

CECA MEETING MINUTES

April 24, 2013

Members present: Armand Antommaria, Ken Berkowitz, Art Derse, Paula Goodman-Crews, Ann Heesters, Martha Jurchak, Nneka Mokwunye, Kayhan Parsi, Kathy Powderly, Terry Rosell, Wayne Shelton, Jeffrey Spike, Anita Tarzian (chair)

Members absent: Marty Smith, Lucia Wocial, Brian Childs, Jeffrey Berger, Joe Carrese, Jack Gallagher, Tia Powell, Christine Mitchell

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 AM Eastern.

CODE OF ETHICS

We discussed the Code Responsibility of “Speaking Responsibly.” In drafting the interpretive paragraphs, Paula and Kathy were guided by open-ended comments from the Code survey, which fell into three general areas of concern: the importance of clarifying what “speaking responsibly” actually means; the nature and scope of “expertise” required to qualify an HCE consultant as competent to comment publicly about an issue related to HCEC; and concerns related to negative consequences from stifling free speech or divergent/unpopular opinions. We reworded the Code responsibility, statement, and interpretive paragraphs as follows.

PRIOR VERSION:

Speaking Responsibly: HCE consultants, when making public statements, should distinguish when they are speaking for themselves or representing a group or institution and should provide justification for their [claims?].

Speaking responsibly obliges the HCE consultant to be sufficiently informed about issues on which they speak publicly, including an understanding of facts and scholarship relating to the topic. Ethics expertise and competence emanates from multiple sources, including but not limited, to knowledge, experience, research, education, or occupation in the field of bioethics. If the HCE consultant does not have expertise in a particular area and is unable to sufficiently research the topic, s/he should consider referring to an individual who has the requisite expertise to comment on the issue.

Public comments should be balanced, prudent, and reflect cultural humility and sensitivity to differing values within the local, national, and international communities. The HCE consultant should recognize that the topics upon which s/he is asked to comment can generate strong emotional reactions and moral distress. Speaking responsibly should promote reflection in others and an opportunity to deliberate different points of views. If the HCE consultant offers an opinion, s/he should clarify its justification and disclose whether it is an opinion rooted in one’s personal values, or the collective moral opinion of a specific organization or institution.

NEW VERSION:

Communicating Responsibly: When communicating in the public arena (including social media), HCE consultants should clarify whether they are acting in their HCEC role, and should communicate in a professionally responsible manner.

Communicating responsibly obliges HCE consultants to be sufficiently informed about issues on which they communicate publicly, including an understanding of facts and scholarship relating to the topic. Ethics expertise and competence emanates from multiple sources, including but not limited to knowledge, experience, research, education, or occupation in the field of bioethics. If HCE consultants do not have sufficient knowledge in a particular area, they should decline to comment and consider referring to others. Public comments should acknowledge uncertainty about norms or lack of consensus, where it exists. HCE consultants should recognize that the topics upon which they are asked to comment can generate strong reactions. Communicating responsibly should promote reflection in others and an opportunity to deliberate different points of views. HCE consultants should demonstrate cultural humility and sensitivity to differing values when communicating in the public arena.

Board Update

We discussed updates from the Board regarding the Quality Attestation project and plans to share a draft of the white paper with CECA within the next 4-8 weeks. We agreed to offer an expeditious review turn-around of 2 weeks to accommodate the timeline required to provide a recommendation to the Board before finalizing the white paper for membership dissemination in October, 2013.

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 PM. The next meeting is in May – Anita will send out a poll to determine the date.