



BEYOND BETTER SOFTWARE: THE IMPACT OF A GRADUATE ASSISTANT ON RESEARCH COMPLIANCE INNOVATION AND PROCESSES

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Abstract

Manual IRB processes delay research and increase compliance risk. In Summer 2023, our institution implemented Cayuse research administration software and onboarded a Graduate Assistant (GA) from the Computer Science program. Together, these upgrades significantly modernized IRB operations, especially at a small, resource-constrained PUI (Primarily Undergraduate Institution).

Program Description

Cayuse alone improved review speeds, but rollout challenges persisted. A Computer Science Graduate Assistant was integrated into the Office of Research to build tailored digital solutions:

- Custom dashboards for tracking protocol progress
- Secure digital forms to reduce clerical errors
- Database automation for more efficient data handling.

Limitations

- Institutional IT constraints delayed new tool deployment
- The GA had limited access to sensitive data for testing
- Some staff faced a learning curve with digital systems.

Program Assessment

Review times dropped an additional 20%, with improved tracking and fewer clerical errors. Staff morale rose, and faculty reported clearer communication. Surveys showed high satisfaction with new digital tools. Challenges included resistance to change, limited digital skills, and time constraints for system testing, but overall operations improved significantly.

Key Achievements



60% Faster Review Time

Administrative and Exempt reviews became significantly faster after Cayuse + GA Integration.



IRB Helpdesk Launched

Dedicated support for researchers and faculty improved service quality and response time.

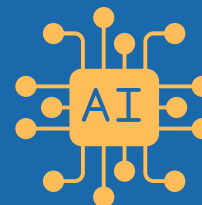


Engagement

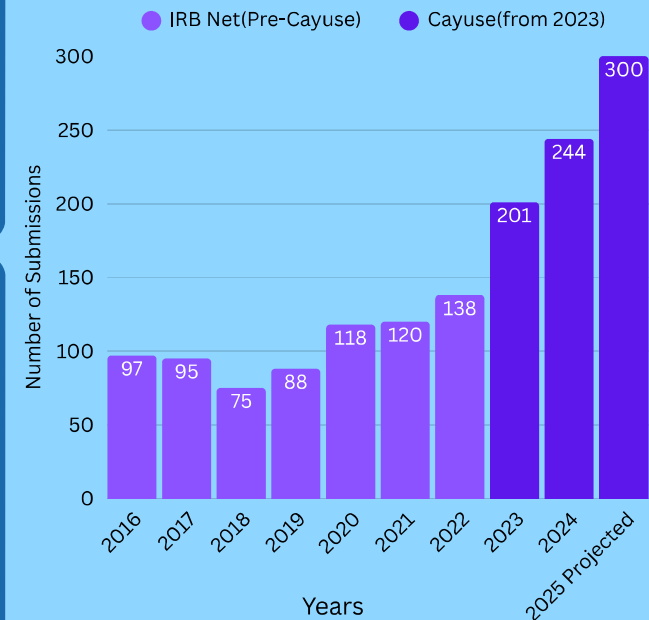
More organized meetings and collaboration
"Ready for Research" campaign educated campus on research ethics.

Future Plans

- Automate consent document reviews
- Integrate AI-assisted pre-review tools
- Develop AI-powered process documentation to train new researchers.



IRB Submission Trends



Discussion

This case demonstrates a cost-effective, replicable model for improving research oversight through student technical talent. Even during hiring freezes, schools can:

- Boost compliance efficiency
- Enhance user experience
- Support modernization goals.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Office of Research and Sponsored Programs Director/IRB Administrator for this project and for IRB Chair, and IRB Committee Members for their guidance, support, and collaboration.