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Canada

Re: Response to February 10, 2025 Letter of Concern and Supporting Documents

March 28, 2025

Dear Daniel,

Thank you for submitting your concerns regarding the potential risks associated with human subjects and the audience of UAP studies and experienter research at CIHS. We share and value your dedication to ethical research practices and the protection of human subjects in the academic community and we take your concerns seriously. Though the concerns that you raised do not fall under any of our established grievance procedures, I have carefully reviewed all of your submissions and provide the following response.¹

As stated in your February 10 correspondence and submissions, you would like CIHS to consider what steps it will take to mitigate the risk of harmful false memories in UAP studies and experienter research. You also requested that CIHS answer the following questions:

- Is there truly a risk of harmful false memories in UAP/NHI studies, why or why not?
- Who is liable for harm caused to human subjects related to false memories?
- Are AARO claims about fanatic believers in UAP Disclosure valid, why or why not?
- Why is Bledsoe a primary case study and advisor of the WISER Study when there is such delusion or deception as I have documented with his UAP sighting at the Monroe Institute?
- Will CIHS confirm or deny Esbjörn-Hargens' promotion of The Experienter Group as a safe-space for abductees on CIHS-endorsed media, if or if not, why?

We recognize the sensitive nature of UAP and experienter research, particularly when it involves human subjects. We understand that studies in this area, and a wide range of others, can involve the risk of creating false memories or reinforcing pre-existing beliefs that may not be grounded in objective evidence. We agree that it is crucial to attempt to ensure that research is conducted in a way that minimizes harm and maximizes ethical integrity.

¹ As previously explained, the Student Rights Section of the CIHS Catalog—the Grievance Procedure for Non-Academic and/or Non-Disciplinary Matters policy—is intended to address individual decisions or individual actions taken by CIHS that impact the grievant personally in his or her capacity as a student. Dissatisfaction with a program, Institute policy or general practice is not grounds for a grievance under this policy.

It is important to note that CIHS' role is to evaluate and recommend institutional responses to student concerns rather than issue statements on complex, abstract or philosophical questions that may not have definitive answers. Likewise, it is not CIHS' role to speculate on matters beyond the Institute's direct responsibility or area of expertise.

While CIHS cannot answer your questions about the existence and extent of harmful false memories, the validity of research or claims by third parties, or potential liability issues, I can discuss what steps CIHS takes to minimize risks in research, including UAP research. As described in more detail below, these steps include ensuring informed consent, following ethical guidelines for research with human subjects, and educating student researchers on the use of best practices to prevent suggestibility or undue influence (unless these are an aspect of what is being researched).

Here are the steps CIHS takes to mitigate risks in all human subject research performed at the institution, including human subject research into UAP studies and experienter research:

- 1. Ethics Review and Approval:** All human subject research conducted at CIHS is required to undergo review by our Institutional Review Board (IRB), which considers the principles of beneficence (doing good), non-maleficence (not causing harm), autonomy (respecting individuals' choices), and justice (fairness in selecting research participants and distributing benefits and burdens) when reviewing proposed studies.

Each research proposal is unique and requires a thorough review based on the topic, questions, protocol, funding and potential conflicts of interest. The IRB evaluates each proposed study for ethical considerations, including the potential for harmful psychological effects such as the creation of false memories. Generally, researchers must provide detailed plans outlining how they will mitigate, monitor, and report on potential risks before any research is approved. The IRB retains an overview role during the carrying out of all research, and has the authority to modify, pause or cancel any research underway based on issues such as participant harm.

- 2. Informed Consent Process:** As part of the IRB process, a documented informed consent procedure is in place to ensure that all participants are aware of the nature of the specific research project they are considering participating in, possible psychological impacts, who they can contact at CIHS aside from the researcher with any concerns or support requests, and their right to withdraw at any time.
- 3. Methodological Rigor:** We emphasize the importance of employing appropriate methodologies in research, including with respect to UAP and experienter research.
- 4. Research-based Instruction:** As part of the training that is available for all student-researchers at CIHS, we strive to provide instruction on the current best practices in human subject research, ethical considerations, and safety. For example, in the context of your concerns here, this training covers the potential risks of suggestibility and introducing false memories.

Commitment to Ongoing Review and Advancement

The nature of research is constantly evolving, and we are committed to regularly reviewing and updating all of the above as new information and best practices emerge. We continue to work with our IRB, academic professionals, and research community to strive to ensure that our approach to all research conducted at CIHS, including UAP studies, remains in line with current best practices, as they evolve over time.

As an academic research institution, we're also interested in what we can do to advance these standards. To this end, we seek to apply knowledge from across our own institution, as well as support researchers such as yourself who have an interest in this area.

Accordingly, I encourage you to collaborate with the Center for Anomalous and Noetic Studies (CANS), as your Program Director, Dr. Esbjörn-Hargens, previously suggested, to contribute a white paper that explores what you feel are among the most pressing issues you raise and are interested in, in a structured and scholarly manner. For example, perhaps this white paper could include an evidence-based analysis of the potential risks associated with false memories in UAP studies, examine ethical considerations in experiencer research and offer recommendations for researchers in the field to consider as potential revisions to current best practices relating to human subject protections.

By engaging with experts and producing a formal academic paper, you could help advance a well-informed discussion that has the potential of influencing research practices at a broader level. Your Program Director, Dr. Esbjörn-Hargens, would be glad to support this effort. Though you are presently on a leave of absence from your studies, you are not required to have enrolled status at CIHS to participate in research projects at CIHS labs and centers. The first step in this direction would be to submit a proposal for the consideration of the center or lab you would like to work with.

We appreciate your advocacy for the protection of both research participants and the broader community engaged in these studies. Please be assured that we are always seeking to be proactive in addressing the types of concerns you've raised, and in seeking to ensure that research at CIHS is conducted in a responsible and ethical manner.

If you would like to discuss this matter further or have any additional concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Stacy Gomes, EdD

Provost