

# Broadening Representation on Institutional Research Committees: A Paradigm to Model

Sara Hanley, MSW, Roy Cambria, BS, Ann Rodavitch, MA, Collette M. Houston, BA, Krista Napolitano, MA, Xhenete Lekperic, BS  
Dana E. Rathkopf, MD, Thomas J. Kaley, MD, Robert Michael Tuttle, MD, Eileen M. O'Reilly, MBBCh BAO, Paul J. Sabbatini, MD

## Background

As an NCI-designated cancer center, an institution is mandated to have a Protocol Review & Monitoring System (PRMS) consisting of a Scientific Review Committee (SRC) and an Institutional Review Board/Privacy Board (IRB/PB) to oversee human subject research. The focus of this initiative was to evaluate membership opportunities and to expand representation across its two largest committees responsible for scientific (SRC) and human subject protection (IRB/PB) reviews.

Traditionally, representation on major institutional committees has been by hierarchical selection by senior leadership. Membership criteria were largely subjective and dependent on individual senior leaders' interpretation of a particular faculty member's qualifications and fit. Competing priorities of the service chiefs and/or 'free time' of potential members created an additional layer of subjectivity. The same small pool of investigators tended to be nominated for multiple institutional committees, and typically, there was not an opportunity for self-nomination.

## Goals

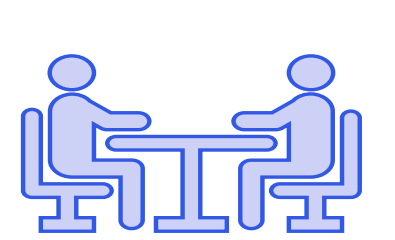
To broaden membership opportunities, we implemented a transparent, accessible, inclusive, and formalized process for institutional research committee membership by:

1. Defining responsibilities and qualifications
2. Streamlining application/interview processes
3. Developing outreach strategies, including promotion of the importance of institutional citizenship

## Methods



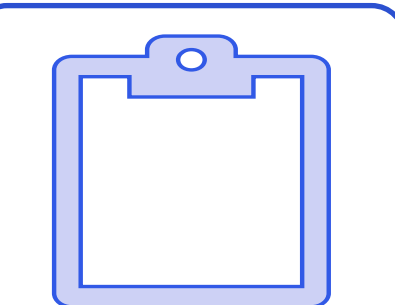
Brainstorming meeting with institutional research leadership to evaluate how best to expand membership, reduce barriers to membership, and ensure inclusivity



Outreach to internal councils for membership recruitment, including Junior Faculty Council (JFC), Black Faculty & Scientists Advisory Council (BFSC), Black, Latinx, Asian, Multi-racial Faculty & Fellows Alliance (BLAM FFA) (Figure 1)



Develop and formalize policies and procedures on committee membership qualifications and access

