1.0 POLICY

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The University of Alabama accepts the premise that people who understand research will value it and also be better protected as participants. Therefore, it is incumbent upon Human Research Protection Programs (HRPP) to offer education about research, research participation, and research protection to the community.

1.1.2 Community within the context of this policy is defined as all research participants regardless of university affiliation and persons from outside the University.

1.2 Policy Statement.

1.2.1 The University of Alabama HRPP will offer education designed to enhance the community’s understanding of research, their rights as research participants, and the research protections available to them through the university and state and federal regulations.

1.2.2 These outreach activities shall be evaluated and changes made in the outreach program when appropriate.

1.3 Objective.

1.3.1 Although no single activity may result in measurable changes in community understanding, implementation of this policy will make needed research-related information available in a variety of formats and in understandable language to the community with potential to benefit individuals and groups external to the university.

1.4 Responsibility.

1.4.1 The ultimate responsibility for this policy rests with the Vice President for Research. Enabling parties are the Director of Research Compliance, the IRB chairs and members, and the committee appointed for evaluation and quality improvement of HRPP. Assistance may be sought from others as needed, such as the Vice President for Community Affairs, the unaffiliated members of IRB, and community members.

2.0 PROCEDURE

2.1 The enabling parties shall identify appropriate and feasible strategies for community education about research, research rights, and research protections. These strategies may include, but are not limited to, a Community Outreach website on the Office for
Research Compliance website, paper and online brochures, news about research of significance to the community, features about UA researchers, a speaker’s bureau, communication in *Dialog* (weekly University newsletter), and message systems for reaching students.

2.2 The enabling parties shall identify important constituents and sub-elements of the Tuscaloosa/West Alabama community to reach, based on census data and knowledge of vulnerable populations and protocols submitted.

2.3 The IRBs shall confer about desirable content to present to the community and by what media. Input from the community members of the IRB will be sought in particular.

2.4 The enabling parties will monitor external websites and print sources to identify new topics and strategies for outreach and share suggestions.

2.5 Connections to the African American and Hispanic communities will be sought for both the content and dissemination of community outreach materials.

2.6 The Director of Research Compliance and office staff, IRB chairs and members, and interested faculty may volunteer to make presentations to community groups on selected or requested topics.

2.7 The reading level of materials developed for community outreach shall be no more than 10th grade and lower when needed to fit the target audience.

2.8 Print and online materials in Spanish will be located or developed whenever possible.

2.9 The e-mail address for use by those wishing to communicate with UA HRPP/IRB is participantoutreach@ua.edu. The dedicated local telephone number is 205-348-8461. The toll-free number is 877-820-3066.

2.10 Evaluation and Improvement of Community Outreach Activities

2.10.1 The Research Compliance staff will maintain a log of “hits” on the community portion of the HRPP website, the number and sources of requests for or distribution of paper brochures about research, and the size and nature of the audiences and topics for oral presentations.

2.10.2 Records shall be kept of questions or comments received about online, paper, or “live” outreach activities. Formal presentations shall be evaluated, using FORM: Evaluation of Community Outreach Activity.

2.10.3 Although no single activity may result in measurable changes in community understanding, use of a pre-post survey to measure gains in knowledge (designed for the specific activity) will be encouraged when feasible for the time available, the audience, and the presentation method.
2.10.4 Questions and complaints received from the community and research participants will be monitored to identify needed additions to or changed emphasis on particular outreach activities. The Director of Research Compliance shall compile and submit the evaluative data for Community Outreach to the committee charged with evaluation of the HRRP for use in the quality improvement plan.

3.0 REFERENCES

3.1 None

4.0 RELATED SECTIONS

4.1 None