

York Centre for Practical Ethics

Centre Newsletter - April 2007

Director's File

David Shugarman

Our year began with an inspiring talk by the former President of Oberlin College, Robert Fuller, on the dangers of "rankism" and the abuse of authority that too often go with leadership positions. It ended with a sterling panel presentation by faculty members from the U of Ottawa and Western, who are engaged in an extensive interdisciplinary SSHRC-sponsored research program on threats to privacy posed by developments in radio frequency identification technology. In between, we had a number of excellent presentations that, thanks to the co-sponsorship and cooperation of the Master's Office of McLaughlin College, were well-attended by appreciative audiences of undergrads, grads, staff and faculty. A list of our presentations is provided elsewhere in this Newsletter. There were so many well-presented and thought-provoking sessions that I won't risk singling any out, save to note that in late March one of the Centre's graduate assistants, Dave Gordon, gave a wonderfully lucid presentation on the political philosophy of John Rawls. This marked the first time that a graduate student has delivered a talk in the seminar series for YCPE membership; the talk was also part of the McLaughlin lunch-time speakers series. It all happened as a result of the initiative of McLaughlin's Master and YCPE Executive Council and Board member Ian Greene. Other Centres at York have been supporting special forums and activities for graduate students so it is about time for us to do the same. Dave's talk and Ian's initiative will get us moving in this area.

I want to report on several interesting things that happened this year, and some that are still developing. As I have tried to do regularly over the past several years, I attended the annual meeting of the Association of Practical and Professional Ethics. The APPE is based in Bloomington, Indiana and is supported by the University of Indiana as well as by its membership and associated Centres in the US and Canada. This year the event was held in Cincinnati and I participated in the meeting of Centre directors, which is always informative and often instructive. I also attended, along with Howard Adelman and Ian Greene, the International Congress on Ethics held in Ottawa in early February. We all participated in sessions and Howard and I gave papers based on our ongoing research that has been part of the SSHRC supported "ethics of international intervention". This is a project that three York Centres and faculty from three continents have been collaborating on for five years. We hope to soon publish the results of our research efforts. With the help of our Centre assistants I have been working on editing a finished product.

During the first term I had an opportunity to meet with Professor Olga Volkogonova, the Head of the Department of Philosophy of Natural Sciences at Moscow State University, who was visiting York. She indicated an interest in developing a collaborative arrangement with our Centre. Just prior to the first term break I met again with Professor Volkogonova and we



Director of the YCPE - Professor David Shugarman

agreed on a memorandum of understanding that was drawn up with the support of York's legal counsel and the support of the VP(R&I). We are expecting a visit from a distinguished ethics scholar from Moscow State sometime in the Fall and Professor Volkogonova has recently written me to suggest a collaborative volume on social ethics. There is a good deal of potential for fruitful cooperation, research and dialogue here.

As we were getting close to deadline for this Newsletter Wes Cragg was informed that his SSHRC collaborative clusters grant application to expand the Canadian Business Ethics Research Network (CBERN) was accepted. It is a substantial grant that covers a seven year period, and our Centre is one of the collaborative and supporting units. For more information on CBERN please see the "Congratulations are in order" section in this newsletter. In the Fall Wes received an SSHRC research development initiative grant to study ethics at the health care-business interface. YCPE is again a supportive agent in this research endeavor. I have already sent out a note on behalf of the Board and Executive congratulating Wes and I want to do so again here. On a related matter, in early February Wes was instrumental in helping me bring together a group of York faculty specializing in health-care ethics to discuss setting up a Centre-sponsored *Health-Care Ethics Research Cluster*. Key to this project are Professors Marcia Rioux, Duff Waring and Geoff Reaume. The new Dean of the Faculty of Health, Professor Harvey Skinner, also attended the meeting and indicated his interest and support. A workshop on aspects of health care ethics is being considered for the Fall.

This year marked the first time we have ever had a deputy director and I want to thank Shirley Katz for her willingness to try to move our consulting services forward. Shirley is off on sabbatical next year and at last hearing she was preparing to retire immediately thereafter. We wish her well, with a large thank you for all her contributions to the Centre over the years.

