSU. The ethics office arranged a lunch meeting with them and the USask ethics team to meet face to face and collaborate while they were here. As the USask and SHA have a reciprocity agreement with regards to research ethics, this relationship is important to maintain and strengthen as it requires continual trust and collaboration.
13. In early 2019, the RSEO reached out to the REB consultant, Charmaine Kabatoff, at the University of Alberta, to invite her to come to Saskatoon. She travelled to Saskatoon in August. The visit was invaluable as much was learned with regards to human ethics knowledge, including but not limited to: workflows and document management, REB management and succession planning, outreach to the campus community and researcher support. This collaboration was also important to maintain and strengthen the Western Canada reciprocity agreement and the working relationship with the UofA.

14. Members of the biomedical ethics office met with the Chair of Indigenous Health and her research team to strategize how biomedical ethics reviews can further the guidance provided through chapter 9 of the TCPS2-2018 on community engagement. This is an ongoing effort with further work continuing over the next few years.

15. There have been challenges with adopting the UnivRS on-line system in the past year. Looking into the next year, there will continue to be challenges that will be worked through with the UnivRS ICT team. Although the timeline is not confirmed, it is planned that UnivRS will go live to the research community in the summer of 2021, which will reduce the administrative (data entry) burden; however, challenges in the roll-out of UnivRS are expected.

