

FACULTY SENATE AGENDA ITEM

Date: July 27, 2007

Number: 07-04

Subject: Establishment of a policy relating to the review of student “research”

Description: For various reasons, research involving human subjects is regulated by the federal government and is reviewed by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). According to the Office for Human Research Protections, an agency of the U.S. Department of Human and Health Services, research is defined as “a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.” Within academe, a number of departments/schools offer courses within which an instructor will require students to conduct a research project as part of the course. In many instances, completion of the student project requires the participation of individuals not enrolled in that course and who may not be enrolled at Washburn University. If it is the case that the student project and findings are not presented in a public forum, then the project is not considered “research” and thus would not require IRB review/approval. Nonetheless, the possibility exists that a project may offend or cause harm to the participants and, thus, negatively impact the student, the faculty member, and Washburn University. The question of interest here is whether IRB review/approval should be required for projects conducted as part of a course assignment and which involves individuals (students and/or nonstudents) beyond the classroom.

Financial Implications: None.

Requested Action: The Faculty Senate derive and approve a formal policy as to whether (and under what circumstances) course required projects, while not officially designated as “research,” should be reviewed and approved by the IRB.

Originated by: Nancy Tate, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs