

## **Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

NWACC affirms that human research subjects should be treated with dignity, respect, and with due regard to their welfare. Those participating in research have the right to be informed regarding the nature of the research, including its methods and procedures (any aspect of the research that could reasonably influence a subject's willingness to participate, the nature of any benefits for the research subject or for society, and its reasonable foreseeable risks); the right to withdraw from participation in the research without penalty; and the right to have the subject's confidentiality respected. Research proposals at NWACC that involve human participants should guarantee that:

- Ethical and moral standards are in compliance with federal guidelines
- Informed consent has been obtained from all participants
- Anonymity or confidentiality of the participants
- Participation is voluntary and that participants may withdraw from the study at any time
- Researchers will avoid the use of deception whenever possible

### **JUSTIFICATION:**

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of NWACC serves to protect the rights of human participants and to promote professional research in a safe environment for students and employees. The goal of the IRB is to work with administration, faculty, staff, and student researchers to enhance the validity of their research by helping to ensure that projects involving human participants adhere to established ethical, moral, safety and legal standards. The IRB weighs any potential risk to research participants against the benefits that the proposed research may provide. Human research is any activity developed for the purpose of collecting and organizing data from human participants in such a manner as to test hypotheses, address research questions, or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

The IRB consists of five members with varying backgrounds to promote complete and adequate review of research activities commonly conducted at the College. Selected members meet or exceed the minimal requirements set forth in Federal regulations and are charged to carry out their duties in a fair and ethical manner. The IRB may, in its discretion, invite individuals with competence in special areas to assist in the review of issues which require expertise beyond or in addition to that available on the IRB. These individuals may not vote with the IRB. Researchers who have submitted a proposal for review will be notified following a scheduled

IRB meeting as to whether their proposal has been approved, rejected, modified, or returned for further action. Notes and records will be the property of the NWACC Office of Institutional Research.

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

An institutional review board (IRB) is a committee that has been formally designated to approve, monitor, and review biomedical and behavioral research involving humans.

#### **REFERENCES RELIED UPON:**

Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations regarding protection of Human Subjects (<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html>)

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The IRB is responsible for the review, approval, and protection of all human subjects participating in research at and on behalf of the College. The NWACC IRB embraces the ethical principles set forth by the Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations.

The Chairperson of the IRB will determine the level of review required for each research protocol. The levels of review include: exempt, expedited, or full IRB review. Within two weeks of the receipt of a request to conduct research involving human subjects, the Chair shall notify each member of the IRB of the status of the review and schedule a meeting as appropriate to that status. Research proposals with no risk to human subjects can qualify as exempt and will be reviewed only by the IRB chair. Research proposals that involve a minimal amount of risks to human subjects can qualify for expedited review. To receive expedited review, a proposal must be reviewed and approved by at least 2 IRB members, usually via an email vote. A full IRB review will be conducted if participants include vulnerable populations such as minors, mentally compromised, or incarcerated people and/or the potential risk to participants is more than minimal. In addition, the IRB will meet annually to review policies, procedures, and matters pertinent to the completion of the duties of their office.

#### **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Code of Ethics: Association for Institutional Research  
(<http://www.airweb.org/AboutUs/LeadershipAndGovernance/Pages/CodeofEthics.aspx>)