16. Some of the main challenges of UnivRS have been erroneous errors in the system, for example on April 1, 2020 it came to our attention that all principal investigators received an automated expiry notification, regardless of if their project was due to expire or not, or was already closed. This resulted in confusion/concern in the research community and, as to be expected, a large number of emails to the ethics administrative staff. This was resolved within a couple of days. This is one example of the challenges faced; however, there were ongoing discussions with the UnivRS ICT team throughout the reporting period and constant improvements were made to the system to reduce/remove errors, add fields and workflows to increase the ease of use for the administrative staff, and in turn for the researchers when the system goes live to all of campus.
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**NOTES:**
1. Full Board Reviews: Refers to review of research assessed as above minimal risk, and reviewed at a face-to-face REB meeting and is inclusive of full board delegated reviews.
2. Delegated Reviews: Refers to a review by the Chair and/or one or more REB members.
3. Exempt: Projects exempt from research ethics review based on TCPS2 criteria (e.g. quality assurance, secondary use of de-identified data).
4. Full Board Amendment: Major amendment to an already approved study reviewed at a face-to-face REB meeting.
5. Delegated Amendment: Minor revisions to an already approved study reviewed by the Chair and/or one or more REB members.
6. Administrative Review: Minor administrative amendments reviewed and acknowledged by the Specialist.
7. Full Board Renewals: Study renewals that require review at a face-to-face REB meeting.
8. Delegated Renewals: Study renewals reviewed through the delegated review process.
9. Closures include completed protocols as well as those that are cancelled or withdrawn.
10. Protocol Violations: Unanticipated or unintentional divergence from the expected conduct of an approved study that is not consistent with the current protocol.
11. Internal SAE's: Refers to any unanticipated problem(s) that occurs involving a USask researcher/study participant.
12. From ABCC: Files that we have received from Allan Blair Cancer Centre.
13. Harmonized Review: Studies that are reviewed at USask as well as either Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and/or Univ. of Regina - No longer practiced due to full reciprocity with the amalgamated Saskatchewan Health Authority.
14. CTSU: Studies that are managed by the Clinical Trial Support Unit.
### Bio-REB-2 Membership Roster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIO-REB MEMBER</th>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>AFFILIATION WITH REB</th>
<th>AFFILIATION WITH INSTITUTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gordon McKay, Chair Professor Emeritus, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition (Chair from 01-Jan-2016)</td>
<td>01-Nov-2015 to 30-Apr-2022</td>
<td>Scientific Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Ildiko Badea Pharmacy and Nutrition (Vice-Chair from 01-Mar-2020)</td>
<td>01-Jul-2012 to 28-Feb-2023</td>
<td>Scientific Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Hadi Goubran Messiha* Oncologist/Hematologist</td>
<td>01-Oct-2016 to 30-Sep-2022</td>
<td>Clinician</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Sharyle Fowler* Gastroenterology</td>
<td>01-Nov-2018 to 31-Oct-2021</td>
<td>Clinician</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Lori Ebbesen* College of Kinesiology</td>
<td>01-Nov-2008 to 31-Oct-2020</td>
<td>Scientific Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Dean Weninger*</td>
<td>01-Oct-2015 to 30-Sep-2021</td>
<td>Scientific Representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janet DeGirolamo*</td>
<td>01-Dec-2019 to 30-Nov-2022</td>
<td>Scientific Representative</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norma Sim*</td>
<td>01-Nov-2019 to 31-Oct-2022</td>
<td>Legal Representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leah Howie*</td>
<td>01-Oct-2018 to 30-Sep-2021</td>
<td>Legal Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leslie Spokes*</td>
<td>01-May-2013 to 01-Sep-2022</td>
<td>Community Member</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Galka*</td>
<td>15-Mar-2017 to 14-Mar-2023</td>
<td>Community Member</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alex Beldan*</td>
<td>28-Apr-2016 to 27-Apr-2022</td>
<td>Knowledgeable in Ethics</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caitlin Prebble, Biomedical Ethics Specialist, Research Ethics Office</td>
<td>08-Jun-2018 to Present</td>
<td>Ex officio</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawna Weeks, Research Approval Coordinator, Saskatchewan Health Authority</td>
<td>01-Nov-2015 to 31-Oct-2021</td>
<td>Ex officio</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) Members may serve as alternates on the Bio-REB-1 to meet quorum requirements.
## Bio-REB-1 Membership Roster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIO-REB MEMBER</th>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>AFFILIATION WITH REB</th>
<th>AFFILIATION WITH INSTITUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Gordon McKay, Chair Professor Emeritus, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition (Chair from 01-Jan-2016)</td>
<td>01-Nov-2015 to 30-Apr-2022</td>
<td>Scientific Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ildiko Badea* College of Pharmacy &amp; Nutrition (Vice-Chair)</td>
<td>01-Mar-2020 to 28-Feb-2023</td>
<td>Scientific Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Christine Pask* General Practitioner</td>
<td>01-Mar-2020 to 28-Feb-2023</td>
<td>Clinician</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ali El-Gayed* Radiation Oncology (on leave)</td>
<td>01-Dec-2011 to 30-Nov-2022</td>
<td>Clinician</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Don Cockcroft* Respiratory Medicine</td>
<td>01-Oct-2018 to 30-Sep-2021</td>
<td>Clinician</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Phil Chilibeck* College of Kinesiology</td>
<td>01-Feb-2014 to 31-Jan-2023</td>
<td>Scientific Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Soo Kim* School of Physical Therapy</td>
<td>01-Oct-2016 to 30-Nov-2022</td>
<td>Scientific Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Barbara von Tigerstrom* College of Law</td>
<td>01-Nov-2014 to 31-Oct-2020</td>
<td>Legal Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ibironke Odumosu-Ayanu* College of Law</td>
<td>01-Jan-2017 to 31-Dec-2020</td>
<td>Legal Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connie Plotzki*</td>
<td>01-Mar-2019 to 28-Feb-2022</td>
<td>Community Member</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janine Platana*</td>
<td>01-Mar-2020 to 28-Feb-2023</td>
<td>Community Member</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Bryan Wiebe* Department of Philosophy</td>
<td>01-Dec-2015 to 30-Nov-2021</td>
<td>Knowledgeable in Ethics</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caitlin Prebble, Biomedical Ethics Facilitator, Research Ethics Office</td>
<td>08-Jun-2018 to Present</td>
<td>Ex officio</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawna Weeks, Research Approval Coordinator, Saskatoon Health Region</td>
<td>01-Nov-2015 to 31-Oct-2021</td>
<td>Ex officio</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) Members may serve as alternates on the Bio-REB-2 to meet quorum requirements.
TO: University of Saskatchewan Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee of Council

FROM: Diane Martz, Chair, Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB)
       Nick Reymond, Human Research Ethics Specialist (Behavioural), Research Excellence and Innovation

DATE: November 19, 2020

RE: Annual report of Behavioural Research Ethics Board Activities
     Reporting period, May 1, 2019 – April 30, 2020

The Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is responsible for the review of all protocols involving human participants which include social, behavioural and cultural research using methods such as interviews, surveys, questionnaires, observations, psychological, social or behavioural interventions, audio and/or video recording.

The purpose of an ethics review of research is to ensure the rights of the participants are respected and protected and that the procedures followed comply with ethical, scientific, methodological, medical, and legal standards (USask Human Research Ethics Policy (June 2013)).

Summary of Activities:
The attached report describes the overall number of research protocols, full board reviews, delegated reviews, exemptions, annual renewals, closures, and amendments in the past reporting year. The Behavioural REB received 533 new research applications in this reporting year. This number represents a small drop from the previous report, but the Beh-REB experienced a dramatic increase in new applications starting in May 2020 and throughout the Spring, Summer, and Fall.