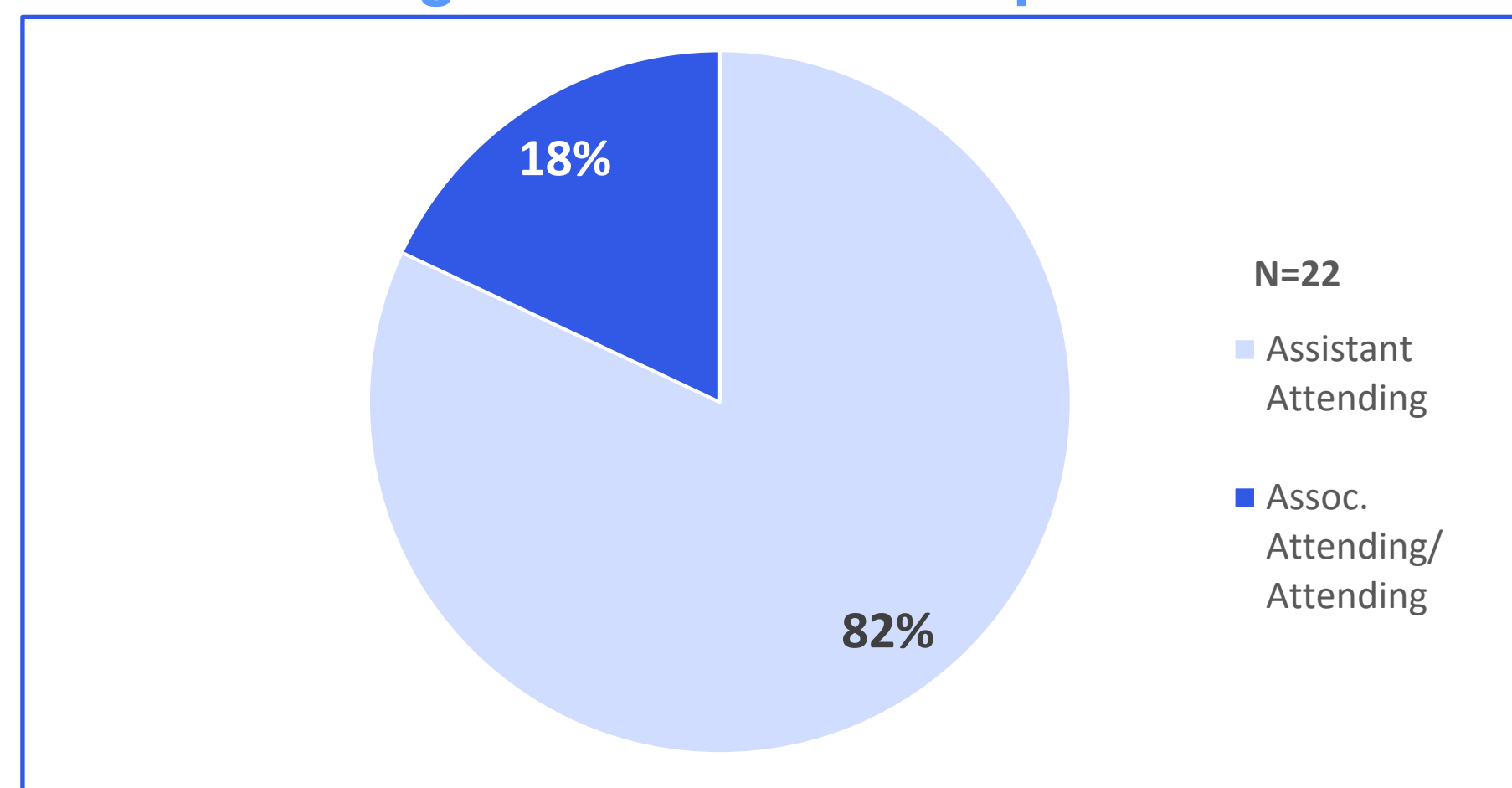


Demographic survey of committees to establish benchmark data on years of employment, current rank, length of service on committee, age, gender identity, ethnicity, race (Figures 2-3)

