



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

A recent report published by the Association of Academic Health Centers (a Washington DC-based national, non-profit organization of more than 100 institutional members in the United States) concluded that Creighton University's Center for Health Policy and Ethics can be distinguished from many other ethics and policy centers by its pivotal role in the ethics preparation of its university's health professions students. Like other centers, CHPE is committed to excellence in ethics research and service activities. But unlike many others, Center members also are also involved in required course work for all students in the four Creighton University Health Sciences Schools. These course loads are supplemented with elective seminars and guided research projects for students who choose to pursue further ethics study.

Creighton University, as Catholic and Jesuit, encourages the ethical and faith development of its students as well as their intellectual development. Creighton University's mission affects the design and contents of all the Center's curricular activity. To give you a flavor of the range of its course offerings, in this issue of FOCUS we begin a series of thumbnail sketches of CHPE course offerings and approaches. Subsequent issues will highlight other ethics courses and initiatives.

What kinds of issues can one expect to see addressed? Social justice is one dominant theme found in virtually every course offered by CHPE members. To illustrate with one that Jos Welie and I co-directed with the Department of Psychiatry, this spring the second-year medical students completed a required course that dealt with the challenges

and opportunities involved in working professionally with groups at the social margins of society. Catholic and Jesuit teaching calls us to give a preferential option to the poor. "The poor" are those who cannot participate in the social goods of society. Students were encouraged to learn about and reflect on their professional responsibility to redress injustices related to the social good of health care. Readings and discussion on poverty, justice, minority health status and organizational challenges to providing services for underserved groups created the intellectual context.

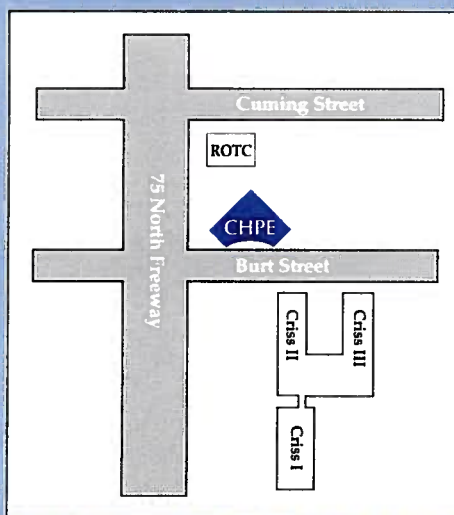
The centerpiece of the course was the students' on-site participation in local health care sites. Collaboration with professionals at seventeen different sites allowed students to become familiar with many of Omaha's best health care

facilities and professionals dedicated to providing quality health care to marginalized populations. Students learned about the actual structures of care, economic, legal and administrative issues. Many met and interacted with patients or clients as well as health professionals. Creighton faculty met with students in small groups to facilitate discussion about what they had experienced and help integrate what they learned.

This is just one example among others that will be featured in subsequent issues of this newsletter. It illustrates once again the power of Creighton University's mission to help provide direction in the education of future generations of competent and compassionate health care professionals.

Ruth Purtilo

We Have Moved



New Visiting Address:
2616 Burt Street

Our mailing address
has not changed:
2500 California Plaza
Omaha, NE 68178

Watch for the Fall 2000
issue of FOCUS which
will be devoted to
events surrounding the
move to the new
building.

Timeless Issues and Contemporary Challenges in Healthcare

"Autonomy vs. informed consent comes up all the time in the hospital, take this case where..."

"Some patients don't really have knowledge of their disease process so..."

"I'm right smack in the middle of the road because..."

Ethical dialogue and debate are key components of the undergraduate health care ethics course offered through the Center. Given the large numbers of students consistently registered for the course HPE 311, participation during class is limited but the use of an internet based conference board currently provides the mechanism through which every student contributes to the discussion. The above comments were from the "Right to Refuse Treatment" topic as students engaged in deliberation during the section on autonomy. The conference board activity is a joy to supervise as students use their knowledge of bioethics and other disciplines to inform the group, present positions relative to ethical issues, or

challenge others to think about problems from another perspective. The conference board is a recent addition to former course strategies given increased computer availability and the flexibility afforded by internet capabilities.

The course, Health Care Ethics (HPE 311) focuses on the inquiry and exploration of ethical issues in modern health care using theoretical foundations from bioethics and scholarly reflection to articulate a range of possible solutions to the problems that may ensue. As an introductory course, a range of topics addressing the entire life span as well as systems, cultural, and environmental issues are included. Teaching strategies in addition to the conference board utilize video productions, poetry and stories, role playing, knowledge assessments, small group work, quizzes, and games. Students are required to complete both individual and group work for their evaluation. Student group presentations are scheduled throughout the semester which are based on a point-counterpoint concept. The creativity of these sessions is very rewarding and many presentations are quite lively. Individual papers vary in their frame-

work as students are required to identify an ethical issue, analyze it, pose solutions with the accompanying ethical rationale, and determine which solution is preferable. Student papers make the use of newspaper reports, fiction (poetry, short stories, or book chapters), editorial cartoons, and personal interviews. Some students write in the form of a letter to the editor or to a political figure which on occasion are actually mailed.

