SIC IRB Policy

All requests for surveys/research, whether internal or external, must get IRB approval prior to conducting research.

I. Institutional Review Board Function

The Southeastern Illinois College (SIC) Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a specially designed committee appointed to ensure that all research activities involving human subjects are conducted in a way that promotes their rights, protects their welfare, ensures safety, minimizes any potential risks, and assures informed and voluntary participation in any research. The IRB also monitors research to ensure that human subjects are protected from undue risk and deprivation of personal rights and dignity. The IRB operates under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations for the Protection of Human Research Subjects: Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46 (45 CFR 46). The IRB is guided by the ethical principles regarding all research involving humans as subjects as set forth in the April 18, 1979 report of the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Researcher, titled: "Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research," commonly known as the "Belmont Report." The SIC Institutional Review Board regulates all research activities involving human subjects on all campuses. This committee is responsible for conducting ethical reviews of human research activities, while ensuring compliance with all applicable federal and state laws/regulations. Its primary responsibility is to assure that all researchers operate within the provisions of the federal wide Assurance of Compliance filed through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP). Any research involving human subjects conducted at SIC must be approved by the Institutional Review Board.

II. Composition of the IRB- Membership

The Executive Director of Institutional Effectiveness will serve as the chairperson for the IRB. Members of the IRB are appointed by the president with guidance from the president's cabinet. The IRB must have five or more members of varying expertise and maintain a commitment to research integrity. The president may add new members as needed.

III. Definitions

A. Human subject is defined as a living individual about whom an investigator (whether professional or student) conducting research obtains data: 1) directly through intervention or interaction with the individual (e.g., interview, examination, or questionnaire), or 2) indirectly (e.g., through observation),

and/or when information is accessed concerning specific, individually identifiable private information through files, data banks or other depositories, or through direct inquiry.

B. *Research* is defined as a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, *designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge*. Activities which meet this definition constitute research for purposes of this policy. The following may be considered research:
    I. Pilot studies
    II. Interviews
    III. Focus groups
    IV. Surveys/Questionnaires
    V. Observation
    VI. Case studies
    VII. Oral histories
    VIII. Analysis of existing secondary data

C. An investigator is defined as an individual who is involved in conducting human subject research studies. Such involvement includes:
    I. Obtaining information about living individuals by intervening or interacting with them for research purposes.
    II. Obtaining identifiable private information about living individuals for research purposes.
    III. Obtaining the voluntary informed consent of individuals to be subjects in research.
    IV. Studying, interpreting, or analyzing identifiable private information or data for research purposes.

D. Minimal risk, according to federal policy, means that the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.

IV. IRB Review Process

All research involving human subjects requires an IRB Approval for Human Subjects Research application. If the investigator is not certain whether a project falls outside applicable review, it is his/her responsibility to contact the IRB chairperson for clarification.

Both internal and external requests for research must be submitted for review. Faculty and staff (both full-time and part-time) using human subjects or identifiable, private information about human subjects to conduct research outside the course and scope of

their duties are required to have prior approval from the IRB before research is initiated. Both internal and external researchers must submit an application, along with documentation showing that IRB approval has been obtained by their home institution's IRB, if applicable. Projects must be approved regardless of whether the research is funded and regardless of the source of funds. This policy also applies to students whose research is conducted under the advisement of a faculty member except when research is for classroom instructional purposes only. All research must be reviewed by the IRB and no individual, other than the IRB chairperson or IRB members designated by the chairperson, may exempt a proposal from review or find the research eligible for expedited review. Research that is conducted without IRB exemption or approval is not in compliance with SIC Board Policy and federal regulations. In these circumstances a non-compliance report will be sent to the president of the college for further action.

The following criteria will be used for determining approval:

A. Risks to research subjects are minimized.
B. Risks to research subjects are reasonable to anticipated benefits and the importance of knowledge that may result.
C. Selection of subjects is equitable.
D. Informed consent is given and documented.
E. Importance of requested research has clear purpose and contributes to current scholarship.
F. SIC/IRB is allowed to monitor data collection.
G. Confidentiality of data is maintained.
H. No identifiable data will be collected, disseminated or shared.
I. Research subject privacy is maintained and guaranteed through viable data collection methods. No research request will be approved without strict adherence.
J. A copy of all surveys, datasets, and associated reports will be provided to SIC/IRB for retention and archival purposes. No research request will be approved without strict adherence.

The IRB chairperson has the authority to certify research as exempt or to approve it through the expedited process. If a full-board review is required, the IRB chairperson will distribute the application and accompanying materials to the IRB members and convene an IRB meeting. The investigator may be required to attend an IRB meeting to answer questions. The IRB can: 1) approve the project without reservation; 2) approve the project with modifications; 3) defer approval of the project pending resubmission of the application, or 4) disapprove the research. If the IRB decides to disapprove a research activity it shall include in its written notification a statement of the reasons for its decision and give the investigator an opportunity to respond in person or in writing.

Research may not commence until signed approval by IRB chairperson is granted.