115 applications were considered exempt from human ethics review. Of these applications, 71 were reviewed for exemption based on key information where full applications were not received. Applications were deemed exempt because they did not meet the definition of research in the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans (TCPS2 2018). Submissions are determined to be exempt through consultation between the researcher and Chair or Vice Chairs.

28 applications were acknowledged. These are minimal risk applications that had already been approved by an REB at a Canadian institution meeting the standard of the TCPS2 (2018). In these cases the preponderance of responsibility resides with the reviewing institution. The Chair or Vice Chair will review the approved application (including evidence of approval, such as a certificate) and issue a Letter of
Acknowledgement, indicating that they are satisfied that the ethical concerns have been addressed in the original review.

14 studies were deemed to be “above minimal risk” and required full board review. Normally decisions to approve a protocol and / or to recommend changes are by consensus of the Beh-REB at a face to face meeting. During the pandemic, the Beh-REB has conducted its meetings online via Webex.

376 protocols reviewed were designated “minimal risk” and were reviewed by a member of the Board and the Chair or Vice Chair of the Beh-REB, in what is known as a delegated review. The review timeline for delegated review of a minimal risk protocol remains 4 weeks, though the timelines can change depending on the time of year.

There were 348 requests for amendments to previously approved studies. While the work volumes of other types of work performed by the Beh-REB have remained roughly the same since the previous report, Amendments have experienced a large increase in volume (31%). This spike in Amendments cannot only be attributed to changes to protocols required due to the pandemic, since the only two “pandemic” months in this reporting period (March and April 2020) had typical numbers of amendments. Rather this fits the broader pattern of significant increase in the number of Amendments (back to 2018). Examples of amendments include the addition of recruitment material and changes to already approved protocols and consent forms. These requests were reviewed by the Chair or Vice Chair only, unless they were substantive enough to require full board review.

The REB also received and reviewed 435 renewal requests for ongoing studies, and 246 study closure reports for studies completed during the reporting period.

**Events and Opportunities in 2019-20**

1. The RSEO received a small number of complaints about the conduct of research projects. These included loss of research data, recruitment of participants without operational approval from the host institution, and the lack of a consent form for an online survey. These were all investigated thoroughly and resolved.

2. The RSEO received two complaints from researchers about the content of their reviews and unhelpful requirements from the REB. The Chair discussed the reviews with the complainants and resolved the matter to the satisfaction of both parties.

3. There have been some technical errors with UnivRS, most notably in March and April of 2019 when notices indicating imminent expiry of approval were erroneously sent to numerous researchers. But since that time, UnivRS has operated without any significant errors.

**Behavioral REB Support Structure and Membership:**
During 2019 and 2020, the daily work of the Beh-REB was carried out by one ASPA II FTE, and one ASPA I FTE. One CUPE FTE provides administrative support to the entire Human Ethics side of the RSEO. Until the ethics model in UnivRS is ready for roll out to researchers, staff in the RSEO continue to support researchers through data-entry of the content of Human Ethics applications, submitted as Word documents via email, into UnivRS. Due to financial constraints, that support has fluctuated from 0.2 to 1.2 CUPE FTE during the reporting period.

Beh-REB Chair and Vice-Chairs roles were held by the following individuals during the reporting period:

- Dr. Diane Martz (Chair) from Apr. 4, 2019 to end of reporting period
- Dr. Vivian R Ramsden (Vice Chair) from Apr. 4, 2019 to end of reporting period
- Dr. Stephanie Martin (Vice Chair) from Jan. 1, 2019 to end of reporting period
- Patricia Simonson (Vice Chair) from Aug. 31, 2018 to end of reporting period

The Behavioral REB has members from the following colleges and departments:

- College of Arts and Science (Psychology, Indigenous Studies, Geography & Planning)
- College of Education (Educational Psychology, Educational Administration)
- College of Medicine (Academic Family Medicine)
- College of Nursing
- Edwards School of Business
- School of Public Health
- Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture

The Behavioral REB has five members from the community, two of whom fill the required role as the member knowledgeable in ethics. Overall, the Beh-REB has a good complement of members, but is mindful of ensuring that its membership reflects research activity on campus in subject matter and methodology.

The Behavioural REB added a third Indigenous member to ensure that applications involving Indigenous engagement receive a thorough and perspicacious review.

**Research Ethics Committees**

The following departments/colleges have active Research Ethics Committees (REC) that report to the Beh-REB.

