THE CHALLENGE OF RESEARCH ETHICS EDUCATION IN THE UNIVERSITY SETTING: A RESPONSE TO NIH AND NSF REGULATIONS

Brian Schrag, Executive Director (retired)
Association for Practical and Professional Ethics

On March 3, 2011, the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, through its subcommittee, the Responsible Conduct of Research Education Committee (RCREC), sponsored a seminar, “The Challenge of Research Ethics Education in the University Setting: A response to NIH and NSF Requirements.” The seminar was held in conjunction with the Association’s Annual Meeting. The intention was to begin fostering collaboration on Research Ethics Education by bringing together some diverse groups who have much to learn from each other regarding education in the responsible conduct of research, but who would not necessarily otherwise have an occasion to interact. The groups included research scientists and engineers; university administrators charged with research ethics education and research compliance training; young scientists and engineers who were former participants in the Association’s long running NSF funded Graduate Research Ethics Education Program; representatives of the Society for Ethics Across the Curriculum; Ethics Center Members of the Association; and members of the RCREC Committee. The seminar was convened by Brian Schrag, Executive Director of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, James Dubois, Chair of the RCREC, and Stephanie Bird, Committee Member, RCREC. Over 100 participants attended the seminar.

The seminar began with a presentation, “Responsible Professional Practices” by Peggy Fisher, Associate Inspector General for Investigations, Office of Inspector General, National Science Foundation. This was followed by a presentation by James Dubois, Hubert Mader Endowed Professor, Department of Health Ethics, Saint Louis University, drawing on his published report “Using a Delphi Survey Process to Establish a Consensus on the Goals and content of RCR Instruction.”
The following essays are a selection of the papers presented or submitted for four panels and are grouped under those headings: (Panel 1) “The Challenge of Research Ethics Education in the University: The View from University Offices of Research;” (Panel 2) “Collaborative Possibilities Between Ethics Centers, Ethics Across the Curriculum Programs and University Offices of Research;” (Panel 3) “Research Ethics Education in the University: The View from Early Career Faculty;” (Panel 4) “Special Focus: Research Ethics Education in the Social Sciences.” The intention of these proceedings is to give voice to those working in the trenches in research ethics education and to speak to the large community that is required for effective collaboration to provide sound research ethics education. The discussion at the seminar was enormously enriched by the small group discussion leaders and the discussion of the more than 100 attendees at the event.

**PANEL 1: THE CHALLENGE OF RESEARCH ETHICS EDUCATION IN THE UNIVERSITY: THE VIEW FROM UNIVERSITY OFFICES OF RESEARCH**

The essays in the first section address the internal and external challenges of research ethics education, as seen from the perspective of University Offices of Research. All of the contributors on the panel agreed on the need to move beyond compliance training. They all discuss, from their various perspectives, the challenges of identifying precisely the aims of Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) programs and the cost of such programs. A common theme is resource constraints, both time and money.

The first essay, “New NSF and NIH Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Guidelines: A Three Phase Plan” by Jennifer McCafferty, Reid Cushman, Kenneth W. Goodman, Paul Braunschweiger, and Robin N. Fiore, all from the University of Miami, lays out some of the challenges of the new federal guidelines to University Offices of Research. The essay provides a helpful side-by-side comparison of the new requirements from the NSF and NIH (See Appendix A of the essay.)

The authors note that for many compliance officers, already hard pressed to provide RCR compliance training, and evidence of training, these new mandates are perceived as just another pressure for doing compliance training—another unfunded mandate imposing increasing time and cost constraints on already burdened compliance offices. It is
worth noting that, from this perspective, university officials are motivated by external considerations to install compliance training, namely to provide the university with legal liability protection. As such it is rational for the university administrators to perceive compliance training as not central to the mission of the university and to try to provide compliance training for the least possible cost. On the part of many university officials there is a failure to recognize the difference between compliance training and ethics education for responsible conduct of research in terms of objective, content, and mode of delivery. (The essays in Panel 2 will expand on this distinction.) Consequently there is a failure by many administrators to recognize ethics education for RCR as a core part of the university educational mission and hence a failure to fund it appropriately.

The essay by McCafferty et al., demonstrates the breadth of program required if the university is not content with merely compliance training, but is determined to provide ethics education for RCR across the entire university. It raises the question of the level of financial commitment required if universities are serious about RCR ethics education, and underscores the impact that institutional culture and economics have on responses to the new requirements. Their essay also provides a good example of an institution that has a history of a collaborative effort between the University Office of Research, research scientists, ethicists, and a university-based ethics program.

