

Institutional Review Board of the Cooper Union

2012 Annual Report

Prof. Robert Q. Topper, Chair

The Institutional Review Board of the Cooper Union (IRB) is responsible for the review and supervision of all human subject research carried out by faculty, staff, administrators and students of the Cooper Union. This report encompasses IRB activity during the 2012 calendar year.

In part, the statement of purpose of the IRB reads as follows:

“The Institutional Review Board of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (IRB) has the responsibility for the oversight of all research involving human subjects conducted or supported through research activities which are conducted by faculty, students and/or staff associated with the Cooper Union. The goal of this oversight is to protect the rights, privacy and welfare of all human participants in research while respecting, supporting and enhancing the responsible and ethical scholarship activities of the faculty, students and staff.

To achieve this goal, the IRB has the authority to review, approve, modify or disapprove research protocols submitted by faculty, staff and student investigators which involve human subjects as well as to monitor and review their progress. The review and monitoring processes are to be guided by federal rules and regulations, and are based on the Protection of Human Subject Code of Federal Regulations, the Belmont Report and provisions of 45CFR46 – Protection of Human Subjects. These regulations require institutions receiving federal funds to have all research involving human participants be approved by an IRB.”

The following individuals served on the IRB during 2012.

Continuing Members from 2011:

Toby Cumberbatch, Ph.D.; Professor of Electrical Engineering

Christina Ho, M.Eng.; External IRB Member; Con Edison

Robert Q. Topper, Ph.D.; Professor of Chemistry, IRB Chair

T.C. Westcott, M.B.A.; Vice President for Finance, Administration and Treasurer

New Members (joined during 2012):

Melody Baglione, Ph.D; Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Julie Castelluzzo, M.S.; Librarian

Benjamin Davis, Ph.D.; Assistant Professor of Chemical Engineering

Former Members (left during 2012):

George Delagrammatikas, Ph.D.; Assoc. Professor of Mechanical Engineering

Robert Uglesich, Ph.D.; Asst. Professor of Physics, IRB Secretary

The IRB schedules four regular meetings each year, meeting twice each academic semester. A meeting may be cancelled if there are no proposals pending for Full review. When proposals receive Expedited or Exempt review status, the work is done online and separate from the regular meetings. A streamlined process has been established wherein certain kinds of survey-based studies can claim Exempt status through a self-guided application process.

In 2012, the IRB continued to use and develop three Moodle sites which it has developed to facilitate and enhance the committee's work. One is publically available and explains the IRB's role and activities;¹ one requires Moodle registration and contains all documents necessary for researchers to apply for IRB review and approval of projects;² and one is used solely by IRB members for agendas, minutes, annual reports, and information which must be kept on file in case of audit, such as resumes and NIH training certificates for all IRB members.³

2013: Looking Forward

The Obama administration's proposal to modify IRB standard procedures have apparently halted and no changes are currently contemplated to the "Common Rule" by the Department of Health and Human Services. However, the IRB is moving towards improving and expanding its innovative self-guided review process for internal opinion surveys to make it easier for exempt surveys to gain rapid approval.

The IRB needs logistical assistance for its work. In particular, space should be established on Cooper Union's web site which has basic information about our IRB so that researchers from other institutions can reach the IRB chair quickly and easily. This needs to be directly linked from the top level of the site.

¹ <https://moodle.cooper.edu/moodle/course/view.php?id=571> . Accessed 1/17/2012.

² <https://moodle.cooper.edu/moodle/course/view.php?id=573>. Accessed 1/17/2012. All Cooper Union community members can register for this site.

³ <https://moodle.cooper.edu/moodle/course/view.php?id=572>. Accessed 1/17/2012. This site is for IRB members only.

Table 1. Summary and Status of Applications - 2012 (*Principal researcher in italics*)

Research Proposals			
Application #	Researchers	Title	Status
01-2012	<i>B. Davis</i>	Time On Task As An Assessment Tool for Student Learning	Approved 1/21/2012 (Exempt)
02-2012	<i>J. Castelluzzo</i>	Spring 2012 Library Usage Survey	Approved 3/20/2012 (Exempt)
03-2012	<i>A. Copperman, R. Savizky, S. Keene, J. Barrett, J.A. Lee</i>	Radiation-Sperm Exposure Quality Assessment	Approved 3/26/2012
04-2012	<i>G. Hyman, S. Sava</i>	Center for Writing Student Survey	Approved 4/9/2012 (Exempt)
05-2012	<i>M. Baglione, D. Rosen</i>	Interactive Light Studio: Interactive Technology for Promoting STEM Learning in PreK-2 Students and Encouraging Inclusivity for the Deaf and Hearing-Impaired	Approved 12/3/2013
06-2012	<i>R. Thill, J. Woodson</i>	The Cooper Union Center for Career Development Graduating Student Survey	Approved 6/28/2012 (Exempt)
07-2012	<i>C. Sable, W. Ho, C. Hong, M. Patel</i>	Eye See What You See	Approved 2/5/2013
Self-Guided Reviews of Exempt Student Surveys			
Application #	Researchers	Title	Status
S01-2012	<i>B. Davis</i>	Course Evaluation	Uploaded 1/19/2012
S02-2012	<i>G. del Cerro</i>	HSS Core Program Survey	Uploaded 3/23/2012
S03-2012	<i>G. del Cerro</i>	Dept of Mathematics Program Questionnaire	Uploaded 3/23/2012
S04-2012	<i>S. Sava</i>	HTA102 Mid-semester Course Survey	Uploaded 3/25/2012

In addition to the reviews summarized in Table 1, numerous inquiries were made to the IRB Chair by faculty, administrators and students regarding which kinds of research required review.