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RCO becomes RICRO

New name - same friends and colleagues. The Regulatory Compliance Office (RCO) is now the Research Integrity & Compliance Review Office (RICRO). How do you pronounce that? We like Rik'-Row, even though we have been known to hear the occasional Scooby-Doo (ruh-roh) jokes. We are still in Suite 321 of the General Services Building. We plan to have an open house in September and hope you can stop in and chat with us.

Our name change reflects the new dual missions of this office: providing training in research integrity and facilitating compliance review of research protocol proposals. Our mission, along with new resources and information, is now posted on our new website: http://RICRO.Research.ColoState.edu. Click on over and browse through the site. Let us know if you have any questions or comments about it (Kathy.Partin@Research.ColoState.edu).

On the path to electronic protocol submissions

Frustrated by having to print out 14 copies of your A-100? So are we!! RICRO is on an aggressive timetable to move to a paperless protocol submission and review process. We have been spoiled by the new electronic protocol submission and review process for the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC; thank you, Dr. Bowen!!). Coming soon - Dr. Bowen is developing a new electronic application process for the Drug Review Committee (DRC). Also in the works - Research Services and RICRO are looking at a number of vendors for electronic protocol submission and review for the Animal Care and Use Committee (ACUC) and the Human Research Committee (HRC). We are soliciting input from investigators in this process. Want to demo some software? Have experiences with electronic submission that you want to share? Have concerns or comments? Let us know - we want to hear from you!
Essay of the Month: “Academic Freedom and Compliance Review”

Creative and scholarly research necessitate academic freedom; without it, meaningful discovery would not be possible. The principle of academic freedom is so intrinsic to our mission that the CSU Administrative Professional Manual explicitly addresses it. However, with academic freedom comes the great responsibility of ensuring that research is tempered by ethical considerations. The historical failure by researchers to protect their human and animal subjects led to societal outrage and the strident call for governmental oversight. The government’s response was to initiate strict “self-monitoring” of research activity, and from this sprang the need for institutional peer-review of research proposals. Does the mandate that investigators submit their research proposals, the very seed of research endeavors, to a “compliance” process impede scientific inquiry? Compliance, to some, must seem the antithesis of creativity, and compliance review, the death of academic freedom. Since joining the Research Integrity and Compliance Review Office (formerly the RCO), I have contemplated this issue with respect to the CSU peer-review process, particularly regarding the HRC (Human Research Committee) and the ACUC (Animal Care and Use Committee). I was anxious to see how the need to protect academic freedom could be balanced against the need to protect research subjects.

An argument has been made that “(w)ithout addressing the validity of the proposed scientific objectives and methods, the IACUC can’t decide if the ethical cost weighed against the potential benefits is morally justifiable.” In fact, federal regulations state that “procedures involving animals should be designed and performed with due consideration of their relevance to human or animal health, the advance of knowledge, or the good of society.” This terminology could make us all think that “Big Brother” was both watching and playing a determinative role in our research endeavors. Could the ACUC or HRC be an arbiter of what kind of research questions will be posed at CSU? On the other hand, federal regulations state that “(e)xcept as specifically authorized by law or these regulations, nothing in this part shall be deemed to permit the Committee or IACUC to prescribe methods or set standards for the design, performance, or conduct of actual research or experimentation by a research facility.”

Federal regulations give guidance, but it seems that frequently the guidance is in a shade of gray, rather than black-and-white. This allows local governance, based upon local values and ethics. The HRC (Human Research Committee), IBC (Institutional Biosafety Committee), DRC (Drug Review Committee) and ACUC (Animal Care and Use Committee) are the foundation of a peer-review process that takes these complex issues in hand and develops CSU policies to promote ethical research, ensure compliance with governing regulations, and protect the welfare of research subjects. I have been impressed with the integrity with which this process works at CSU. Consistently I have seen these committees discipline themselves to focus on the questions of the ethics of the methodology, without imposing their views on the validity of a particular hypothesis. It is a delicate balancing act, and our committees do it carefully, thoroughly, and in my opinion, very well. Perhaps this reflects the strength of the peer-review process itself, as many committee members are themselves investigators whose work will undergo the same scrutiny. This process complements, but does not replace, the scientific review of merit of a proposal that study sections subsequently perform.