Terry May, in his very thoughtful paper, “The View from Michigan State University,” speaks from the perspective of another long established program in research ethics education in RCR at Michigan State University. That history allows him to reflect on the long term impact of various efforts at that institution. He acknowledges the value of educating students in how to do RCR and that “doing the right thing” is based in part on knowledge and understanding of research ethics, but that such knowledge is not sufficient to ensure actually “doing the right thing.”

May notes two challenges in doing RCR ethics education. The first is a lack of clarity about the objectives or desired outcomes for ethics education programs. Our perception of how effective RCREC ethics education is will obviously depend on the objectives and hence the outcome measures of its success. (Essays in Panel 2 will address this issue more explicitly.) He also notes that, in looking at the history of the Michigan State program, it is clear that the cultures of various research
units on campus have differed in buying in on the importance of and need for formal requirements for RCR ethics education.

May observes that, over the years, a fundamental assumption at Michigan State University has been that as a result of graduate education in RCR ethics education, the academic culture and perception about RCR ethics education and practice would be changed over time to a more accepting attitude toward it. He then shares the results of two assessment efforts which challenge that assumption. He concludes that it is easier and more effective for departments to focus, not on individual moral and ethical decision making, but on group deliberation and decision making, which draws on group norms and standard for the quality of research.

Allison Ratterman, University of Louisville, in “Developing Diverse and Robust Research Ethics Education: One Office’s Approach,” sets out in more detail the challenges of University Offices of Research. Part of the challenge is the struggle imposed by dual roles such offices play in both compliance training and research ethics education.

On the one hand, government regulations on research conduct and requirements by funding agencies are constantly changing. The University Office of Research has to keep on top of the changing regulatory landscape as well as performing risk management for the university. The impact of new regulations on the universities also has to be explained back to the legislative and regulatory bodies, as well as providing leadership to find compromises with them. At the same time, the University Offices of Research must provide the compliance training and RCR ethics education which complies with the regulations. This imposes enormous time constraints on University Offices of Research.

Ratterman recognizes that the modes of compliance training to satisfy many of the regulations and the means for doing so, including quizzes and online offerings, do not achieve the aims of RCR ethics education, nor are the measures of compliance training adequate measures of RCR ethics education. Hence there is a tension between the University Offices of Research need to fulfill the “annual metrics of office performance to justify continual support” and the need to foster “true change in the institutional culture” in terms of responsible conduct of research. Consequently, Ratterman urges that University Offices of Research must resist the tendency to conflate the tasks of compliance training and RCR ethics education. The focus must not be merely on documenting compliance training, but on significant RCR ethics education.
Ratterman makes clear that one consequence of the clarity of the distinction between compliance training and RCR ethics education is the recognition that for RCR ethics education, “one size does not fit all.” RCR ethics education must be tailored to address the levels of sophistication of researchers from the level of trainees to senior faculty, tailored to the sorts of research being done, tailored to the cultural variations fields as different as engineering and action research. All of these concerns raised by Ratterman imply greater collaboration between University Offices of Research and faculty and a significant shift in approach from many current programs in University Offices of Research in many universities.

The essays by Stephen Erickson, Boston College, “The Boston College Experience” and Camille Nebeker, San Diego State University, “One Size Doesn’t Fit All: Creating Relevant Research Ethics Training Opportunities,” further illustrate the need to provide unique RCR ethics education for diverse areas of research. Erickson describes a RCR program for university administrators involved in administrative issues of RCR. Nebeker describes a program of RCR ethics education for participants in Professional Science Masters Programs who will work in non-profits, government, and industry, and who have unique needs to integrate research ethics into their practice.

Both authors underscore the theme that underlies all the essays in this section, viz. the issue of adequate budgeting in the university for RCR ethics education, independent of compliance training. Erickson illustrates how fragile a good program can be without adequate funding. Nebeker notes that her university has taken in over one billion dollars in research grants over the last ten years. That suggests both a source and a justification of increased funding support for RCR ethics education, a point to which we will return.

Panel 2: Collaborative Possibilities between Ethics Centers, Ethics Across the Curriculum Programs and, University Offices of Research

The focus of the essays in Panel 2 is on possibilities of collaboration on RCR ethics education between groups that have not necessarily interacted in the past. Panelists included those with a background in academic administration, faculty research, research ethics, ethics centers, and ethics across the curriculum. Some have formal training in ethics and ethics education. It is significant that one rarely finds a group with this
collective background working together on an actual university campus to provide leadership in RCR ethics education.

Historically, research administrators have had responsibility for RCR at least since the inadequacy of ethics education by mentoring has been recognized. As we have seen from the first set of essays, that education has often focused on compliance training since administrators have responsibility for ensuring university compliance with government regulations in research.

