ONTARIO COLLEGES MULTI-COLLEGE RESEARCH ETHICS PROCESS

Canadian Association of Research Ethics Boards (CAREB),
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Historical Context:

- 2010 Colleges Ontario Heads of Applied Research (HAR) Research Ethics Subcommittee (RES) established
  - Aim: promote excellence & alignment of College REB processes
- 2014 Common Multi-college REB Application Form
  - Though some colleges also have their own, it is accepted at all publically funded Ontario Colleges with REBs
- HAR RES with the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research developed a multi-college review process (Expert Panel)

2015 Pilot Project

- Five applications were sent to the expert panel (EP) during the six month project
- Average review time by the EP: 9 days
- The EP largely agreed on issues related to ethics
- Panel members reported that the referral, review and recommendation process functioned well
- Researchers reported a positive experience with the EP
- Mixed results and researcher dissatisfaction with the college REB process

2015 Pilot Project (continued)

- College REB review process following EP review and recommendation:
  - 21 reviews: large variation in review time:
    - Seven were reviewed in 0 to 2 days
    - Seven were reviewed in 3 to 8 days
    - Two took 18 to 25 days
    - Five were very slow, taking 44 to 54 + days

- Main reason for delays: REB requests for institutional risk management documentation (e.g. researchers/entire team complete TCPS2 training, institutional approval, local investigators etc…..)

- Other concerns: REB concerns about just having one reviewer/anxiety about liability, fear of loss of role, ‘young’ REBs concerned they won’t build expertise

Overall Objective:

"Streamline the process while staying true to the spirit of Chapter 8 on of multi-jurisdictional review (TCPS2 2014)"

Essential: Provide across Ontario College REB representation on this expert panel!

Process:

*The Expert Panel **reviews** the application and if needed, **works with** the researcher to make changes. Once amendments are complete, they issue the researcher with **a letter of recommendation**.*

- Chair/Coordinator receives Multi-college Application form & Researcher Letter of Agreement
- Chair sends out request to Expert panel team querying their availability to review (Three members review application)
- Using a template, members review and provide feedback to the Chair & Coordinator
- Response provided to the P.I. within 10 working days
- Once deemed ethically acceptable, a letter of recommendation is sent to the P.I.

Each college at which the research is conducted continues to be responsible for research conducted under its auspices.

Launch: September 2016!
First 2 year term, Sheridan College as Lead

Sustainability: September 2018 handover to Fanshawe College as Lead

Members of the Current Team:

- Steve Crema, BA, MA – Chair Expert Panel
- Eric Schwenger, Member, Centennial College
- Florencia Carlino, PhD - Member, Sault College
- Geraldine Lyn-Pisuso, PhD - Member, Seneca College
- Louise Boudreault, PhD - Member, Algonquin College
- Michele McIntosh, PhD - Trent University/College

- Wanda Anderson, Coordinator, Fanshawe College

Participating Colleges

* Total 22

- Algonquin College
- Cambrian College
- Centennial College
- Collège Boréal
- Conestoga College
- Confederation College
- Durham College
- Fanshawe College
- Fleming College
- George Brown College
- Georgian College
- Humber College
- Lambton College
- Loyalist College
- Mohawk College
- Niagara College
- Northern College
- Sault College
- Seneca College
- St. Clair College
- St. Lawrence College
- Sheridan College

THE NUMBERS

September 2016- February 2019 = 38 applications

Colleges:

- Cambrian College
- Canadore College
- Centennial College
- Collège Boréal
- Durham College
- Fanshawe College
- George Brown
- Humber College
- John Abbott College
- Mohawk College
- St. Clair College
- Seneca College
- Sheridan College

Universities:

- Brock University
- McMaster University
- Royal Military College of Canada
- Ryerson University
- Trent University
- University of Guelph
- University of Liverpool
- University of Toronto
- University of Waterloo
- York University
- Western University

Other:

- Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board
- Heads of Business Ontario Colleges

Lessons learned:

- Governance and administration of research ethics can be improved to facilitate more effective practice at the institutional and at the sector level
- Colleges need to adhere to appropriate parameters for ethics review (e.g., reviews proportionate to risk; focus on ethics, not on issues unrelated to ethics)
- Need still exists across the sector for education and training for all stakeholders (administrators, REB members, and researchers)
- College should regularly review policies, procedures, processes and practices related to ethics to ensure that they are serving their intended purposes
- Need to address the questions of when, whether and how institutional approval should be granted for research activities, SEPARATE AND DISTINCT from ethics approval

Moving Forward…

- Possibly adding minimal risk applications…

Secrets to the Success…

Teamwork!

- Prior Relationships: History of learning together and from each other, and sharing resources.

The Expert Panel itself:

- Regional Representation (staying true to the multi-jurisdictional lens)