

# Association of Bioethics Program Directors Meeting Minutes

Sienna Hotel, Chapel Hill, NC

April 11, 2011

**Attendees:** Asch, Burke, Clay, Derse, Doukas, Eckenwiler, Fox, Goodman, Klitzman, Kim, Kodish, Koenig, Iltis, Juengst, Kahn, Kuczewski, Lehman, Magnus(chairing), Moller, Rosenthal, Secker, Tomlinson, Stubing, Youngner, Wilfond(minutes).

## 1. Treasurer' Report- Tom Tomlinson

Our annual budget is currently about \$14,000, including \$4,000 for special projects. We have a reserve of about \$32,000. Our initial goal was to maintain a reserve of \$15,000. With an annual income from 55 members at \$500 a year, our reserve will continue to grow each year.

We discussed whether to spend more on some special projects or reduce our dues. Our prior special projects have been related to an organizational survey and a budget survey. Some were concerned that the \$500 is not necessary and not affordable to some programs. **We reached a consensus that we will leave dues at \$500 and defer a decision about dues once there is further consensus about the goals of the organization.**

We discussed the goals of ABPD. Collecting aggregate data over time about the structure and function of bioethics programs is likely to remain a priority. Further refinement of the surveys will be necessary to account for the diversity of organizational structures of academic bioethics programs and to improve the interpretation of the data. Other key issues identified included an improved web presence (accessible to the public?), further involvement with ASBH regarding accreditation of consult training programs, and addressing the implications of healthcare reform for bioethics programs discussions. We decided that such goals should be clarified by the organization, now that four years has passed since Jeff Kahn began us on our journey.

We identified two specific goals for the next year:

1. **Engage in a strategic planning process for ABPD.** Ideally, this process will involve most of the members. We could do this via email/conference calls/face to face meetings. The ABPD board will discuss how best to do this, including involving outside consultants. The irony of using our reserve to develop a thoughtful plan to use our reserve, was noted. We also noted the potential for a dues increase, particularly if an outcome of the process is a strategic plan that would require the efforts of a part-time executive director.

- 2. Develop a qualitative “map” of the organizational structure and institutional relationships in bioethics programs, to provide a foundation for further survey development.** We also discussed the potential of partnering with the AAMC and engaging with organizational sociologists to provide use with advice and guidance. Volunteers for an organizational mapping working group included Klitzman, Youngner, Fox, Kim, Juengst, Rosenthal, Wilfond(chair). Kodish and Magnus, who conducted the prior surveys, did not volunteer, were not offered the option of not participating.

For those not at the meeting but who are interesting in being involved in either of the two projects, contact Magnus or Wilfond, respectively

## **2. Discussion of Business Plans and Strategic plans- Kodish and Magnus.**

We were treated to Magnus’ s collection of Dilbert cartoons and Kodish’s insights from the business colleagues at the Cleveland Clinic. We had a robust discussion about differences between mission, vision, goals, strategies, tactics and the concepts such as value and return on investment. We distinguished between goals for leaders, programs, and institutions and the extent that these are, or should, or should not, be aligned. For a moment, which could only be measured in the scale of subatomic particles, there was complete clarity and agreement.

## **3. Update on certifying clinical consultants - Mark Kuczewski**

This is a topic that evokes the harmony of the universe. The ASBH Clinical Consultation Affairs Committee just developed a recommendation that rather than develop a certification exam, which is fraught with complexities and plagued by contention, to instead consider developing a ‘quality attestation’ program that might be useful to hospitals that wished to verify consultant’s credentials. This could involve review of documentation of a minimum number of consults, a relevant graduate degree, evidence of adequate consultation training, letters or recommendations, written case study analysis, examples of consults documentation, or an oral interview. This proposal has not yet been discussed by the ASBH board.

A task force on training program accreditation was established by ABPD and ASBH after the October 2010 meeting to conduct a curriculum mapping exercise to assess whether programs teach the core competencies. There are 12 members of the taskforce appointed by the ASBH and ABPD presidents and Robert Baker and Bruce White are the chairs. The group has not yet had a conference call.

ABPD is also the acronym for the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry. There was unanimous agreement that we should honor that relationship by advocating for the competency of ethics consultants to diagnose and treat little teeth.

#### **4. Evaluating Excellence in Bioethics- Barbara Secker (Jill Gibson on phone)**

We discussed the one-year project conducted by the Joint Centre for Bioethics. This was a normative examination of the features for evaluating excellence in bioethics education, research and practice. This project involved a literature review, interviews with local stakeholders, and drafting a final report. The report described four key features of excellence in Toronto: interdisciplinary, inter-professionalism, interplay between theory and practice, and real world impact. We continued our discussion about how to measure the value of bioethics programs, distinguishing between context, process and impact. We know this is important, and both the traditional and novel measures are imperfect.

#### **5. Announcements**

Kahn distributed the subcommittee report on open access journals in bioethics. This will be on our website and will be discussed at our next meeting

Next meeting will be the Wednesday evening before ASBH in Minnesota from 6:30-9:30, preceded by a 500pm (joint reception co-hosted with ASBH) to honor Bill Stubing for his leadership and contributions to the field of bioethics.

Our Spring meeting will be May 9<sup>th</sup> 2012 in Louisville in conjunction with the National Conference on Medical Ethics and Humanities in Medical Education which will be on May 10-11. David Doukas will be our host.

For those of you who are still reading this, there are prizes for the first three people who email me (bwilfond@uw.edu). You can choose between a bottle of Washington wine, a pound of Seattle coffee, or a signed picture by my 6 y.o. grandson of a 'silly goose monkey', depending on availability. These will be presented at our next meeting.