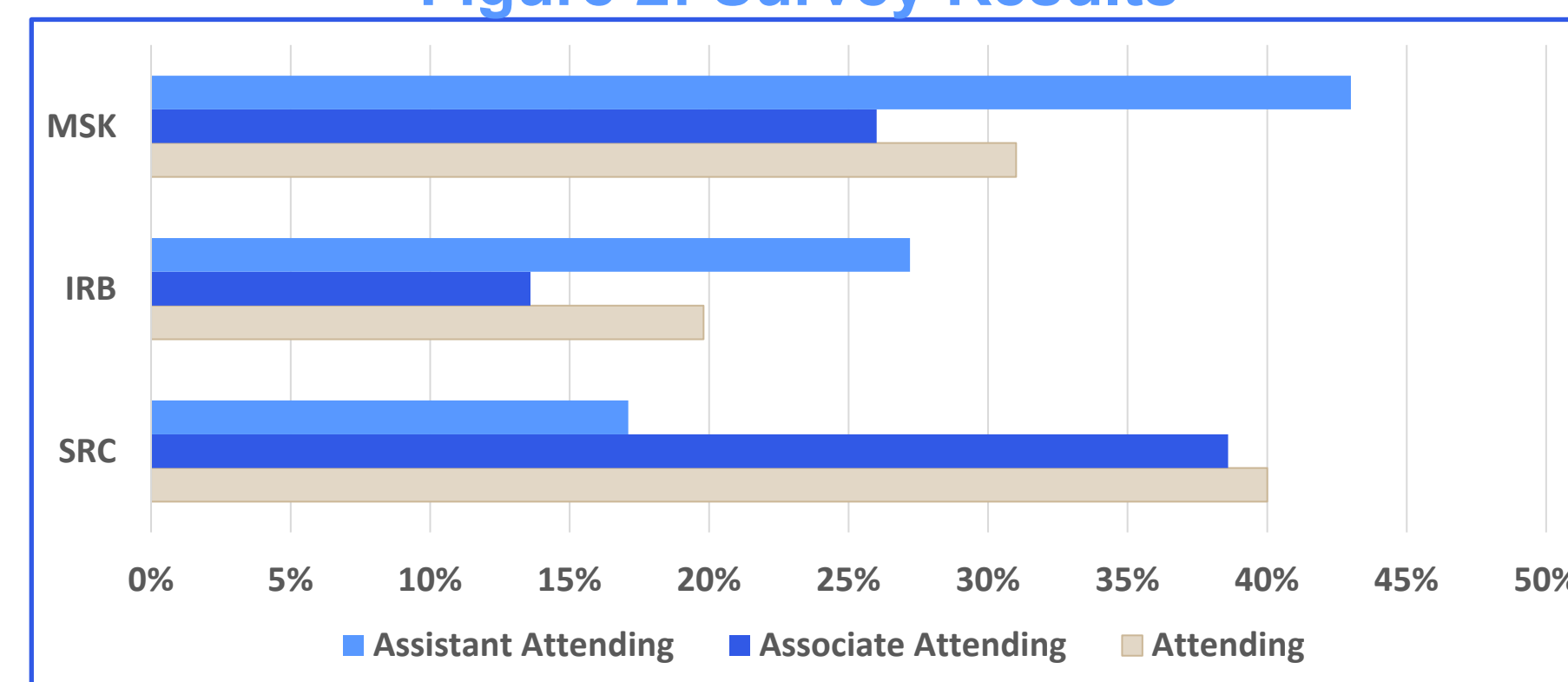
**Table 1: SOP Summary - IRB/PB and SRC Membership**

<b>Member Qualifications</b>	Membership is considered an expectation of institutional citizenship and is recognized by departmental leadership.
	Members should be interested in human subject protection (IRB) and the scientific integrity of the clinical research portfolio (SRC).
	Members who are faculty should have clinical research experience (broadly considered). Experience can be either internal or external to the Center.
<b>Member Access</b>	Interested parties can self-nominate by contacting the leadership of the respective committees.
	Potential members will need to articulate their candidacy qualifications and must have the support of their service or department.
	Membership will be selected pending the need and availability of openings within committees. By intent, membership will be from all areas within the institution aligned with specific expertise requirements.