Historically most such administrators have not had formal degrees in ethics or experience in ethics education. A more significant number have had a legal background which has perhaps made it natural for them to focus on compliance and a compliance approach. Consequently, many in University Offices of Research have not been in a good position to recognize the difference between compliance training and RCR ethics education, nor the difference in goals, outcomes or resources needed. (Sangeeta Panicker, in her essay for this collection, notes how frequently the terms “research regulation” and “research ethics” are used interchangeably in many education programs including NIH and CITI, and the damaging impact that has had.)

As administrators, they also have a responsibility for the cost of RCR programs and are sensitive to faculty complaints about time taken away from research to do RCR education. That has led increasingly to the reliance on the use of online RCR education, which is essentially a form of compliance training. It costs less and takes less time for faculty than more effective RCR ethics education. The compliance concern is legitimate but not adequate. The authors in the essays for this panel distinguish between the goals and effects of compliance training and RCR ethics education. They argue for the need for RCR ethics education and the need (not often recognized), for collaboration between administrators, research faculty, and ethicists to provide that education. The challenge in such collaboration is discussed and some concrete models for promoting that collaboration are provided.

Daniel Wueste, in “RCR: Some Splendid Opportunities” sets out a crucial distinction between the notion of compliance and that of ethical responsibility. He notes that compliance has to do with and focuses only on the compliance of a researcher with federal or legal guidelines, whereas the notion of responsible conduct of research preceded any legislative guidelines. For example, the ethical issues of falsification, fabrication, and plagiarism were recognized in research long before the existence of any governmental regulations regarding such concerns and
hence their “wrongness did not then and does not now depend on the existence of governmental regulations.” These are the norms implicit in scientific research. Compliance may be the province of those with a legal or regulatory background but the ethical norms of a practice are the ethicist’s expertise.

Wueste notes the implication of this distinction for ethics education. Compliance training focuses on making researchers aware that something must be done to comply with a regulation. Ethics education focuses on why these things should be done. This involves making explicit the underlying norms of science. Making the norms explicit is necessary for researchers to “own” the norms governing research. As ethicists know, that is best done by the pedagogical approach of dialogue in a face-to-face setting, not in an online course.

Wueste observes that this is the sort of teaching activity which practical ethicists do for a living in many areas of professional practice and which ethics centers with a focus on practical ethics facilitate on many university campuses. Therefore, ethicists and ethics centers on campus could make a significant contribution to research ethics education in the university, both with the ethics education of science trainees as well as with helping research faculty integrate research ethics into their courses.

Wueste draws on his experience in business ethics to note the impact of a compliance mentality in teaching a target audience. The focus on compliance training leads the target audience to treat policies and training as hoops to be jumped through and creates an authoritarian, adversarial relation between those in charge of the education and those receiving the education.

A focus on research ethics education, on the other hand, results in an understanding of conduct that is owned and freely chosen. The outcome of research ethics education should result in respect for and adherence to the educational norms inherent in research. This echoes the observation in Terry May’s essay regarding an educational focus on group decisions based on shared norms of the research enterprise. Wueste adds that recognizing the links between RCR education, Ethics across the Curriculum, and Academic Integrity movements on campus would provide some opportunities which, for the most part, have been missed by RCR programs.

In “Involving Faculty in Teaching the Responsible Conduct of Research,” Stephanie Bird concurs with Wueste on the distinction between compliance training and research ethics education. She argues
that trainees and faculty must “own” the ethical norms that underlie research and for that to happen, both trainees and faculty must become *explicitly* aware of those norms. Compliance training does not do this; mentoring does not do this adequately. Mentoring may address the ethical issues implicitly but not explicitly. The problem with the mentoring approach is that the rationale behind exemplary behavior is not always obvious and thus the norms are not made explicit. Bird also mentions the research in cognitive psychology that debunks the myth that students (and faculty) cannot be taught to behave ethically if they do not already do so.

An absolutely central issue addressed by Bird regards the goals of ethics education, a topic that is missing in much of the RCR literature. Such goals were first articulated in 1980 by Daniel Callahan in *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education*. The goals include developing a capacity to take the moral point of view, a capacity to recognize ethical issues in a specific situation or practice, a capacity to reason about ethical issues and make practical ethical decisions as well as developing a disposition for responsible ethical behavior. A proper understanding of these goals raises serious concerns about any of them being met by compliance training or online ethics training, since neither compliance training or online ethics training is effective in providing ownership in the norms or experience in making and defending ethical decisions in the practice of scientific research. (For a comprehensive discussion of the goals of ethics education and the implications for teaching research ethics see my article, “Teaching Research Ethics: Can Web-Based Instruction Satisfy Appropriate Pedagogical Objectives?”).

