**III.J. Guidelines for Research in the Community**
*(Source: Office of the Provost, [Almanac, May 19, 1998](#))*

A significant number of Penn faculty and students are engaged in research that involves the study of the Philadelphia community, and, in particular, West Philadelphia, or that involves community members as research subjects. As in all research conducted under the auspices of the University, such research should adhere to the appropriate protocols for the protection of human subjects and must be approved by the University's Institutional Review Board.

Although the Institutional Review Board does an excellent job of protecting individual subjects, community-based research raises additional questions about research protocols and approaches. The populations studied are often Penn's neighbors, and as such, the approaches undertaken should reflect the importance of that relationship to Penn, and the values of mutual respect and trust that should guide all of our collaborative activities with the community. The University also recognizes that mutual respect and trust are necessary preconditions for the honest and open exchange of ideas that is essential to genuine learning and the advancement of academic inquiry.

The University views its relationship with the Philadelphia community as a partnership. Accordingly, and to the extent possible, Penn faculty and students should engage the community in helping to plan research projects. Also, the findings should be shared with the community so that all parties can benefit.

1. As in all research involving human subjects, undertaken under University auspices, research in the community must be approved by the Institutional review Board, and meet all of the required protections of human subjects.

2. Whenever possible, researchers investigating community issues should work with community-based organizations to discuss all aspects of the research process, including problem definition, hypothesis generation, study design, data analysis, and dissemination.

3. Whenever possible, researchers should have a dissemination plan that includes distribution or presentation of results to community members and organizations, particularly those who participated in the research.

4. Researchers should determine if other projects are underway in a community, and whenever possible, coordinate efforts with other research projects to minimize disruption and maximize positive impacts on community members and organizations.

5. In the spirit of mutual learning and benefit, researchers should consider how study results could be used to the benefit of the community whenever possible, and should make extra efforts to communicate those recommendations to appropriate community members.