Regarding external projects, Shirley and Alan Shefman continued

Director's File Continued

their work on case conferencing with sections of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. In February, the Centre facilitated a one-day workshop on diversity and ethical responses for the new Canada Border Services Agency. The four facilitators were Shirley Katz, Alan Shefman, Ian Greene and myself. We were ably assisted by Centre assistants Dave Gordon

and Maggie Maclsaac.

Finally, I want to express my sincere appreciation for the invaluable contributions of our coordinator, Lilian Polsinelli and secretary, Vicky Carnevale, who manage to do a lot as part-time support staff. This appreciation extends to our team of assistants, including our new part-time special assistant, Maggie Maclsaac,

MA students Breanne Whitwell and Dave Gordon, and work/study undergrad Elliot Pobjoy. These are the people who ensure the smooth operation of the Centre, and who bring their imaginations and efforts to bear on a variety of initiatives. Over the years I've had the pleasure of working with bright, cooperative students. Our group this year was

first rate. This Newsletter, I'm pleased to say, has been produced and edited by Maggie, Breanne, Dave and Elliot. This summer we will have the benefit, one last time, since his eligibility is running out, of the assistance of PhD student Danny O'Rourke-Dicarolo. Danny will join Maggie, who will also be doing a lot for the CBERN project, in helping me in the office.

Our Assistants

Stephanie Silverman completed her Master's Degree in Political Science and subsequently spent time in Central America, volunteering in a bilingual school in a town called Ocoepeque in western Honduras. In January she left for Panama, Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and from April to the end of May, she will be in Guatemala conducting research for a paper on the current conditions of the former refugees of that country's thirty-six year civil war.

Maggie Maclsaac completed her Master's Degree in Political Science and is currently engaged as a Special Projects Assistant at the YCPE. One aspect of this position is assisting the Director of the YCPE with respect to general oversight of YCPE activities. In addition she will provide research assistance to members applying for research grants. In this capacity, she was involved in building the Canadian Business Ethics Research Network (CBERN), as part of an SSHRC Strategic Knowledge Clusters Grant Application submitted by Professor Wes Cragg. With the grant in place, Maggie is taking on the part-time role of Communications and Website Manager for the CBERN project.

Danny O'Rourke-Dicarolo, who together with Maggie kept the YCPE operating during the summer, is a PhD candidate currently in the process of completing his dissertation. His research interests include the history of political thought and critical the-

ory with a special emphasis on the role of law in the development of liberal democracy. Danny has been an active member of the YCPE for four years and is assisting on a project concerning the ethics of international intervention. He has presented at numerous conferences covering a wide spectrum that reflect his interests in politics and law alongside aesthetics and cultural studies. Most recently Danny has been invited to Canterbury England to present a component of his dissertation research that investigates the changing role of law and state capacities in the course of globalization. He enjoys teaching, talking about film and music and walking his dog, Dudley.

Elliot Pobjoy is in the process of completing his Honours B.A. in International Development Studies and History. Since returning from an internship in Southern India, Elliot has kept himself busy by assisting the Youth Programs Department at War Child Canada and by reporting for York International's Radio Program. His international work has led him to be featured in the March edition of York magazine. Elliot recently received the Faculty of Arts Essay Prize for his historical research on tattoo artists in Canada. Elliot will continue his research on this topic as a history graduate student at York University next year.



David Shugarman, Shirley Katz, and the Assistants

The Centre welcomed two new Political Science Graduate Assistants for the 2006/2007 term, Breanne Whitwell and Dave Gordon.

Breanne joined us after completing her BA in Political Studies at Trent University, where she focused on International Political Economy. While studying international development, political culture, social justice and activism at Trent, she became interested in all aspects of the idea of community. For her MA in Political Science she will combine these interests in a study of the narrowness in scope of the Canadian work and welfare policy discourse, and the necessity to address the absence of a dis-

cussion of social values.

Dave joined us from the University of Western Ontario where he completed a Combined Honours BA in History and Political Science. As an undergraduate, Dave developed a strong interest in political theory, and specifically theories of social and global justice dealing with equality, toleration, and human rights. He plans to continue exploring these interests as an MA student by focusing on the ideas of human rights found in John Rawls and Amartya Sen.

YCPE Welcomes...

