

## FACULTY INTRODUCTION: GENESIS OF THE ANTHOLOGY & THIS ISSUE

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The selected papers in this inaugural issue of the OHSU Division of Management's online anthology, *Reflections on Healthcare Management*, represent the outstanding work from the most recent class to take the healthcare organizational ethics course in the OHSU-PSU Health Management MBA program. The idea of publishing the papers rapidly grew into the notion of creating a regularly published online anthology for the OHSU Division of Management. Such an anthology could serve multiple purposes: to honor and reflect the excellent work of our students; support for the Division's education programs; but most importantly to stimulate those who read the articles contained within each issue to achieve the Quadruple Aim, and the possibility of achieving an effective, person-centered, and sustainable health system.

I have developed and co-taught this course with my very able colleagues, Jeanne Enders, Ph.D. and, more recently, Ruth Ann Tsukuda, Ed.D. since the MBA program began in 2009. The course, which is provided for both the MS and MBA tracks of the Division's programs, is an overview of a number of ethical issues, specifically ones that administrators in the health delivery system must be aware of in order to develop skills and strategies for addressing them in their management and leadership activities throughout their careers.

The students in these classes represent a diverse set of healthcare professionals from a wide range of clinical disciplines and health delivery experience, as well as career administrators from various health fields, not to mention a few who have no prior experience in the healthcare field. The student groups are also quite diverse in terms of various demographic parameters such as age, cultural and ethnic identification, and socio-political orientation.

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Early on in the course, we introduce the concepts of healthcare organizational ethics as a composite of clinical, organizational, and business ethics. We emphasize the broad range of skills and responsibilities that administrators may need to exercise in addressing the kinds of dilemmas and challenges that require ethical understanding and decision making. These include treating patients and families with compassion, treating employees with respect, acting as good citizens of the community, and allocating resources in reasonable and justifiable ways (Winkler, Gruen, & Sussman, 2005).

The students view and discuss a lecture by Robert Potter, M.D., an emeritus faculty member of OHSU's Center for Ethics in Healthcare. In his simultaneously folksy and erudite style, Dr. Potter provides the philosophical and historical background for organizational healthcare ethics. He also introduces a very clear, practical, and persuasive lens, framed by three questions through which to address a number of ethically charged situations: What is going on here? What ought we to care about? What is the fitting response to what is going on here (Potter, 2011)?

The final assignment for the course, the best examples of which follow this introductory section, asks the students to reflect on specific ethical issues, answering some key questions about any relevant dilemmas in the process. This assignment allows the students a broad array of topic choices.

The following eloquent introductory essay provides an insightful analysis of the featured papers. The organizational lens through which David Barnard

views these essays places them into three categories of primary focus:

- Decision making with and for patients near the end of life;
- The conduct of research with human subjects; and
- The roles and impacts of key factors on ethical decision making: limited resources, the challenges to one's virtue, courage, and character, and the inevitability and unpredictability of technical advances

This order of progression moves the reader from seeing some specific issues that are frequently confronted, to some that are subtler, broader, and even more uncertain in their implications.

The papers that follow reflect eleven thoughtful and insightful students asking Robert Potter's three questions in engaging and insightful ways. The authors challenge us to adapt and balance our clinical, organizational, and business ethical perspectives to the wide range of issues that are present, emerging, or yet to be faced. I hope you will recognize and agree that, if these papers represent healthcare leadership of the future, we are in good and capable hands.

## References

- Potter, R., (2011). Advancing Organizational Ethics, [video file]. Retrieved from Oregon Health & Science University MGMT 560 Ethics in Healthcare Management Sakai: <http://sakai.ohsu.edu>
- Winkler, E., Gruen, R., & Sussman, A. (2005). First Principles: Substantive Ethics for Healthcare Organizations. *Journal of Healthcare Management*, 50, 2, 102-119