1. Department of Psychology
2. Edwards School of Business
3. College of Kinesiology (joint with the Biomedical REB)
All RECs submit annual reports to the Beh-REB by end of July.

**Research Ethics Education for REB Members:**
Institutions with REBs are required by the TCPS2 to ensure that REB members are educated in research ethics. REB members and administrative staff require training to keep abreast of changing regulations and new developments in research ethics. The Research Ethics Office educates and trains new members as they join the Beh-REB. New REB members learn protocol review on-the-job and by consultation with each other and the Research Ethics Office.

The BEH-REb continues to seek educational opportunities related to the review of projects requiring Indigenous engagement. During the reporting period, the RSEO hosted a two day workshop with Aaron Franks from First Nations Information Governance Centre and the OCAP program. These workshops were attended by the Chair, RSEO staff, and members of the Beh-REB.

**Research Ethics Conferences**
- All research ethics-related conferences were suspended as the result of the pandemic. The bodies that host them are planning to resume these conferences in 2021, conditions permitting.
- In their place a variety of online communities and resources have emerged. The Canadian Association of Research Ethics Boards has hosted several online discussions, particularly related how REBs have been affected by COVID. It also maintains a forum for research ethics professionals across Canada to discuss their work during the pandemic.

**Research Ethics Education for the Research Community:**
The RSEO continues to emphasize communication and education regarding research ethics and integrity. A number of Canadian universities have made research ethics training mandatory for researchers doing research with human participants. At present graduate, undergraduate students and staff involved in submitting ethics applications are required to complete the TCPS2 On-Line Tutorial.

The RSEO updated the consent form template to provide better guidance to researchers. Currently there are three templates, each tailored to a typical mode of data collection (individual interviews, online surveys, group activities).

In response to the need for new considerations for in-person/face to face data collection, the Chair developed two documents to assist researchers with drafting a COVID safety plan for the Beh-REB’s review, namely a set of guidelines and a template. Both have been finalized and made available to researchers.
The RSEO established regular monthly workshops for faculty, students, and staff, providing an introduction to submitting an ethics application and focused advice on draft applications. These workshops were well attended, averaging 20 attendees per session. These workshops have been suspended during the pandemic.

The RSEO receives specific requests from Departments, Colleges, Faculty and researchers for education and training in research ethics. RSEO staff made educational presentations on REB processes, human research ethics issues and academic integrity to more than 400 members of the campus community. The units visited are listed in the table below; some units received multiple presentations. During the pandemic, these presentations have been moved to online platforms, such as MS Teams and Webex.

| RSEO Presentations and Workshops - Class / Dept / School / College 2019-20 |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Indigenous Studies | Edwards School of Business |
| Dentistry         | Surgery           |
| Medicine          | FYRE              |
| Education         | Mechanical Engineering |
| School of Public Health | Internal Medicine |
| Kinesiology       | Women’s and Gender Studies |
| Nursing           | Educational Foundations |
| Computer Science  | SENS              |
| SSRL              | SHRF              |
| TOTAL ATTENDANCE  | ~400              |

**Additional Educational Activities**
Members of the Beh-REB and RSEO Staff have had many face-to-face and virtual meetings last year with researchers and students to discuss potential research projects involving human participants.

**Initiatives in the coming year:**
- On-going is the Research Administration System: The Beh-REB began to use the compliance module for processing ethics applications at the end of May 2018. The next step will be the expansion of the module so that researchers can submit their application online through UnivRS. The expected full rollout of UnivRS to the full research community is June 2021. During this interim period, the RSEO has requested a number of fixes and updates to the Compliance Module within UnivRS.
- Continue to work to improve communication between the Beh-REB and the research community.
- The RSEO is finalizing guidance documents to help researchers navigate the ethical considerations created by remote data collection via online videoconferencing.
• Continue to work to increase visibility and recognition for the critical work done by Beh-REB members on behalf of the University. The work done by REB Members is essential to the University of Saskatchewan as it continues to develop its research capacity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Protocols Submitted</th>
<th>Full Board Reviews</th>
<th>Delegated Reviews</th>
<th>Exempt</th>
<th>Acknowledged</th>
<th>Renewed</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
<th>Closed</th>
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<th>Delegated Reviews</th>
<th>Exempt</th>
<th>Acknowledged</th>
<th>Renewed</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
<th>Closed</th>
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| % Change   | -6%                 | -13%               | -1%               | -20%   | 4%           | -3%     | 31%       | 2%     |