Stephen Newman

Stephen Newman joined the York Centre for Practical Ethics in 2006 and has been a member of the Political Science Department at York University since 1985. His research and teaching interests are in political theory; the history of political thought; Anglo-American political thought; American constitutional law; and American politics. He is the author of *Liberalism at Wits' End: The Libertarian Revolt Against the Modern State* and is the editor of *Constitutional Politics in Canada and the United States*. In addition, he has published numerous book chapters and articles on topics such as free speech and liberalism, and has contributed to media outlets such as the Globe and Mail, CBC Newsworld, CBC Radio, and CTV News. His favourite class to teach is POLS 2900 (Introduction to Political Theory) because he enjoys teaching the classics and welcomes the challenge of teaching them to undergraduates. Evidently this enthusiasm is not lost on his students, as Professor Newman was recently nominated by his students for TVO's Best Lecturer award. In line with his appreciation of the classics he recently read, and recommends, Stanley Rosen's book-length study of Plato's *Republic* entitled *Plato's Republic: A Study*.

Duff Waring

Duff Waring has been a member of the Philosophy Department at York University since 2004. His research interests include the philosophy of medicine/psychiatry, bioethics, and biomedical research ethics. He particularly enjoys teaching his class on research ethics because he designed it himself and its debut attracted a "great group of undergraduates." He also enjoys his bioethics class because "the topics are very current and lend themselves especially well to class discussions." Duff brings a large measure of personal experience to his research and teaching, as he spent nine and a half years as a lawyer doing advocacy work for psychiatric patients before returning to school for his PhD.

Duff joined the York Centre for Practical Ethics in 2006. He was attracted to the innovative work in which the centre is engaged and from his involvement he hopes to learn about new ways that theory can inform practice. While at the Centre he plans to work with the Human Participants Review Committee.

Outside of academia, Duff has an avid interest in music. A self-confessed Miles Davis freak, he also recommends Bill Evans' *The Complete Village Vanguard Recordings, 1961*, and the The Band's box set.

New Board of Director Members:

Duff Waring; Greg Levine; Gerry Ginsberg

Thaddeus Hwong

Thaddeus Hwong joined the Centre for Practical Ethics in 2006. He holds a BA in economics from York University, an MSC in journalism from Columbia, and an LLB and PhD from Osgoode Hall Law School. He is an Assistant Professor in the School of Administrative Studies, Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies, and is cross-appointed to the new School of Public Policy and Administration at York University. He is also co-editor of *Canadian Review of Social Policy*, which is hosted by the School of Social Work at the university. His teaching interests include tax law and policy as well as the use of data analysis in policy advocacy. His research interests center on quantitative empirical analyses of tax law and public policy. One undercurrent running through his research concerns the use of data in policy discussions. Statistics, or simply numbers, sometime provide a scientific glow that obscures issues ranging from data collection to ideologies. Through his empirical work he aspires to let the data tell the policy story in a transparent and accessible way. In the 2006-7 academic year he taught tax law and policy, with a new course on tax law as an instrument of social and economic policy expected to launch in fall 2007. His latest publication will be a joint report, with Professor Neil Brooks of Osgoode Hall Law School, on the costs and benefits of taxation in selected OECD countries to be published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Shaun Young

In July (2006) Shaun began a 12-month contractually limited appointment as an Instructor in the Department of Political Science at Carleton University. During the 2006-2007 academic year he taught a number of courses in political theory as well as the introductory core course in the Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management program. Among Shaun's current projects is a proposal to secure funding from SSHRC to convene a one-day symposium during 2007 at York on the legacy of John Rawls.



Events at the Centre

The Fall and Winter 2006-2007 session has been an eventful one for the YCPE. We hosted the following presentations, most of which were co-sponsored by MacLaughlin College

September 14th:

For our first event of the year we invited Robert Fuller, former president of Oberlin College to speak about "Rankism", which is the abuse of power inherent in rank. This is the subject of his new book *All Rise: Somebodies, Nobodies and the Politics of Dignity*, in which he argues that rankism does serious damage to private relationships and public institutions.

October 12th:

Our guest was David Mullan, who is Toronto's Integrity Commissioner and the first Municipal Ethics Officer appointed in Canada. He spoke about the nature of his office, which focuses on the City of Toronto's Code of Conduct governing the activities of elected officials, and his advisory, investigative, adjudicative, and educational responsibilities. He also spoke about the recent City of Toronto Act which, among other offices, mandates the Integrity Commissioner and sets out its terms and developments from the Bellamy Report.

