Poynter Center Wins Matching Funds for Cross-Campus Collaboration

In March of this year, the Poynter Center garnered commitments from an array of partnering IU units in a successful bid for matching funds from the College of Arts and Sciences Ostrom Grants Program. In all, twelve IUB units will collaborate to host a series of workshops on “The Future of Professional Ethics” in academic year 2015-16. Ken Pimple, Director of Teaching Research Ethics Programs (right), spearheaded the project and will be the principal coordinator.

Three key questions sparked the brainstorming process:

- What ethical challenges does your profession currently face?
- What ethical challenges will your profession face in the near future?
- How can researchers and educators prepare students and young professionals to meet these challenges?

As the sponsoring partners have begun meeting, vibrant conversations have made it clear that there is both great diversity in the concerns of teachers preparing their students for the professional world, and also great interest in exploring these challenges together, beyond standard disciplinary scripts. What does professionalism mean to young graduates? How do high student debt and variable career trajectories affect their choices? What social roles are new professions filling, and what social needs are going unmet? How do contemporary professionals cope with the ethical dilemmas raised by new technologies, high levels of regulation, and systemic injustices? What dilemmas are truly new, and how are old problems recurring in new forms?

By identifying ethical issues that professions and professionals face now and are likely to face in the near future we hope the workshops will provide a foundation for innovative research and curricula, as well as new and strengthened cross-disciplinary relationships among students, faculty, and departments. The workshop discussions will be compiled and organized into one or more coherent, persuasive products (a white paper, a special edition of a journal, a book, etc.) and disseminated widely.

This cross-campus collaboration at IUB will also link to a national effort being made by the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (see p. 7). With the Association, we plan to reach out to other universities hosting related events and send IU personnel to attend.

Partner Units

1. Association for Practical and Professional Ethics*
2. Department of Business Law & Ethics, Kelley School of Business
3. Division of Informatics, School of Informatics and Computing
4. Maurer School of Law
5. Media School*
6. Medical Sciences Program
7. Poynter Center*
8. School of Education
9. School of Optometry
10. School of Public and Environmental Affairs
11. School of Public Health–Bloomington
12. School of Social Work

* Lead units
Questions
from our Spring
Seminars

Should Holocaust memorials and museums broaden their missions? Are such moves expressive of solidarity or repression?

* How can Athletic Trainers balance their obligation to athletes as their patients with their professional responsibility to the team as their employer?

* A doctor who follows the law must give lower quality care to undocumented patients with chronic renal failure than to documented patients. What is an ethical doctor to do?

* What is artistic integrity?

Poynter Center Fellow: Jeff Fry

The Poynter Center hosted Jeff Fry as Poynter Center Fellow for Spring 2015. Jeff Fry graduated from Indiana University with a Ph.D. in Philosophy and Religious Studies. His specialty areas include Ethics, the Philosophy of Sport, and Philosophy of Religion. He is an active participant in sports, and has taught "Advanced Basketball." He has recently developed an interest in the intersection of neuroscience, philosophy of mind, and ethics, and in how these disciplines can be combined to illuminate and enrich the philosophy of sport. Recent publications include "On the Supposed Duty to Try One’s Hardest in Sports," in Philosophy in the Contemporary World (Fall 2011), and "Citius, Altius, Fortius, Virtuous," a chapter in The Olympics and Philosophy (edited by Austin and Reid/University Press of Kentucky, 2012).

As a Poynter Center Fellow during the 2015 spring semester, Fry describes his experience as rich and varied. "In order to deepen my understanding of subjects relevant to my ongoing research and teaching endeavors, throughout the semester I informally audited a course in cognitive science and two courses in neuroscience. In the neuroscience survey course I even took exams—for fun!"

In February Jeff presented a paper entitled “Sports, Brains, and Ethics” at the Poynter Center. In April he traveled to Vancouver, Canada where he presented a paper entitled “Extending the Mind Through Sport” at the Group Meeting of the International Association for the Philosophy of Sport at the Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association. Also in April Jeff presented at the Poynter Center a synopsis of his semester’s activities. This included a report on his progress on two ongoing research projects.