In understanding moral deliberation and its implication for teaching ethics, Bird also invokes an important distinction between taking the first person perspective of a moral agent making an ethical decision in a particular case, as opposed to taking the perspective of a moral judge. (The philosopher Stuart Hampshire first made that distinction in his 1949 article, “Fallacies in Moral Philosophy,” which illustrates how the literature in philosophical ethics can inform research ethics education.)

Bird provides an excellent account of how these goals can be worked out in a concrete workshop. Face-to-face workshops are more expensive than online training, but far more effective for meeting the goals of research ethics education as opposed to compliance training. It is time for universities to acknowledge that. Bird’s essay also includes an excellent introductory bibliography on these issues.
Joe Giffels’ essay, “Minding and Mending the Gaps,” addresses a crucial but rarely discussed issue, if there is to be the collaboration called for by Wueste. There are cultural and cognitive gaps between administrators, ethicists, and researchers that must be acknowledged as real and which pose real challenges to collaboration.

Ethicists have not always paid their dues in terms of understanding the details of the practice of scientific research in different disciplines or the guidelines that have developed in research ethics. Neither are they aware of the responsibilities and constraints under which research administrators must operate. Ethicists cannot be expected to be invited to make a contribution to research ethics education armed only with grand ethical theory but ignorant of practical ethics in general and the practice of science and engineering in particular (not just medical ethics).

There are, fortunately, a significant number of practical ethicists and ethics centers who are members of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics who have done their homework and are involved in collaboration with University Offices of Research on their campuses. Many are represented in the panels in this seminar. Others remain untapped on their local campus because their expertise is not recognized by research administrators or research scientists.

Giffels clearly makes the point that what can be said of ethicists can also be said of the research administrators and the research scientists. It is one reason the confusion between compliance training and research ethics education has prevailed for so long.

Giffels rightly argues that the cultural and conceptual gaps between these three groups must be narrowed before meaningful collaboration will be possible. All these groups coexist on the same campus but in fact the silos in the university create difficulties and resistance for collaboration. The university culture rewards and reinforces faculty to focus on ever increasing specialization in their discipline. The press of administrative duties discourages administrators from taking the time and energy to acquaint themselves with the details of research practice or the nature of practical ethics. There is no arena in which these interactions are regular or easily available.

Giffels suggest the creative and practical idea of establishing a shadowing program on campus to allow members of each of these groups to develop some sense of the cultural and conceptual differences between them. Such a program would be coupled with group meetings to encourage the processing of the experience and building a sense of community. There are some cost implications in terms of time but it is a
doable proposal, if the will exists. Leadership for such a program will likely have to come at the level of the University Office of Research.

The essays “Teaching Research Ethics Across the Curriculum: An Institutional Change Model” by Michael S. Pritchard, and “Addressing the Need for Templates for Teaching Responsible Conduct of Research at a Research University” by John M. Essigmann, provide concrete examples of practical programs in research ethics education in face-to-face seminars that have actually worked. Essigmann, a research scientist, provides testimony for the effectiveness of the program developed by Stephanie Bird. Both models could be used to begin to build a community on campus to provide research ethics education which would involve collaboration between the research scientists, an ethics center, and the University Office of Research.

**Panel 3: Research Ethics Education in the University: The View from Early Career Faculty**

All of the authors in Panel Three share a unique common experience. As graduate students in the natural sciences, social sciences or engineering, they were all selected as participants in an NSF sponsored project: Graduate Research Ethics Education (GREE) to provide an intensive educational experience in research ethics and research ethics education, under the direction of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics. (For a detailed account of the seven year program, see my essay, “Teaching Research Ethics: Changing the Culture of Science.”)

The authors are not formally trained ethicists but researchers who were provided substantial ethics education. However, that research ethics education is not beyond what could be provided to any graduate student or faculty member in the sciences and engineering. They were provided this education in a face-to-face setting with other participants who represented a wide variety of universities and a wide range of disciplines in science and engineering. Consequently, they had an opportunity to see research ethics and ethics education from a much broader perspective than students in programs located in a single department or university. They were all required to share some of what they learned at their own university the following year and so also had a rather immediate experience in providing research ethics education themselves.

As participants, they returned to their graduate programs with a level of sophistication in research matched by few if any of their graduate
student peers or faculty colleagues. That sophistication was paired with a very strong motivation to make a contribution to research ethics and research ethics education in their careers. (The same is true for the other seven GREE participants who participated in this RCR seminar including Jennifer McCafferty, Monica Calkins, James Corbett, Dee Anne Goodenough-Lashua, Tara Kuther, Debra Mathews, and John Laukaitis.)