November 8th:

Our speaker was Greg Levine, a lawyer who worked several years ago as General Council for the British Columbia Ombudsman's office. A unique form of government ethics law, the ombudsman plan in Canada holds great promise for achieving just resolutions of often intractable problems. This presentation explored elements of the history and development of the ombudsman plan in BC and Ontario and discussed issues concerning the plan's operations and

effectiveness.

November 16th:

The Centre's Director, David Shugarman, and MacLaughlin College's Master Ian Greene spoke on the Gomery Commission Report, drawing on a review they recently co-authored for *Canadian Public Administration*. They claimed that the Report, with its extensive supporting volumes of research studies, is the most important milestone in Canadian public administration in decades and they highlighted a number of the Commission's key findings and recommendations.

November 22nd:

Professor Shirley Katz spoke about the work she and external Associate Alan Shefman have been doing with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to develop a case conferencing model. She explained what the model entails, and discussed how it promotes ethical decision-making with regard to applications by immigrants to stay in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, as well as other kinds of immigration decision-making.

January 11th:

David Wiesenthal, Professor of Psychology at York, spoke about the Tri-Council Policy Statement which has been established to regulate and ensure ethical research practice in Canada. Wiesenthal explained that the code employs a "one size fits all" approach which has resulted in a number of practical and bureaucratic problems. Issues have arisen with regard to aboriginal research, sponsorship, academic freedom and safety. He also made recom-



RFID Panel Presenter Professor Ian Kerr at the March 23rd event.

mendations for the expected revision of the code in 2007.

February 20th:

Ethics consultant Vince Di Norcia visited to discuss the implications of neuroscience research into the neurobiological and social foundations of morality. He noted that this is an extension of empirically testable/scientific approaches to ethics that began with Darwin and was advanced by Piaget and E.O. Wilson. This shifts the study of moral values away from endless metaphysical speculation and promises new insights into the evolutionary, psychological, and social fundamentals of ethics.

March 13th:

Joanna Chapman spoke about accountability in the government and the importance of the individual citizen in promoting ethical conduct. A former Councillor for the Town of Dundas (now part of Hamilton) Joanna told the story of how she held her Mayor accountable, exposed corruption in City Hall and brought about electoral change.

March 20th:

Christina Becker, a Diplomate Jungian Analyst and Psychoanalyst from the C.G. Jung Institute

in Zurich Switzerland, discussed the ethical questions and dilemmas that arise daily for the analyst in Psychological counselling. She spoke about the principles involved in clinical ethics and ways to deal with our own tendency to avoid self reflection.

March 23rd:

Our final event for the 2006-2007 academic year was a panel discussion on Radio Frequency Identifications (RFIDs) and issues of privacy, co-sponsored by the Chumir Foundation. The panel included Jacquelyn Burkell (Information & Media Studies, University of Western Ontario), Ian Kerr (Law, University of Ottawa), and Valerie Steeves (Criminology, University of Ottawa). Jackie spoke about the capabilities of RFID technology to gather information about consumer habits, and how consumers have only a superficial awareness of these capabilities. One of the highlights of Ian's presentation was the emerging trend toward implanting RFID technology into humans in the same way that microchips have been used for identifying and locating pets for the last decade. Valerie's presentation drew on the work of science fiction, such as the Matrix, to examine how the prevalence of RFID technology necessitates negotiation between privacy concerns and convenience.

Report on Case Conferencing Model for Citizenship and Immigration Canada

By Shirley Katz

Since 2002, Alan Shefman, an Associate Member of the Centre for Practical Ethics, and I have worked on a Case Conferencing Model for discretionary decision-makers in the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). We designed a model specifically for officers who are responsible for making determinations on humanitarian and compassionate grounds under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, and we extended that model to officers in the Pre-Removal Risk Assessment unit (PPRA). Over the years, we developed and fine-tuned the model at both port-of-

entry (CIC Niagara) and inland offices (CIC Mississauga, CIC Etobicoke and CIC Scarborough). This year we received a contract to evaluate the model at the four aforementioned sites and at the PPRA unit.

