

**IPI Ethics Committee
Minutes
Sunday, 7-June-2015 (6:00 to 7:00 pm ET)**

Members present: Michael Kaufman, Andi Pilecki, Judith Rovner, Caroline Sehon and Michael Stadter

Caroline opened the meeting by reviewing the themes/topics discussed at the last IPI Ethics Committee (29 March 2015). She informed the group that she had briefed Andi on the content of that meeting which Andi could not attend as the last IPI Ethics Committee meeting occurred at the IPI faculty retreat.

The committee discussed the following matters during this meeting:

1. Structure and function of the Ethics Committee
2. The role boundaries of the student representative
3. Tasks of the Committee
 - a. Identification of tasks
 - b. Prioritization of tasks

Structure and function of the Ethics Committee

We discussed the importance for the ethics committee to be structured as (a) a standing committee with the potential to form (b) an ad-hoc committee if we were to receive an ethics complaint/concern. The functional nature of the standing and potential ad-hoc committees was delineated with examples.

The standing committee would function as a kind of ‘think-tank,’ to develop ways for IPI to develop a greater ethical mindfulness when delivering educational events. For example, the committee might try to develop ways for IPI weekends to offer ethics CE credits as an integral part of these educational events to foster a climate of ethical thinking and decision-making among the membership. (In addition, it was considered this augmentation of the weekends could serve as a useful recruitment strategy for IPI.) Another example identified was the development of ethical guidelines for the practice of teletherapy/teleanalysis at IPI.

The ad-hoc committee was conceived as a group that could be comprised, in consultation with the IPI Director, of one or more members of the standing committee along with other potential IPI faculty consultant(s). The ad-hoc committee would become activated at the time of an ethics complaint or concern to be registered by an individual or program, such as by a student, faculty, program chair, or Director.

The group considered these ideas as exploratory possibilities, as the committee develops its sense of its identity and functions. Being a new IPI Committee, it was generally recognized that we are gradually evolving a process of coming to understand our focus, tasks, and priorities.

The role boundaries of the student representative

Caroline reviewed that there had been a brief discussion at the last IPI Ethics Committee of the role for a student representative on this committee without much opportunity for discussing that topic raised by a guest member to our committee. Caroline reported also that Andi had requested a conversation with Caroline to discuss the role definition for the student role, given that there might be a variety of conflicts to her participation on the committee depending upon the scope and boundaries for the ethics committee.

The group as a whole were in unanimous agreement that it would be optimal for the ethics committee to include a student representative, so long as the student were not involved in any consideration of ethical complaints/concerns. The group strongly opinioned that the student representative would not be informed about the nature of any ethical complaints, nor would that person participate in any meetings to consider the matter.

The rationale for not including a student in managing an ethical concern was discussed and agreed upon by all committee members. It was considered that it would place an unfair burden on the student, to be exposed to confidential matters, and to confront potentially challenging faculty/program tensions operating within IPI. Andi expressed relief that her role boundaries would be demarcated so clearly, and that she would be protected from exposure to specific ethical concerns brought to the committee.

The committee outlined valuable ways in which the student role would be a significant contribution to the standing committee function. For example, the student could assist the committee at developing suggestions to offer the IPI Director for ways that IPI might integrate ethics thinking into the program development of IPI weekends.

Tasks of the Ethics Committee

Caroline reviewed topics previously outlined regarding potential tasks of the committee. These included, for example, the idea of developing opportunities for the IPI community to grow its capacity to think ethically on matters pertinent to an educational environment (not clinical practice arena) that defines IPI. One such example had been for the standing committee to begin developing a collection of case examples/vignettes that might represent hypothetical ethical issues/violations operating within a learning institution. Such vignettes could be used in a variety of ways to foster IPI members' thinking ethically, but the group did not arrive at a specific way as to how such ideas/thinking processes could be disseminated (eg. a document accessible as a resource to IPI members; a case booklet that could organize an ethics discussion group at IPI as part of IPI weekends or elsewhere).

The committee discussed the uncertainty as to whether we could prepare our methods of approaching an ethics complaint. Committee members outlined a range of hypothetical examples of such complaints, and expressed the challenges of preparing much in advance for this scenario. The committee worked with a few hypothetical situations to explore

what could, or could not, be mapped out by the committee prior to receiving a complaint. For example, the committee discussed one initial approach upon receiving a complaint - to gather more information from the complainant (context, specifics of the situation etc) to assess several matters, including:

- Was the complaint truly an ethical issue, or was it actually an administrative issue?
- Did the complainant address the issue at the lowest level within the hierarchy of the organization? For example, if a student were raising an ethical issue relating to a matter within the Core Program, did the student raise this matter first with the Chair of the Core Program?
- Did IPI follow its standard operating procedure to respond to the issue?

The committee agreed to further consider these matters individually in advance of the next meeting, and especially, to think about how we might regard our next task(s) that we would prioritize as a group. Caroline will report back to Janine on the evolving work of the group.

NEXT MEETING: Sunday, 27 Sept 2015 @ 6:00 pm ET by teleconference.

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Schon