Some of the presenters in this panel are now tenured faculty or working their way through the tenure process. Others are completing their graduate program. Collectively, their graduate work and faculty experience cover a broad range of disciplines at a variety of universities. Since the GREE experience, they have all had the opportunity to view the remainder of their graduate career (and for many of them, their early faculty careers) through the lens of having already had a solid grounding in explicit research ethics and research ethics education and a strong desire to contribute to research ethics education in their respective universities. They offer a rare resource for their respective universities. Consequently, their observations on the challenges and opportunities that they have encountered regarding research ethics and ethics education in their universities provide an especially valuable voice for research faculty and University Offices of Research to hear.

There are some common themes that run through observations in the first five essays. Here we have young faculty with more training in explicit research ethics and ethics education (particularly face-to-face education), than most of their colleagues or research administrators, and they are highly motivated to share it. Yet they find all the institutional incentives and pressures against them for doing so. It is especially instructive to hear how that talent and motivation has been thwarted in their institutional setting.

Jeffry Dudycha in “Research Ethics: Education from the View of a Junior Faculty” notes that the criteria for tenure at his institution are very explicit and do not reward tenure track faculty for engaging in explicit research ethics education. In general there are also no resources for faculty to provide explicit research ethics education or incentive to do so. In that institutional environment, surely replicated at many universities, it is understandable that senior colleagues urge him to forego efforts at research ethics education until he is tenured.

Jeffrey Petruska in his essay, “The Pickle of Credit: Research Ethics in the University” argues that the “Pickle of Credit” is an institutional barrier at the heart of the problem of tapping faculty expertise in research ethics education. He argues that there is a
disconnect between the University Offices of Research/compliance programs which do have a responsibility for research ethics education and that of the academic departments/research programs which do not have a direct charge to engage in research ethics education. The “Pickle of Credit” will not be solved unless universities, the University Offices of Research, in collaboration with senior faculty and departments, do two things: 1) Make individual faculty efforts at teaching research ethics count toward teaching/service; and 2) Provide some form of compensation to the departments whose faculty are involved in research ethics education. Only the University and the faculty can solve this “pickle of credit,” but it is not clear how many are working on it. Both Dudycha and Petruska note that young faculty are more likely to be sensitive to the nature and need for research ethics education but also are most vulnerable (in terms of the standards for tenure) if they engage in that activity. Senior faculty are the least vulnerable in terms of pressure to perform but are also least likely to see the need for explicit research ethics education and least likely to feel comfortable teaching research ethics education. That implies the need for much more faculty development with programs of the sort set out in Panel 2 in order to engage and qualify senior faculty to do research ethics education. To change the institutional structures that discourage faculty involvement in research ethics education will require more leadership from University Offices of Research in collaboration with senior faculty.

Julia Frugoli in her essay, “Be Careful What You Wish For,” illustrates what happens when, although the university formally assumes responsibility for the research ethics education, it does not, for whatever reason, allocate adequate financial resources to do that. Frugoli makes the absolutely foundational observation that is a key to the entire discussion of this seminar, namely, that budgetary allocations are within the purview of the university and represent the value choices of the upper administration, ultimately the president of the university. Education is a core mission of the university. Research ethics education must be a core focus of research education. Failure to adequately fund research ethics education at each university is, at best, a result of ignorance of the importance of a part of the core mission of the university. At worst it represents a deliberate choice at the highest levels of the university to place budget priorities on programs less central to the core of the mission.

The essay, “Research Ethics Education Challenges in a Psychology Department” by Todd M. Freeberg and Todd M. Moore, makes
explicit the other issue impeding research ethics education, the lack of faculty leadership at the senior level. Even if there were no institution-wide impediments in terms of credit or lack of funding, there would remain the issue of faculty culture. Their essay demonstrates how the eagerness of young faculty can be thwarted by the lack of understanding by senior faculty of the significance and importance of face-to-face research ethics education. Earlier papers in this seminar have argued for the importance of face-to-face research ethics education. As we have seen from earlier essays, some faculty continue to think such an approach at best “unnecessary,” perhaps assuming that mentoring is sufficient and at worst that it takes away from research or other course work. That view may also be a result of the lack of understanding of the difference between compliance training and explicit ethics education and the failure of some senior faculty to “own” research ethics as discussed in Panel 2. That points to the need for further faculty development.

The elephant in the room underlying much of the discussion in the first five essays of this panel and some of the earlier essays is the inadequate funding in many universities of research ethics education as distinct from compliance training. The initial cause of such underfunding may have been confusion in the minds of many administrators of the distinction between compliance training and research ethics education and the assumption that satisfying compliance training would also satisfy research ethics education.