The seriousness of the issues encompassed within the course is appreciated and acknowledged by the students. Not a single semester goes by without students sharing many personal encounters with health care ethical issues either directly to other students in class or more recently through the conference board. They are challenged by these issues but as the semester progresses, the students develop and increasingly apply the bioethical material during their analysis of the problem. The semester usually closes all too quickly as both the students and myself recognize that there is far more ideas to explore than there is time to examine them.

Winifred J. Ellenchild Pinch

Ethics Courses in the OT and PT programs

"Writing this case analysis has brought organization to my thought processes. I realize that there is more to decision making than my own personal beliefs. My morals and values have a place, but many other factors may dictate a situation. I learned that it is ok to make mistakes. I just need to take responsibility for them and do what I can to make the situation right. From this experience, I will know what to do the next time." (student's reflection; spring 2000)

A central component of our ethics courses in occupational therapy and physical therapy is facilitating reflective habits of the mind. The ability of health professionals to assess the experience, context, and possible outcomes of ethical dilemmas is vital to professional practice that is reflective and not routine.

Both the occupational and physical therapy departments at Creighton University support a minimum of one

3-semester hour credit class in each of their programs. In occupational therapy (OT) this will be the final year for our baccalaureate program where we have offered a capstone course in ethics for seniors just before their graduation. The entry-level OT clinical doctorate program will offer a sequence of two ethics courses. The post-professional OT clinical doctorate program has included an advanced ethics seminar since its start in 1994. In 1993 the physical therapy department began with an entry-level clinical doctorate program that has also featured a course in ethics since its inception. This fall marks the first year of a post-professional clinical doctorate program that is being offered through distance learning. The ethics course for that program is currently underway over the internet, linking therapists from across the country in conversations and ethical analyses of their current practice.

Our ethics teaching draws explicitly on students' clinical experiences—whether they are beginning students in an entry-level program or seasoned therapists enrolled in a post-professional program. Physical and occupational therapists work in a variety of settings, including in- and out-patient rehabilitation services, long-term care facilities, sports medicine practices, school systems, vocational retraining agencies, industry, and nontraditional community-based health education and wellness programs. Common to all the diverse settings are issues that require clear ethical discernment and action of students and therapists alike. Our teaching strategies weave between theory, experience and narrative to provoke and guide students toward enlarging their capacity for ethical discernment, reasoned judgment, and committed action.

Kate Brown and Gail Jensen

Center News

Congratulations to...

On February 8, 2000, **Gary Westerman**, Chair of the Department of Community and Preventive Dentistry and CHPE Faculty Associate was appointed as the second chair holder of the Dr. Oscar S. Belzer Endowed Chair in Dentistry.

On April 6, **Sidney Stohs**, Dean of the School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions and member of CHPE's Deans' Council, was appointed as the first chair holder of the Gilbert F. Taffe, Jr. Endowed Chair in the School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions.

This spring, **Gail Jensen**, member of the Department of Physical Therapy and CHPE Faculty Associate, was promoted to full professor. She also received the Physical Therapy Educator of the Year award at the School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions' Student Banquet on March 25, 2000. This award is given by the PT students to a faculty member in recognition of excellence in teaching and advancement of student professional development. In addition, she has been appointed as a U.S. West Technology Fellow for the 2000-2001 academic year.

On March 25, 2000, **Amy Haddad**, Professor in the CHPE and the School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions, received the Dr. Pete Ellerbeck Teaching award, presented by Kappa Psi Pharmaceutical Fraternity to a pharmacy faculty member who has been of great service to the students.

On March 25, 2000, **Kate Brown**, Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy and CHPE Faculty Associate, received the Educator of the Year award conferred by the entry-level Occupational Therapy Doctoral students, in recognition of her knowledge and enthusiasm regarding Occupational Therapy, including the compassion and consideration conveyed to students.

On July 1, 1999, **Robert McQuillan**, Associate Professor in the CHPE and Department of Anesthesiology, was appointed as the chair of the latter department. He was also awarded tenure this spring.

JOINING THE CENTER

Mark Goodman, MD joined the CHPE as a Faculty Associate early this year. Dr. Goodman received his MD degree from the University of Nebraska Medical



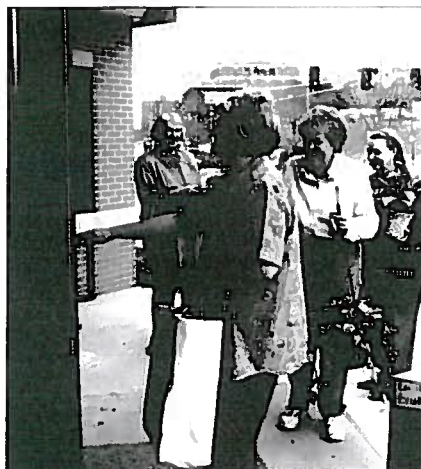
Center in Omaha in 1985. He specialized in Family Practice at Rush University in Chicago and was Board Certified in 1988. Mark started practicing in California (1988-1990), but moved to Showak, Sudan (1990-1992) to work for the Lalmba Association and United Nations High Commission on Refugees as medical director of the refugee clinics. After working for Omaha's Charles Drew Clinic (1992-1994), he joined Creighton University's Department of Family Practice. He also serves as the medical director of St. Joseph Villa Hospice in Omaha. Mark brings extensive experience in HIV care, travel medicine and hospice care to the Center.

