

September 18, 2002

To All Faculty:

I am pleased to announce the formation of a new Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review of non-medical research such as social and behavioral research, history and ethnography studies, and similar research involving human subjects. This IRB will start convening effective Thursday, September 26, 2002. Details on how research projects can be submitted for review by this particular IRB will be posted soon on our Office of Research website.

Scientific inquiry, scholarly contributions, creativity, and academic accomplishment can take many forms and may vary among disciplines. All faculty members (Fulltime and Adjunct Faculty), students and staff of our university are ultimately responsible for the scholarly character, accuracy, and reliability of their own research, safeguarding of research subjects and the research environment in which they work pursuant to federal regulations, university policies, funding agency requirements, and contractual commitments.

Drexel University and Drexel University College of Medicine have always considered research involving human subjects vital to our research enterprise. Therefore, we have embraced protecting the rights and welfare of research subjects by providing assurance to the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) to comply with federal regulations [Title 45 CFR 46 (OHRP)] for all human subject research, regardless of the funding source. This includes all human subject research conducted under the direction of any employee or agent in connection with his/her institutional responsibilities or use of the university's name or academic or non-academic titles. Noncompliance with this assurance can result in the loss of all federal and other forms of sponsored funding. Additionally, it may cause financial and reputational damage to our institution. Other major institutions have suffered both financial and reputational damage as a result of these compliance and ethical deficiencies. Our aim is to avoid such public embarrassment and negative publicity through responsible conduct of human subjects research.

IRBs have the responsibility to review, approve initiation of, and conduct periodic review of all research involving humans as research subjects. This is not a new requirement. What is new, and what has prompted this memo, is the formation of a university IRB devoted specifically to review non-medical research. Therefore, it is important that all faculty members, students, and university staff take seriously the requirement for review of all human subject research. For example, an individual researcher who fails to have a research project reviewed by the IRB will have sole legal liability should a subject decide later to sue for damages (psychological or physical) attributable to their participation in the investigator's study. Please also note that unless a study has been approved "exempt" from IRB review, all other protocols expire after one year or earlier as previously determined by the IRB.

In the near future a brief description of the new IRB, detailing its purview and indicating how you can find more information about where to find the necessary forms and how to submit a research protocol intended for review by IRB #3 for non-medical research, will be posted on our Office of Research website: [www.research.drexel.edu](http://www.research.drexel.edu). I urge all faculty members to visit the website and to become familiar with the requirements for human subject research review. It is in all our best interests, not to mention the interests of those individuals who participate in our research projects.

In the meantime, any questions about submission of research protocols for review by the new IRB for non-medical human subject research should be directed to either Dr. Sreekant Murthy (762-8103; [S.Murthy@drexel.edu](mailto:S.Murthy@drexel.edu)) or Ms. Eileen McCarthy-Dorsey (762-5078; [em32@drexel.edu](mailto:em32@drexel.edu)) in the Office of Research Compliance.

Sincerely,

Sreekant Murthy, Ph.D.  
Senior Associate Vice President for Research Compliance