Notes:
1. Full Board Review - Refers to the review of "above minimal risk" protocols by the full Beh-REB. These include Full Board Delegate
2. Delegated Review - Refers to the review of "minimal risk" protocols by an Beh-REB subcommittee.
3. Exempt from review reflects the protocols that are deemed exempt after ethical review by the Beh-REB, based on the TCPS2 (e.g. quality assurance, secondary use of anonymous data)
4. Acknowledged - Refers to minimal risk protocols approved by another REB where Usask review would be redundant.
5. The Annual Renewals column denotes those files that remain active.
6. Amendments - Refers to modifications made to previously approved projects that have been submitted for review.
7. Closed - Studies that have been finished and file closed

The Usask REBs no longer perform Harmonized Reviews under the new Reciprocity Agreement -

We are currently working on a way to track protocols that have gone through Reciprocity with UoR and/or SHA.
## Behavioural Research Ethics Board Membership Roster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beh-REB Member</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Affiliation with REB</th>
<th>UoS Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Diane Martz, Chair</td>
<td>04 April 2019 – 31 Dec 2021</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Vivian Ramsden, Vice-Chair Academic Family Medicine</td>
<td>01 Aug 2005 – 31 Dec 2021</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Patricia Simonson, Vice-Chair</td>
<td>01 June 2010 – 31 Aug 2021</td>
<td>Ethicist</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Stephanie Martin, Vice-Chair College of Education</td>
<td>01 Sept 2004 - 31 Dec 2020</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Jamie Campbell Department of Psychology</td>
<td>01 Jul 2007 - 01 Aug 2022</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Marjorie Delbaere Edwards School of Business</td>
<td>01 Sept 2014 - 01 Sept 2020</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Mary Heilman</td>
<td>01 Jan 2018 – 31 Dec 2020 On leave</td>
<td>Ethicist</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Pammla Petrucka College of Nursing</td>
<td>01 Jan 2010 – 31 Dec 2021</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Holly Graham College of Nursing</td>
<td>01 Sept 2015 - 01 Sept 2021</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Bonita Beatty Department of Indigenous Studies</td>
<td>01 Sept 2015 - 01 Sept 2021</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawna Weeks, Interprofessional Practice, Education &amp; Research, Saskatchewan Health Authority</td>
<td>01 Oct 2015 - 01 Oct 2021</td>
<td>Community Member</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Michael Szafron School of Public Health</td>
<td>01 Sept 2017 - 01 Sept 2020</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Melanie Kirsten Bayly Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture</td>
<td>01 April 2018 – 01 April 2021</td>
<td>Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leslie Widdifield-Konkin</td>
<td>01 Oct 2018 – 01 Oct 2021</td>
<td>Community Member</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Scott Tunison College of Education</td>
<td>10 Dec 2018 – 31 Dec 2021</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Karen Lawson Department of Psychology</td>
<td>01 Sept 2019 – 01 Sept 2022</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Katz</td>
<td>01 Sept 2019 – 01 Sept 2022</td>
<td>Community Member</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Robert Patrick, Department of Geography &amp; Planning &amp; School of Environment &amp; Sustainability</td>
<td>10 Sept 2019 – 10 Sept 2022</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Dr. Robert Henry Dept. of Indigenous Studies</td>
<td>01 Oct 2019 – 01 Oct 2022</td>
<td>Behavioural Research Representative</td>
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<td>Nick Reymond, Behavioural Research Ethics Specialist</td>
<td>Feb 2018 to present</td>
<td>Research Services and Ethics Office, non-voting member</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Joni Aschim, Behavioural Research Ethics Coordinator</td>
<td>March 2016 to present</td>
<td>Research Services and Ethics Office, non-voting member</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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Annual Report of the Animal Care and Use Program and University Animal Care Committee

To the Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee of Council

For the period October 16, 2019 to November 1, 2020

The University Animal Care Committee (UACC) Chair (Dr. Phyllis Paterson) and University Veterinarian (Dr. Kurtis Swekla) are pleased to provide the following overview of the key accomplishments and activities of the Animal Care and Research Support (ACRS) office and UACC for the period October 16, 2019 to November 1, 2020.

OVERVIEW OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE

The UACC must review Animal Use Protocols (AUPs) and approve any use of animals for research, teaching, production, and testing before animal use is initiated. The UACC ensures animal welfare, animal user training, scientific and pedagogical merit review, adequate veterinary care, adequate animal facilities, animal user environmental safety, and best practices to comply with USask Policy, Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guidelines, and international, federal, provincial, and local regulations. UACC Policy reflects the perspective of USask which views the use of animals in research, teaching, production, and testing as a privilege. USask is committed to ensuring that all animal care and use is conducted with exemplary standards which is critical for high quality research.