That confusion is, in part, a failure to recognize the objectives of ethics education in general and of research ethics education in particular. The confusion also reinforces the assumption that because compliance training is imposed from the outside as an “unfunded mandate” and hence not a core part of the mission of the university, so too research ethics education must not be part of the core mission of the university. The prevalence of that confusion has partially been the result of a failure of communication and collaboration between practical ethicists or their ethics centers and University Offices of Research.

There has now been sufficient discussion of these points that it is time for University Offices of Research and faculty to forcefully make the point to higher administration that ethics education for responsible conduct of research is not ancillary but central to the core mission of the university and should be funded as such.

It is now time for university presidents to acknowledge that priority and make appropriate adjustments in university budgets to reflect that priority and provide adequate funding for research ethics education.
Some of the universities represented in this symposium have done that but many universities across the country have not. The choices that administrators make are always challenging and almost always between competing good things. However there are resources that could be tapped for research ethics education. Camille Nebeker, in her essay, mentions that in the past 10 years her institution has taken in more than one billion in grants in research funding. Imagine what an additional 1% of indirect costs from that amount, set aside for research ethics education, could have provided over the past 10 years.

To use a different illustration, the University of Notre Dame allocated the entire $14.5 million received from its appearance in the 2006 Fiesta Bowl to support academic purposes, not the athletic program. University athletic activity, although important to many, is not central to the core mission of the university: teaching and research (and more particularly for our purposes, research ethics education) is central. Reallocation of revenue from the athletic budget to the core mission of the university should not be a close call, as Notre Dame University illustrated. Of the twelve state university institutions represented by authors in this collection of essays, an NCAA data base indicates that for the year 2009-2010, the total operating revenue for the athletic budget at these universities ranged from 24 million to 107 million dollars. The median operating revenue for the athletic budget for these twelve state universities was 71 million dollars. If just 1% of that revenue were dedicated to research ethics education, that would make a significant difference in support for research ethics education.

For those new to the university, it is easy to assume that there is no discretion in university budgets. It is perhaps irresponsible to not note the larger context in which decisions on budget allocations in universities play out. Marc Bousquet in *How the University Works* provides that perspective.

“Over the past forty years, the administration of higher education has changed considerably. Campus administrations have steadily diverged from the ideals of faculty governance, collegiality and professional self-determination. Instead they have embraced the practices of corporate management.” (p. 1) “Thirty five years ago, nearly 75 percent of all college teachers were tenurable; only a quarter worked on an adjunct, part time basis or non-tenurable basis. Today those proportions are reversed.” (p. 2)… “Over three decades, the number of administrators has skyrocketed….especially at the upper levels, administrative pay has soared….Salaries rise into the mid six figures for many medical,
engineering, business and legal administrators.” … “In thirty years, the typical faculty member has become a female, nontenure part timer earning a few thousand dollars without health benefits. The typical administrator is male, enjoys tenure, a six figure income.” (p. 6) “Traditionally, the phenomenon known as “cross-subsidy,” the support of one program by revenue generated by another program … was used to support research activity that was unlikely to find an outside funding agent. Under managed higher education, cross-subsidy has eroded throughout the curriculum and become the goldmine supporting the entrepreneurial urges, vanity and hobbyhorses of administrators.” (p. 7)

To repeat: It is now time for university presidents to acknowledge that, given that the central mission of the university is teaching and research, and that research ethics education is a core component of the teaching of research, they need to make appropriate adjustments in university budgets to reflect that priority and provide adequate funding for research ethics education. The elimination of one or two upper level administrators or an additional one percent allocated from the above mentioned budget lines would make a significant contribution. It is not that budgets are inflexible, although perhaps administrators at the highest levels are.

The last three essays in Panel Three take up new challenges of research ethics education in specific disciplines. Dru McGill in “Archaeological Ethics Education: A View from an Early Career Scholar” details some of the struggles of when and what to teach in research ethics education in archaeology, and the seduction of falling into the trap of assuming that if a research project is approved by an IRB, then the project is “ethical enough.” He makes the point that compliance training and research ethics education can be seen as complimentary rather than competitive.

Sara Wilson in “Research Ethics Education in Engineering” draws attention to the fact that engineering is quite new to research ethics education and provides research evidence for how really different the research approach and experience is for engineering students and the implication of that for modifications in what is taught in research ethics education. She also mentions a theme, familiar to many, that engineering faculty also are inclined to believe that engineering graduate programs do not have time for research ethics education and that mentoring is enough.