The first project is a treatment of various forms of naïveté associated with sport. The end product will be a co-authored book that deals with forms of naïveté in sport that may be categorized under traditional philosophical rubrics, such as metaphysical, ethical, epistemological, and logical naïveté. The second project is a co-edited book on neuro-philosophical issues in sport. During the semester Jeff worked on a chapter for the prospective book. The tentative title of the contribution is “Two Types of Brain Injuries in Sport.” He acknowledges that concussions are rightly, though belatedly, receiving needed consideration in sport. In addition, Jeff suggests that attention might profitably be directed to emotional trauma experienced in sport, and that emotional injuries are reflections of underlying brain injuries.

“I’ve appreciated the openness of the academic community at IU, as well as the camaraderie and the friendships formed at the Poynter Center and at IU in general during the spring term,” Jeff says. “For a three-time IU alum, this has been a rewarding homecoming.”
The Indiana University Ethics Bowl team advanced to the **semifinals** of the national Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl competition in Costa Mesa, CA, on February 22. The competition is held each year in conjunction with the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics International Conference. Two IU teams placed first and second in the Central States regional competition in October, awarding IU a slot in the thirty-two-team national competition. IU made it to the final four before being nudged out by the eventual national champion, Taylor University. The IU Team has a prestigious history at the competition.

In addition to advancing to the semifinals, IU was also awarded the **Spirit of Ethics Bowl Robert Ladenson Award**, which is named for the founder of the Ethics Bowl competition and recognizes excellence in exemplifying the Ethics Bowl competition’s core values of respect and civility. The Ladenson Award is awarded by the votes of fellow Ethics Bowl competitors who have either observed or competed against the schools for whom they cast their votes. “The Ladenson Award represents the respect of the team’s peers, and in that makes it perhaps our most meaningful win to date” said team coordinator and co-coach Emma Young, a former Ethics Bowl semifinalist herself. Head coach Joe Bartzel added, “I couldn’t be prouder of our students. They’re sharp thinkers, they work incredibly hard, and they compete the right way. As a coach, I really couldn’t ask for anything more out of a team.”

The Ethics Bowl competition requires teams to develop and then defend their own unique assessment of complex moral issues across a variety of fields. This year they had five weeks to develop positions on fifteen cases before the national competition. Issues debated at the Nationals included raising the minimum wage, legalizing horse slaughterhouses, allocating rare resources among different branches of science, pursuing machine intelligence, and laws surrounding rape and parental rights.

**Coach Profile:**

Joe Bartzel joined the Poynter staff as Ethics Bowl Coach this year. He is a PhD candidate in Religious Studies, interested in looking at how different actors lay claim to “the historical Jesus” to support their agendas.
2015 Jesse Fine Fellows

The Jesse Fine Fellowship is funded by a gift from the late Dorothy Fine in honor of her husband Jesse, an alumnus of IU. Her wish was to support the development of curriculum and instruction that would infuse ethics into teaching across the disciplines. To that end, since 2013 the Poynter Center has been administering her gift by awarding four or five competitive Fellowships per year based on proposals for the development or substantive revision of courses to address ethics in any field or discipline at IU.

Emmalon Davis, Department of Philosophy:

“Practical Ethics and the Ethics of Community”

Davis, a PhD student, will revise the department's Introductory Ethics course to incorporate practical ethics and community ethics more centrally into the course themes, while also broadening the array of thinkers students encounter to demonstrate that philosophy is not limited to a white male canon. Scholarly texts will be enhanced through opportunities for service learning.

Rae Greiner, Department of English:

“The Ethics of Intelligence”

Greiner, an Associate Professor, will revise existing courses on “stupidity” at the undergraduate and graduate levels, using ethics as the organizing principle. The courses look at how ethical objectives in the eighteenth and nineteenth century were routinely (if uneasily) bound together with scientific, empirical, and literary aims in works seeking to explain how humans know what they know.

Saul Kutnicki, School of Media:

“Ethics in Ruins: Image Cultures and Abandoned Histories in the American Mediascape”

Kutnicki, a PhD student in Communication and Culture, will develop a new course to address the need for innovative curriculum as that former Department is incorporated into the Media School. This undergraduate course will highlight ethical dimensions of visual communication studies, media assemblage practices, and documentary reporting.