The UACC receives administrative support from Research Excellence and Innovation (REI) Animal Care and Research Support (ACRS) Office staff. The ACRS Office is directed by the University Veterinarian and includes the following personnel:

- UACC Administrative Support
- UACC Animal Technicians
- UACC Clinical Veterinarians
- UACC Post-Approval Veterinarian
- UACC Aquatics Manager
- Animal Care and Research Support Services Facility Manager and Animal Technicians

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES (October 16, 2019 - November 1, 2020)

Review of research protocols, modifications, and renewals

There are currently 467 active USask Animal Use Protocols (AUP). This includes 12 AUPs which involve a collaboration with another institution, 16 AUPs which are “Category of Invasiveness (CI) Level E”, the highest CI level defined by the CCAC. In addition, 14 Exempt Activity submissions (CI level A study or live animal use that does not require AREB review) were received during the reporting period. The UACC serves approximately 200 principal investigators on campus.

Ongoing development of UnivRS Animal Ethics Module and Integration with the Animal Order Desk

The University Research System (UnivRS) is a single web-based system that provides researchers a secure space to collaborate on research projects and serves as a central repository to manage all project funding and compliance activities.

The UnivRS Animal Ethics module remains under development for submission, routing, and ethical review of Animal Use Protocols. Progress has been made with the development of this module; however- due to the pandemic and changing workload and priorities, less progress was made than anticipated at the beginning of 2020. Development continues to proceed with an anticipated launch in mid to late 2021. The module is expected to streamline and automate the processing of all aspects of AUP review as well as animal ordering and tracking.
Enhancing Service

University Animal Care Committee Procedures

Animal Research Ethics Board meeting frequency: The AREB, a subcommittee of the UACC, meets twice monthly since 2018 which has reduced turnaround time for AUP review, improved accommodations for contract research, and reduced the length of AREB meetings. All meetings have moved to online video conferencing since the beginning of the pandemic and will continue until USask and the Government of Saskatchewan deems it safe to return to in-person meetings of this nature.

Pedagogical Merit Review (PMR) of Teaching and Training AUPs: The CCAC requires pedagogical merit review of all new and 4-year renewal teaching AUPs. All USask courses for credit (undergraduate or graduate) that involve the use of animals require review by the TLSE Pedagogical Merit Review Committee (PMRC) prior to AREB approval. The PMRC is currently comprised of 8 members, including experts in pedagogy and the Three Rs. This CCAC-mandated committee, chaired by Dr. Karen Schwean-Lardner, reports through the Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience to Dr. Patti McDougall; however, PMRC meetings and reviews are coordinated by staff from ACRS REI. This new committee was established in spring 2019. PMRC Terms of Reference are in place and the committee has worked diligently to develop the review form for course instructors to complete, along with the assessment form that the PMRC will use to evaluate the review forms. The PMRC will implement a phased-in approach to review the 30+ active teaching AUPs that require review by the committee. Due to the pandemic many teaching programs were either cancelled or postponed and instructors were granted special permission to defer the pedagogical merit review of their AUPs until 2021.

Scientific merit review of research AUPs: The CCAC requires scientific merit review of all new and 4-year renewal research AUPs. For any research AUPs that are not funded via an agency that employs scientific peer review, the AUP must be reviewed by the OVPR Scientific Merit Review Committee for Animal-Based Research (SMRCABR). This committee (established in 2018) functions at arm’s length from the AREB and it reports to the Director, REI. The SMRCABR is currently comprised of 13 faculty members, chaired by Dr. Darrell Mousseau. ACRS staff use SharePoint as the platform to coordinate and circulate AUPs for merit review. During the current RSAW reporting period, the SMRCABR reviewed 43 AUPs for scientific merit. This is an increase of 95% from only two years ago. In the past 6+ months, the SMRCABR experienced a workload increase largely due to the number of COVID-19 trials conducted at VIDO-InterVac.

Participation in the USask Live Animal Re-Use and Tissue Share Program has remained consistent this year, facilitated through an online user SharePoint site. Through this program, investigators donate surplus or control animals to be used by recipient investigators for training or experimental use. As research slowed down early in the pandemic, the use of the tissue share program was reduced during the initial lockdown and reduced research at USask.

The previous UACC Chair’s (Dr. Jane Alcorn, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition) term ended on April 30, 2020. A search committee appointed a new Chair. Dr. Phyllis Paterson (College of Pharmacy and Nutrition) is now serving a three year term from May 1, 2020.