In her essay, “Federal Ethics Regulations Governing Internet Research: New Educational Challenges for the University,” Marianne
Ryan emphasizes some of the unique research ethics issues that are raised in informatics research and flags the very serious issue that IRB members may not be keeping up with the innovations in informatics that are relevant to assessing the ethical appropriateness of some research designs in that field. She argues for the urgent need and value for collaboration between faculty and IRB’s to identify ethical concerns and guidelines in the use of online technology in research.

Panel 4: Special Focus: Research Ethics in the Social Sciences

For a variety of reasons, research ethics education in the social sciences is particularly vexed, and a number of social scientists were invited to reflect specifically on the challenges of research ethics and research ethics education in the social sciences.

Sangeeta Panicker, as a psychologist, is uniquely positioned to reflect on this issue since the discipline of psychology, unlike most disciplines, runs the gamut from biomedical research to social science research. She argues in “Research Ethics, Education in the Behavioral and Psychological Sciences: A Mistaken Case of One Size Fits All,” that the challenge in social sciences research ethics education stems from the use, interchangeably, of the terms “research regulation” and “research ethics” in many of the educational and training programs including those such as NIH and CITI. That has two negative effects. First, because these programs focus on research regulation and regulatory compliance rather than the ethical foundations of research, this makes social scientists, already resistant to “outside mandatory regulations,” also resistant to research ethics education as well. That resistance to research ethics is worsened by the misperception of some behavioral and social scientists that the ethical framework underlying research on human subjects is only relevant to biomedical research and not to the social sciences.

Panicker argues that the misperception is actually rooted in the improper implementation of regulations in human research at the level of IRB reviews and not in the ethical principles underlying research on human subjects. Panicker’s observation suggests the need for even more ethics education for IRB members.

A second source of the challenge of ethics education in the behavioral sciences, Panicker notes, is the commonly used dichotomy between “biological” and “non biological” research. That dichotomy is
inaccurate, at least for the discipline of psychology. Psychology employs research methods that can range from those similar to the biological sciences to those in the social sciences, including research with online subjects mentioned by Marianne Ryan. Echoing Ratterman, Panicker argues that current research ethics education programs such as the NIH and CITI modules as well as university specific programs, must stop attempting to develop and use the one-size-fits-all model, since that enhances the misperception that the biomedical model of research ethics is being imposed on the non biomedical sciences. Panicker also argues that a clearer understanding by social scientists of the ethical principles underlying human subjects research and the resultant recognition that research on human subjects is a responsibility, not a right, will undercut complaints by social scientists that ethical guidelines are a violation of academic freedom. This last observation by Panicker once again underscores the need for ethics education for faculty.

Douglas Adams is both a social scientist and a longtime chair of an IRB. He provides some general observations on research ethics education including a point not made by others that research groups are increasingly decentralized geographically, often involve cross disciplinary collaboration, groups, and multiple research groups. He details the challenges for research ethics education in such an environment. He further notes that all these trends further weaken the formal and informal social control of the behavior of researchers and predicts that the potential for research misconduct will grow.

In “The Issues and Challenges of Research Ethics Education in the University, Particularly in the Area of the Social Sciences,” Adams indicates that empirical evidence suggests significant hostility by social sciences toward University Offices of Research policies and procedures, resulting in an oppositional stance by social scientists towards the compliance assurance process. Adams draws an interesting comparison between that phenomenon and research in the study of policing. That research indicates that police cannot deter crime alone. Citizen involvement is essential for deterrence. (Note the similarity of this invocation of the citizen’s role to claims by earlier authors in the proceedings of the need for faculty to take ownership in the norms of science.) Adams argues that to deter misconduct in science, University Offices of Research need to reach out to social scientists in a positive collaborative manner in order to diffuse resistance and engage social scientists in a collaborative effort at research ethics education as well as compliance.
Dena Plemmons and Larry Zimmerman are anthropologists who both have a special perspective from serving on the American Archaeological Association committee on ethics. Plemmons is the current co-chair of that committee. In “Challenges for Research Ethics Education in the Social Sciences,” Plemmons observes that anthropologists have thought hard about the anthropologist’s relation to research subjects, including the impossibility of “truly informed consent,” the collaborative nature of knowledge, and negotiating issues of ownership and dissemination of research data on human subjects and the role of deception research. These are, she argues, all uniquely tied to the ethnographic methodology of the profession.

