**Community Engaged Learning/Research**

**Ethics** is a topic that covers questions relating to what kinds of lives we should lead, what counts as a good society, what actions are right and wrong, what qualities of character we should develop and what responsibilities humans have for each other and the ecosystem. In the context of research, ethics as a subject area traditionally covers topics such as the overall harms and benefits of research, the rights of participants to information, privacy, anonymity, and the responsibilities of researchers to act with integrity.

There are many possible benefits of Community Engaged Learning and Research so what could possibly go wrong with CBR (community-based research)?   
  
The role of the Kenyon College Institutional Review Board (IRB) is to foster ethical treatment of human research participants and to oversee all research (broadly defined) involving human subjects conducted under the auspices of Kenyon College by its faculty, students, and staff. All research projects involving human subjects -- regardless of the source of funding -- require review and approval from the Kenyon College IRB prior to gathering any data or information from research subjects. This includes Oral Histories though we have a slightly different application process.

IRB review of research is based on the three tenants of the Belmont Report: (Respect for Persons, Beneficence, Justice)

* Respect for Persons : Privacy, confidentiality, anonymity, consent, voluntariness, language, literacy, autonomy, protections for vulnerable subjects
  + Researchers treat individuals as autonomous human beings who are capable of making their own decisions and choices.
  + Researchers do not use people as a means to an end.
  + Researchers provide extra protections to those with limited autonomy.
  + CBR may involve populations that are powerless, and therefore, vulnerable (children, undocumented immigrants, aged, persons with some kinds of disabilities)
* Beneficence: Do no harm and maximize benefits
  + Minimize the risks of harm and maximize the potential benefits
    - using procedures which are consistent with sound research design and which do not unnecessarily expose subjects to risk
    - Risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits
      * Harms/risks with this kind of research are usually not physical, but legal, psychological, economic, or social
  + There is likely to be some expectation on the part of the community/community partners that some benefit will result
    - Communities may become disillusioned if expected benefits are not realized and may as a result, not be willing to engage in future research projects
* Justice: Who ought to receive the benefits of research and bear its burdens?
  + Equitable selection of subjects
  + Representative subject pool
  + Researchers should avoid exploitation of vulnerable populations or populations of convenience.
  + Results of the research should benefit the subjects and those communities they represent.
  + Community based research must benefit all involved.

**So what worries the IRB and what is involved in a review?**

**General**

* Relevancy of the study to the community
* Inadequate community engagement during development of the research
* Reputation of the College, the Community, Community Partners, and Community members.
* Safety of our students
* Safety of all participants
* Ethics of our researchers and research partners

**In an IRB Review we consider**

* Researchers’ cultural competence
* Researchers’ abilities, training
* Are Research methods appropriate to the study
* Are Research methods appropriate to a particular community
* Is the Research a good fit with the community’s agenda
* Community involvement in all phases of the research including development
* Culturally appropriate recruitment strategies
* Culturally appropriate informed consent process
  + Both Individual and Community Consent may be needed: information, comprehension and voluntariness
* Community-level risks and benefits
* Identify subjects, or groups of subjects who may be considered vulnerable and describe protections for those subjects
* Plans to share findings with the communities involved in the research
* Anticipation of problems
* Resources for mitigation of any anticipated or unanticipated harms
* Signed partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding
* Plans to translate research findings into practice or policy

If your CEL plans involve human subjects research, you and your students along with your partners need to submit an application for IRB review. Some partners may have their own requirements. Public schools for instance. Researchers will need to ask their community partners to verify to the Kenyon IRB that they are willing to have the proposed research done through/with the help of the community/organization.   
  
The Kenyon IRB webpages are available to anyone. Anyone who needs help in navigating those pages, getting the required training, or filling out the application can call or email me. I can arrange for community partners to have access to the online training without charge.

I think that you will find that researchers, especially student researchers, who go through an IRB review will end up with stronger, more successful research experiences. When projects really involve communities from the beginning, the project will be of real value to all of us, faculty, students, community partners, members of the particular community, the College, and finally the broader community.

[IRB pages](http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/office-of-the-provost/conducting-research-at-kenyon/institutional-research-board-irb/)

[Training](http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/office-of-the-provost/conducting-research-at-kenyon/citi-programs-for-research-education/)  
[Information for Kenyon Researchers](http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/office-of-the-provost/conducting-research-at-kenyon/institutional-research-board-irb/information-for-researchers/)

[Oral History](http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/office-of-the-provost/conducting-research-at-kenyon/institutional-research-board-irb/oral-history-projects/)

[Documentary Films](http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/office-of-the-provost/conducting-research-at-kenyon/institutional-research-board-irb/documentary-films/)

If you need help with human subjects research review, please contact

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