Effective July 1, 2020, Dr. Christy Morrissey (Department of Biology) was appointed as UACC Vice-Chair to serve a three-year term. The Vice-Chair serves when the Chair is on vacation or otherwise unable to fulfill the duties assigned. Additionally, the Vice-Chair serves on the AREB subcommittee which approves minor modifications to AUPs and annual renewals with lower Category of Invasiveness levels (B and C).
Animal Ethics Office Restructuring

The UACC Chair and University Veterinarian now report to Dr. Dion Martens, (Director of REI) rather than Dr. Irena Creed. The Animal Ethics Office underwent a name change and is now the Animal Care and Research Support (ACRS) office and is under the REI/OVPR umbrella.

- Animal Ethics continues to modify its organizational structure and adjust staffing as we are able. In December 2019, an Assistant Manager for Aquatics facilities was hired, but this individual resigned and left USask in September 2020. A new Aquatics Manager was hired as of November 2, 2020. This position reports to the University Veterinarian.
- As part of budgetary cutbacks, the Senior Advisor on Aquatics position was eliminated. The associated duties have shifted to the Aquatics Manager, ACRS Services Facility Manager and the University and Clinical Veterinarians.
- Additional administrative positions are necessary to fulfill the full scope of the ACRS mandate and CCAC reporting requirements and guidelines; however, due to the budgetary situation no additional administrative staff have been hired.

Animal Order Desk

The Animal Order Desk tracked approximately 130,000 animals during this reporting period. Animal ordering is centralized through REI to reduce costs by amalgamating animal orders, to track animal numbers for CCAC reporting, and to facilitate the acquisition of export/import permits. Animal orders historically total approximately $500,000 annually, although the 2019-2020 fiscal year totals approximately $800,000, and we anticipate similar numbers for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Aquatics Program

The Aquatics Program is undergoing review and restructuring in response to Serious Recommendations from the 2019 CCAC Site Assessment. RJF Smith Centre for Aquatic Ecology has serious facility deficiencies that require funding if they are to be addressed; due to the need for renovations, all live animal research has been halted in this facility since February 2020. Live animal research cannot proceed in this location until renovations are complete to ensure appropriate water quality is present. No decisions have been made by the stakeholders and departments involved with respect to funding these renovations. ACRS animal technicians staff the Aquatic Toxicology Research Facility (ATRF) within Toxicology with oversight by the Aquatics Manager in consultation with the Director of Toxicology.

Animal User Training Opportunities

- Rodent handling, surgery, and anesthesia practical skills training continue to be offered regularly.
- A Fish User Training Practical Skills Course is offered monthly.
- ACRS staff continue to offer specialized practical skills training by request.
- ACRS staff deliver animal handling laboratories to VLAC 215 students
- Due to the pandemic and need for physical distancing and reduced numbers of people within a space training frequency has increased. This has significantly increased workload and diversion of human resources towards training from other duties.

Facility Expansion and Development

The UACC Veterinarians and animal facility managers actively engage in planning and design of new vivaria and renovations across campus, providing input to optimize facility operations and workflow, optimize
biocontainment, ensure compliance with CCAC guidelines, and advise on species-specific requirements. For the referenced time period, input was provided on the following projects:

- Livestock and Forage Centre of Excellence (LFCE) Phase II: Goodale Farm Renovations (Design Working Group; Steering Committee).

The University Veterinarian is a member of the LFCE Steering Committee, the Goodale Farm Steering Committees, and the Museum of Natural Sciences Steering Committee.

Per diems are charged for animal husbandry in Laboratory Animal Services Unit (LASU), Collaborative Sciences Research Building (CSRB), Aquatic Toxicology Research Facility (ATRF) and RJF Smith Centre for Aquatic Ecology. ACRS animal technician salaries are funded separately by OVPR, i.e. they are not cost-recovered through per diems.

Crisis Management Planning

The Crisis Operations Team met regularly in planning for a possible pandemic and continues to meet regularly to assess the ongoing situation at USask. The University Veterinarian sits on this committee to advise with respect to potential effects on the animals housed at Usask and the impacts on animal-based research.