RICRO provides administrative support to the CSU compliance review process. As committed as RICRO is to protecting research subjects, we are equally committed to facilitating ethical scientific inquiry. Our mission is to provide the necessary training and support for these important endeavors without becoming an obstacle to their successful completion. Protection of academic freedom in research and protection of our research subjects are both essential components of responsible scientific discovery.

- Kathy Partin, PhD, Director, Research Integrity & Compliance Review Office
**Have something to say to the CSU research community?**

We welcome contributions to the RICRO Report!

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**Upcoming Events**

**August, 2007**

- **Thursday, August 9**
  - H-100 HRC protocol submission deadline @ NOON

- **August 13-16**
  - ANEQ 550A Basic Research Surgery
  - A-100 ACUC protocol submission deadline @ NOON

- **Tuesday, August 13**
  - A-100 ACUC protocol submission deadline @ NOON

- **August 15**
  - HRC training: 9AM-Noon (321 General Services Bldg.)

- **August 16**
  - HRC monthly meeting

- **August 16**
  - Ethics Training: New Faculty and New Graduate Student Orientations @ LSC

- **August 21**
  - ACUC monthly meeting

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**Looking for Janell Meldrem?**

If you are looking for the contact information for the HRC Senior Coordinator, better check under the “B’s.” Janell got married this month and is now Mrs. Janell Barker! Her new email address is:

Janell.Barker@Research.ColoradoState.edu. Her phone number (1-1655) and address (321 GSB; CD 2011) stay the same.

In other RICRO news, we have a new receptionist in our office. Ms. Hillary Swiss is answering phones, processing protocols, and generally helping us with everything as a summer job. She will be heading off to Oberlin College this fall, where she will study rhetoric and musicology.
Open Position in RICRO

Assistant to the Director of the Research Integrity and Compliance Review Office (RICRO)

The Assistant Administrator of the Research Integrity and Compliance Review Office (RICRO) is responsible for a broad range of duties in support of the Director, its staff, principal investigators, and research compliance review committee members. The position reports to the Director. A minimum of a college degree (B.A. or B.S.) or more than 5 years of relevant work experience in research administration, demonstrated experience in data management, and strong verbal and written skills is required. Proficiency with the Microsoft Office suite (with an emphasis on Word, Excel and Access), and experience with grants and/or financial systems is highly desirable. Salary will be commensurate with experience within the range of $30,000-40,000 annually. Please submit a cover letter, resume, and names of 3 references to: Evelyn.Swiss@Research.Colostate.edu by August 17, 2007 for full consideration. CSU is an EO/AA employer.

4th Annual Biosafety and Biosecurity Training Course at CSU

Earlier this month Dr. Robert Ellis (CSU Biosafety Officer) hosted the 4th Annual Biosafety and Biosecurity Training Course at the Hilton Hotel for some 50-60 participants. The course covered a host of interesting topics including a general session plus sessions dedicated to animal and plant biosecurity issues. The speakers were national and local experts including CSU faculty members Bob Ellis, Dave van Metre, Claudia Gentry-Weeks, Howard Schwartz, Ned Tisserat, June Medford and Jan Leach, as well as CSU alumnus, David Neil. The participants included a wide spectrum of people working at a number of institutions in different capacities related to biosafety facilities. Discussion was open and lively. A lot of emphasis was placed on the importance of the having a well-connected biosafety community that shares experiences and expertise. Another significant theme of the meeting was that proactive attention to training, as well as effective communication, are essential components of a healthy biosafety program. Kudos to Dr. Ellis and the other presenters for making this course possible. Please contact him if you are interested in registering for the course next summer. If you are interested in this course, you can check their site to see when information for 2008 will be posted (http://www.cvmbs.colostate.edu/microbiology/crwad/BBTC_2007.htm) or you may contact Bob Ellis (Robert.Ellis@ColoState.Edu).