

July 21, 2003

To: Dean Swartz

From: David Lopatto, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Report on the Institutional Review Board (2002-2003)

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for 2002-2003 consisted of David Lopatto, chair, Lisa Avalos, Ann Ellis, and Will Pergl. The chairman continued to employ the “expedited review” procedure, which permits the chairman to review some research proposals without a committee vote, to streamline the review process and spare committee members from tedium.

The board received 63 research proposals from faculty, administrators, and students. Each proposal was approved or returned for modification. Three proposals involved the use of live animals other than humans. Most researchers are familiar with the board and found the appropriate application materials at <http://web.grinnell.edu/dean/irb>.

Developments in the evolution of the board are taking place this summer. Both the human subjects side and the animal care and use side of the board are changing. On the human subjects side, future research proposals may require evidence that the researcher completed an online tutorial on informed consent. This tutorial, adapted from a tutorial used at the University of Minnesota, will be on the IRB web page. On the animal subjects side, we have had a surprise inspection from Dr. Steve Bellin¹, veterinarian for the USDA (March 3, 2003). The visit may have resulted from confusion at NIH over a grant awarded to chemistry professor Mark Levandoski. Since that time, Vice President Frank Thomas has attempted to reconfigure our IRB to maintain its compliance with federal law. Our attempts to understand federal requirements involved consulting with Dr. Mary Lou James (June 12, 2003) and securing the services of Dr. Kathy Mullin, an Iowa State Veterinarian who has agreed participate in animal care and use issues at the college.

It is likely that the IRB will need to have two subcommittees in the coming year, one for human subjects and one for animal subjects (the latter is often referred to as an IACUC, or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee). Because the changes could not be forecast, the college has not yet staffed the committees with faculty members. In addition, at least one local resident of the town not affiliated with the college must serve on the committee. These matters are being investigated by an ad hoc committee composed of Frank Thomas, Karen Wiese, and David Lopatto.

¹ Dr. Bellin inspected the rat colony in the psychology department and certified it as in compliance with federal law.