Snapshots from "the Big Move" April 2, 2000



Above As their final task in the previous CHPE space, CHPE staff and faculty members ceremoniously retired the Center's sign. (left to right) Rita Nutty, Winnie Pinch, Ruth Purtilo, Amy Haddad, and Beth Furlong.

Below With possessions in hand, CHPE faculty members anxiously wait to claim office space as Administrative Assistant JoAnn Maynard opens the entryway of the new CHPE building. (left to right) Beth Furlong, JoAnn Maynard, Winnie Pinch and Linda Scheirton.



Visit the New Dental Ethics Webpage
CHPE faculty member Jos Welie designed a new web page devoted to the discipline of dental ethics. The web address is <http://www.creighton.edu/dentaethics>. The web page contains information on CU's dental ethics curriculum as well as links to many associations, ethics codes, practice acts, and other on-line publications. A calendar of dental ethics related conferences and contact addresses for experts in the field is included as well.

Members of the Center for Health Policy and Ethics acknowledge with sorrow the passing of **Father Richard A. McCormick, S.J.** (10/3/22 - 2/12/00). Father McCormick taught at the Jesuit School of Theology in Chicago ('57-'73), Georgetown University Kennedy Institute of Ethics ('73-'86) and Notre Dame (Since '86). His wisdom and commitment to the best thinking that can be brought to bear on ethical issues in health care was a source of instruction and enrichment to us all. He will be missed.

The Use of Narrative in Bioethics Education

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Narrative is a way of knowing. We are asked to enter an imaginary world with all of the epistemological problems of the real world. Narrative literature, and by this term I mean language used in an intensified, artistic manner, can be used to offer a fresh way for health science students to understand the encounter between health professional and patient. Short stories, plays, poems and novels about the drama of sickness, loss, adjustment to chronic illness, and death add to a wider, more encompassing discussion of biomedical issues. Narrative approaches to ethics have been described as roughly falling into three categories: (1) classification of stories as a method of getting at what is morally important, (2) use of stories as a means to moral understanding, and (3) telling of stories as a way to make moral sense of something by choosing particulars from the array of experience.¹ The second approach to narrative ethics, i.e., using stories as a means to moral understanding, is utilized in many of the health science ethics courses offered at Creighton University. Narrative is used to improve the students' ability to interpret the written word, to empathize with the predicament of characters and apply what they learn to the real world of clinical encounters.

Faculty members select literary works that focus students on the ethical issues and values dilemmas that will affect their work in clinical practice. In guided discussions, the students are able to

share common concerns and explore their work in broader perspectives. By being able to identify with and through the fictional characters and situations, the students bring up analogous life experiences, from the dramatic to everyday. Thus, the discussions emerge and revolve around "two texts": one the literary text, the other the working world of the students' lives. In this way, moral dilemmas, career expectations, the feelings of power or powerlessness and other dimensions of the moral life can be raised and shared in class. When asked on a recent exam how narrative contributes to the basic goals of ethics, a pharmacy student stated, "It helps us learn how to pay attention to what is important." The student's response, in simpler terms, reflects the position of Martha Nussbaum who noted that poetry, and I assume other forms of literature, "emphasizes the importance of perceiving particular lives in all of their social complexity and individual variety."² Participating in another's story is at the heart of what health professionals do when they interact with patients, so understanding narratives is a particularly important way to gain one's ethical bearings.

Amy Haddad

1 Lindemann Nelson, H. (1995). What's Narrative Ethics? Center View, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, vol. 4, no. 2, pg. 1.

2 Nussbaum, M. (1992). "Literature and Bioethics," in Lawrence C. Becker, ed. Encyclopedia of Ethics (New York and London: Garland), pg. 730.

Affirming Life in the Face of Death. A Comprehensive Look at End-of-Life Issues Second Annual Conference, co-sponsored by the Nebraska Coalition for Compassionate Care, the Nebraska Hospice Association and the Nebraska Medical Association, with financial support of the Center for Health Policy and Ethics. May 4, 2000, Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, Lincoln, NE. For more information, call the NCCC at (402) 477-0204 or visit the NCCC webpage at: <http://www.nebrccc.org>.

CHPE Open House
Come and Visit the new building on May 5, 11:30 am – 3:00 pm, 2616 Burt Street.

Clinical Ethics Series co-sponsored with the Department of Surgery
May 11, 2000, 7:00 – 8:00 am, Saint Joseph Hospital Seminar Room.

11th Annual Women and Health Lecture
Tentatively scheduled for September 6, 2000.

Visit the CHPE website for information on upcoming fall events at <http://chpe.creighton.edu>.

FOCUS

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