To that end, we attended throughout the year at each of the offices and were observers at a case conferencing session. We conducted interviews with the managers and supervisors at those offices, spoke with the officers in attendance, and administered a survey that we devised to assess various aspects of the case conferencing model and project. We submit-

ted the report with our findings and recommendations at the end of March, 2007.

By all accounts, the case conferencing model has changed the culture of the CIC offices where it has been successfully implemented. From time to time, we have presented the model to provincial and national meetings of CIC personnel, and the hope and expectation is that the model will eventually be extended to "humanitarian and compassionate" decision-makers in CIC offices throughout Ontario and then in the rest of Canada.

Ongoing Work at the YCPE

This year the Centre team laid the groundwork for the Ethics Essay Contest that we will be rolling out in the Fall. As soon as the 2007-2008 Ethics Certificate course information becomes available, the Centre will solicit the participation of the course instructors in promoting interest in the contest among their students.

Breanne and Dave completed the final draft for the content of the new Centre brochure, the publication of which will be given priority in the Fall term. All that remains is to finalize the format and make a selection from a variety of printing options.

We are continuing to improve our website. Currently under development is the capability of posting videos of the Centre's events, along with presentations and working papers. The website has progressed significantly over the last two years largely due to the tireless efforts of Elliot Pobjoy.

Congratulations are in Order!

Elliot Pobjoy

Work/study undergrad Elliot has been accepted into the Graduate Program in History at York.

CBERN Receives SSHRC \$2.1 mil grant

The Canadian Business Ethics Research Network (CBERN), with TI-Canada Founding/Past Chair and President Wes Cragg as Project Director, has just won a \$2.1 million grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). This seven-year project, of which the YCPE is a partner, is an interactive research network that crosses academic disciplines and economic sectors. This project invites active dialogue between researchers and experienced practitioners in government, business, community and voluntary sectors. The

CBERN vision is a network that weaves together the currently fragmented insights emerging from business ethics, corporate social responsibility, sustainable development, triple bottom line and corporate governance research.

---for further information, visit: www.cbern.ca

Wes Cragg is on the YCPE Executive Council and on the Board of Directors. In the fall, he was successful in winning a Research Development Initiative award to work on Ethics at the business/healthcare Interface

Both projects had the support and commitment of the Centre as a participant, and the Centre will be working with Wes to advance the goals of both projects.

Practical Ethics Certificate Update

The Centre is pleased with the increased interest demonstrated by undergraduates in working towards acquiring a Practical Ethics Certificate to complement their undergraduate degrees. Susan Dimock, the coordinator of the Certificate programme for the Centre, reports more than twenty new applicants since the beginning of September, 2006.



Professor Susan Dimock, the Coordinator of the Practical Ethics Certificate

New Titles at the YCPE



The following titles have been donated to the YCPE catalogue. Many thanks to:

Wes Cragg for:

Colley, John L., Jr. et al. Corporate Governance: Business, Legal and Ethical Challenges Faced by Boards of Directors. (McGraw Hill. 2003)

Fisher, Colin and Alan Lovell. Business Ethics and Values: Individual, Corporate and International Perspectives. Second Edition. (Financial Times Prentice Hall. 2006)

Transparency International. Global Corruption Report 2005. Foreword by Francis Fukuyama. (Pluto Press. London. 2005)

Karakowsky, Len et al. Business and Society: Ethics and Stakeholder Management. First Canadian Edition. (Thomson Nelson. 2005)

Rothman, Howard and Mary Scott. Companies with a Conscience: Intimate Portraits of Twelve Firms That Make a Difference. Third Edition. (The Publishing Cooperative. Denver. 2003)

Velasquez, Manuel G. Business Ethics: Concepts and Cases. Sixth Edition. (Pearson Prentice Hall. New Jersey. 2006)

Susan Dimock for:

Dimock, Susan, Christopher Tucker. Applied Ethics: Reflective Moral Reasoning. (Thomson Nelson. Toronto. 2004)

The YCPE graciously accepts donations of any Ethics books so please think of us next time you are spring cleaning or “re-gifting”.

Contact the Centre

Location

119 McLaughlin College
4700 Keele Street
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M3J 1P3

Telephone

Phone: (416) 736-2100, ext. 30446
Fax: (416) 736-5436

Electronically

Email: ycpe@yorku.ca
Website: www.yorku.ca/ycpe