**Figure 1: Outreach Inquires**



**Figure 2: Survey Results**



## Outcomes

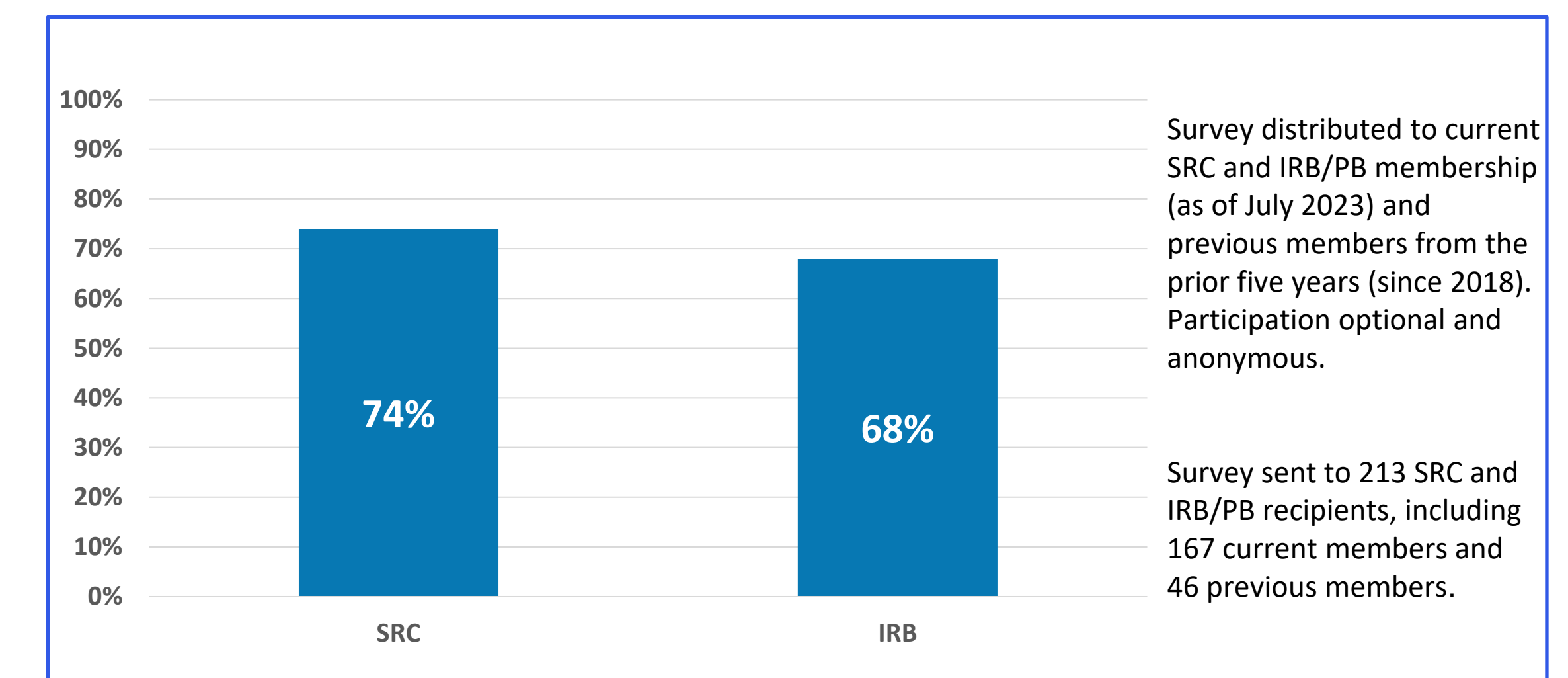
A new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) PRMS#106 was written to reflect the stated goals of the initiative, include applicable qualifications and process to access membership (Table 1).

Outreach for membership resulted in 22 inquiries: 14 from the JFC, 5 from BFSC, and 3 from other sources. Most inquiries came from junior faculty at 82% and 18% from mid-level and senior faculty (Figure 1). Multiple clinical departments were represented: Anesthesiology/Critical Care (1), Laboratory Medicine (2), Medicine (10), Neurosurgery (1), Surgery (4), Radiation Oncology (2) and Translational Research Laboratories (2).

Thirteen new members: 5 for SRC and 8 for IRB/PB were invited to join. Two self-nominees were appointed to other committees.

The committee demographics survey results (Figures 2-3) compare the membership to the demographic breakdown of the Center's workforce. The outcomes highlighted a positive change in increasing transparency and inclusivity within membership where the majority of our inquires came from junior faculty who are under-represented on the committees compared to the Center.

**Figure 3: Response Rates**



## Lessons Learned

Evaluation will be critical to inform the longer-term success of these initiatives. We plan to focus on evaluating membership retention, engagement, and other effects of greater institutional cross-sectional committee involvement.

## Future Directions

Moving forward, these strategies are a template to develop broader institutional representation in the regulatory bodies overseeing human subjects' research. The implemented measures are substantial initial steps which subjectively have been well received and provide a framework for institutional reorganization in one area of major institutional focus.