She notes the dichotomy in the social sciences between sociology and social psychology which have routinely practiced deception research, and anthropology which has long struggled with the validity of deception research. She observes that this particular problem for anthropology has not been aided by the fact that IRB’s have routinely approved deception research. Plemmons suggests that the nearly exclusive focus of the discipline on the anthropologist’s ethical obligations to subjects, though understandable, has led to a neglect of the researcher’s ethical responsibilities to colleagues, students, mentors and the public, and cites some responses on this from interviews with anthropology graduate students. (It is perhaps worth mentioning that it was our experience in the GREE project that, because the composition in each cohort of that project was across disciplines, graduate students and post doctoral fellows as far back as 1996 raised concerns for the researcher’s ethical responsibilities to colleagues, students, mentors and the public in our sessions and that is reflected in many of the cases in the seven volumes of Research Ethics: Cases and Commentaries, produced in the project.) One value of a format of face-to-face research ethics education sessions that are across disciplines and not limited to a single discipline is that it provides a check on the provincial perspective of a discipline regarding ethical issues.

Larry Zimmerman, in “Integral, Ancillary or Incidental: Teaching Ideal or real in Social Science Research Ethics,” wrestles honestly with just how central ethics is or ought to be in anthropological ethics and the implications of that for research ethics education in anthropology. He singled out the challenge of collaboration with human subjects in social science research. That collaboration, as he puts it, “becomes the decolonizing model for anthropology” in response to an earlier history of research recalled by the Milligram experiments, Project Camelot, and
the critiques raised by Deloria regarding research on Native Americans. He discusses the ground level problems of obtaining informed consent and specific challenges for collaborative research including the power of collaborators to veto research projects, collaborator pre-approval of publication content, and the potential of collaborators overriding the researcher’s ethical norm of objectivity. He also details the ethical difficulties of collaborative research in the use of electronic data, as also discussed by Marianne Ryan.

**Mary Brydon-Miller** is doing pioneering work on the ethics of action research which involves reconceptualizing the ethical relationship of the researcher to human subject by substituting the notion of a covenantal relation of researchers to human subjects for that of a contractual relationship. She discusses community based research, and more specifically action research which, in the history of human subjects research, is a radical rethinking of, as she puts it, “the basic nature of research and the ethics that inform our research.” She can be seen as responding to some degree to the concerns of Zimmerman regarding collaborative research, by widening the ethical principles and core values that researchers must acknowledge. Those values, including an expanded notion of autonomy, introducing the notions of sovereignty and the researcher’s obligations of social justice, provide a much more robust platform of ethical principles for a broader conception of the ethical relations of researchers to human subjects, particularly as groups. That of course has profound implications both for guidelines for human subjects research and the consent process as well as for research ethics education.

As I have argued elsewhere, “It is especially useful to think about the issue of group consent from the perspective of group research with certain Native American groups which have the status of sovereign nations... They have [through an accident of history] something that most groups do not have: the legal power to control researchers and their research on the group... it is significant and instructive to see what a group, subject to research, would choose to do in controlling research on their group if they had the power to do so.”\(^\text{10}\) What they have chosen, as Brydon-Miller notes, is something close to the guidelines she espouses in action research and something quite different from traditional human subjects guidelines.

In her essay, Brydon-Miller concentrates on three implications of her approach for the research process. She focuses on the human subjects review process, the issues raised by digital data collection, and the question of the obligations of the researcher to be a responsible
member of society. Her position has radical implications for the very structure of oversight for human subjects review and calls for, at least in some research, community based IRBs. It also implies that, as she puts it, a system of knowledge feudalism must change in which universities and their researchers are assumed to control the research process and the knowledge products that are its outcome. It remains to be seen how broadly this approach can and will be worked out in practice. Brydon-Miller acknowledges there are legitimate limitations of the approach. At a more mercenary and practical level, it should be recognized that independent of the ethical legitimacy of her model, universities have enormous self interest in maintaining the status quo, rather than in moving in the direction of Brydon-Miller’s model.

Her essay, however, also raises an entirely different issue, not really raised by any of the authors. As universities move to a much more expanded provision of research ethics education, there may be a tendency toward ossification of the ethical principles that are perceived to underlie research ethics. That has in the past happened with the transmission of the guidelines for medical research into the broader arena of research in other disciplines. As universities move to provide ethics education for research across all disciplines there may be a temptation, partly for the sake of efficiency, to reduce the level of reflection on the underlying ethical principles. That can lead to an inculcation of fixed views on the nature and extent of ethical principles to guide research. That is to say, a mentality of one-size-fits-all, not regarding the methods of ethics education, but regarding the articulation of the underlying ethical principles in research.

NOTES


4 Hampshire, Stuart “Fallacies in Moral Philosophy”, *Mind*, (1949) Volume 58, pp. 446-482

5 Schrag, Brian “Teaching Research Ethics: Changing the Culture of Science”, *Teaching Ethics*, Volume 8, Number 2, Spring, 2008 pp. 79-111