Training Initiatives for Laboratory Animal Veterinarians

USask offers many unique opportunities to engage students in laboratory animal medicine and research. Its diverse research programs, broad aquatics program, well-established veterinary pathology program, and unique, state-of-the-art facilities such as Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO)-Intervac, the Canadian Light Source, and the Saskatchewan Centre for Cyclotron Sciences offer ample opportunities and strength of experience for students interested in laboratory animal medicine and research. As such, the ACRS group continues to promote student engagement as follows:

- **Laboratory Animal Medicine Rotation**: A 2-week long fourth year WCVM veterinary student rotation is offered through ACRS. Four students participated in the last 12 months. Students learn about laboratory animal medicine, a board specialty, by participating in clinical veterinary care, surgery, anesthesia, compliance activities, AUP review, animal facility management, research support activities, animal user training, and diagnostics activities. During the pandemic ACRS continues to offer this rotation; however, students experience approximately half of the rotation by remote learning opportunities.

- **Laboratory Animal Residency Externships**: A Laboratory Animal Medicine Veterinary Resident visited ACRS to conduct a 3 week externship in Laboratory Animal Medicine under the supervision of the University Veterinarian and the UACC Clinical Veterinarians.

- **Laboratory Animal Medicine Club (for Veterinary Students)**: Our UACC Clinical Veterinarians interact frequently with this group to foster student interest and knowledge in laboratory animal medicine and to enhance their chance of acceptance into laboratory animal residencies upon graduation from WCVM. ACRS offers this group hands-on laboratory animal workshops and one-on-one or group discussions with regards to future training and career options in laboratory animal medicine. During the pandemic training has moved to online lectures and question and answer sessions.

International and Community Engagement

ACRS staff have initiated, coordinated, or collaborated in the development of several activities to bring a very positive international or national spotlight on the USask Animal Care Program.

Workshop on the Animal-Human Relationship
On October 18-19, 2019, the University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Polytechnic held a free, public-outreach event to share perspectives and explore the animal-human relationship, including the use of animals for research and teaching. Funding was secured through various USask colleges and units, SHRF, NSERC and other sponsors. The event included: a Three Rs (animal replacement, reduction, and refinement) & Animal Research Trainee Symposium; Keynote International Speakers; a special evening session focused on ‘New Therapies & Diabetes Research’; and a full day event to explore ‘Ways of Knowing and Understanding the Animal-Human Relationship’. Overall, the 2 day event was a success and over 260 attendees and speakers participated. Keynote speakers were: Dr. Melanie Graham, University of Minnesota; Wendy Jarrett, from Understanding Animal Research; and Dr. Gilly Griffin from the CCAC. Presentations provided inspiring, educational and diverse perspectives about various animal-human relationships including: indigenous perspectives; health research, interspecies communication; therapy dogs; one health in the Canadian Arctic; animal ethics; animal use in science; use of animals in agriculture. Given the overwhelming success of this event, ACRS/REI plans to host another similar event to continue public outreach engagement. Pending funding, ACRS/REI would like to expand to include researchers/trainees from other institutions, thereby engaging the public with a broader Canadian perspective. Due to the pandemic no progress was made in 2020 and given the anticipated transition to UnivRS within the next year, it is unlikely the event will be held in 2021; however, ACRS plans to host the event on a recurring basis every two or three years. Other Canadian institutions have expressed interest in hosting or co-hosting similar events.

Canadian Association for Laboratory Animal Science (CALAS) National Conference
The annual CALAS conference will be held in Saskatoon in 2025. The event was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic as it was initially planned for 2022. Planning is underway, led by Michele Moroz, Animal Care and Research Support Services Manager.

CCAC Site Assessment, 2019

The CCAC conducts full site assessments every six years and interim assessments every three years to ensure compliance with CCAC guidelines and support institutions in achieving best practices in animal ethics and care. Their standards are CCAC policy statements, guidelines documents, and other CCAC-recognized standards designed to promote the ethical use and care of animals in science.

CCAC commended USask for the Animal Order Desk (AOD) as a way to ensure compliance before animals are purchased. The assessment panel was very impressed with the University’s commitment to the 3Rs and the implementation of the Animal and Tissue Share Program.

The CCAC conducted a full site assessment in May 2019. Over the past year we have continued to engage and communicate with the CCAC on the serious and regular recommendations with the next follow up report due for submission to the CCAC in January 2021.

Pandemic update

When the pandemic was announced in mid-March 2020, new animal-based research was temporarily halted, all animal-based research already started could continue and finish as planned with contingency planning in place in case an entire shutdown was required. New animal-based research projects began to be approved in June; however, animal-based research has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

A relatively small number of animals (approximately 450 – mostly mice and chickens) were euthanized as a direct result of issues associated with the pandemic; this was mostly due to the closure of the university and inability to proceed with research projects. The CCAC requires these numbers to be tracked and submitted.