Michelle Moyd, Department of History:

“The Ethics of Helping Others: Humanitarianism in Modern History”

Moyd, an associate professor, will develop a new course in the History curriculum that first surveys the history of humanitarianism, and then guides students into thinking through the complexities of humanitarian action with a central emphasis placed on questions of ethical behavior, whether individual or institutional.
Collaborations

The Poynter Center remains dedicated to promoting academic collaboration. This semester’s partners have included:

**Consortium for the Study of Religion, Ethics, and Society**

“The Internet as Space of Confession of and Forgiveness for Climate Sins”

A Religion and Ethics Roundtable with Sarah Fredericks, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion at the University of North Texas (April 24). The Poynter Center was co-sponsor and host.

**Kelley School of Business, Department of Business, Law, and Ethics**

“Legal and Ethical Dimensions of Predictive Data Analysis: A Colloquium”

The Poynter Center and the Center for Business Intelligence and Analytics in the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech University were co-sponsors. The Poynter Center hosted the two-day event.

**School of Public Health**

**Transgender Health Disparities** video

This teaching resource was created by partners in the School of Public Health with support from the Jesse Fine Fellowship and is hosted on both the School of Public Health and Poynter Center websites.

Questions from our Spring Seminars

Do scientists have a particular obligation to educate the public?

* How does a sex researcher balance pursuing public education with the inevitable sensationalization and normative marketing that accompanies publishing for a broad audience?

* What factors should influence a reporting photographer’s decision to continue reporting or set down the camera and intervene in a situation?

* Do Muslim ethics promote protecting other faiths from religious persecution?
Samantha Strong is a sophomore, an Ernie Pyle Scholar in the School of Journalism, and pursuing an Individualized Major in Bioethics. Her winning project was: "Just Healthcare: a Rawlsian Liberal-egalitarian Perspective on the Accessibility and Affordability of Treatment for Chronic Hepatitis C Patients."

Each academic year, students at IU Bloomington who are conducting research for a class or honors project in any school or department may apply for a $200 Research Prize in Practical Ethics for Undergraduates. These research prizes are intended to stimulate ethical reflection in undergraduate education, reward highly motivated students, and facilitate original research at the undergraduate level. They enable students to develop close mentoring relationships with IU faculty and take advantage of the input and expertise of the Poynter Center community to include ethical inquiry as they hone their skills in their chosen field.

Strong presented her research at the Poynter Center on May Day to an audience of Poynter staff and an impressive array of mentors and family members. Her faculty advisor for the project was Professor of Philosophy Sandra Shapshay. In her presentation, she detailed the specific barriers to Hep C treatment, which is prohibitively expensive even on most insurance plans, explored normative frameworks, argued that society has an obligation to provide a minimum level of healthcare, and made a policy proposal to help pursue fulfillment of that obligation for patients with Hepatitis C.

Among her other accomplishments, Samantha is a founding member of the IU Bioethics Society and on the staff of the IU Journal of Undergraduate Research (IUJUR). This summer she is interning at the Center for Bioethics at IUPUI.

Does the emotion of desperation interfere with ethical decision making?

* How can medical personnel overcome the staggering statistics on silence about medical error?

Catching up with APPE

We continue our long relationship with The Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, which resides in the Poynter Center. APPE is gearing up for its 25th anniversary next year by coordinating “A Year of Conversation on the Past and Future of Professional Ethics,” of which the Poynter Center’s Ostrom Grant will be a part (see page 1).

The Association’s 24th year has been off to a strong start, with record attendance at Annual Conference in Costa Mesa, California. The keynote speaker was Stephen Gardiner, on his book *A Perfect Moral Storm: the Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*.

The 25th Anniversary Conference will be in Reston, Virginia, just outside of Washington, DC, in February 2016. Keep an eye out for the Call for Papers in mid-September 2015!
Looking Ahead…

In academic year 2015-16, David Smith will continue to serve as Interim Director. The rest of the staff also remains unchanged.

In May 2015, we welcomed James Shanahan as Dean of the Media School, our new home. We look forward to continuing to expand our relationship with the School.

Poynter Center Advisory Committee

- Jeffrey Alberts, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences
- Charlene Brown, Hutton Honors College and Wells Scholars Program
- Daniel Conkle, Maurer School of Law
- Josh Perry, Kelley School of Business
- Sandra Shapshay, Department of Philosophy
- Lisa Sideris, Department of Religious Studies
- Rob Stone, IU Health Bloomington Hospital

Keep in Touch

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