San Diego Meeting Rapidly Approaching

November 11th (Evening) and 12th at the Manchester Grand Hyatt


The Neuroethics Society is pleased to present their 2010 Annual Meeting in San Diego at the Manchester Grand Hyatt in the Douglas A Pavilion. Thursday evening’s session will consist of a meet-and-greet, as well as the first meeting of our working groups. Friday November 12th will be a fully packed day with exciting lectures, panels, and workshops on Addiction Neuroethics, Global Brain Health, Teaching Neuroethics, and more. The stellar lineup of speakers includes Steve Hyman, Tom Insel, Nora Volkow, Gonul Peker, Wayne Hall, Judy Illes, Martha Farah, Adrian Carter, Kathleen Michels, Adriani Gini, Elana Brief, Gladys Maestre, and more. There will be a poster session, updates, and networking opportunities. See the full schedule here. Breakfast and lunch are included in registration costs.

Follow this link to register today for this incredible meeting and receive a discounted rate.

Because we are a satellite meeting of the Society for Neuroscience Meeting which draws about 30,000 attendees, hotels are going quick. Check out our website for more information about making hotel reservations and reserve early!

Join a Working Group before the NS Meeting

With the goal of bringing together Society members to promote dialogue and collaboration between meetings, the Society is developing Working Groups on relevant neuroethics topics. Participants will communicate online (listserv) to explore common interests. No meetings are required. No funding will be provided by the Neuroethics Society. Each group will be asked to submit a brief progress report to the Executive Committee each year and to share their updates with the membership at the annual meeting. Space is limited so sign up now!

Listed below are current Working Groups:

- Addiction Neuroethics,
- Global Health and Neuroethics,
- Predictive Biomarkers for Alzheimer’s Disease,
- Deep Brain Stimulation,
- Cognitive Enhancement,
- Neuroscience and National Security,
- Neuroscience and Free Will,
- Brain-Based Legal Implications

Members interested in participating in a Working Group are asked to write the Executive Committee of the Neuroethics Society to the attention of Karen Graham at kgraham@neuroethicssociety.org
Neuroethics Society: As a bioethicist and sociologist, what first drew you to neuroethics?

Paul Root Wolpe: I realized that we were spending so much time in ethics worrying about genetics – genetic enhancement, privacy, and so on – yet most of the things we were concerned about were decades away in genetics, but happening right now in neuroscience. After all, it will be a while before we genetically enhance, but we do it today with psychopharmacology, TMS, etc. Also, I was trained as a sociologist of medicine, but my area of focus was psychiatry and mental illness (my graduate work was supported by an NIMH Training Grant), so I always had an interest in the brain, consciousness, and social aspects of neuroscience.

NS: And is the sociology of psychiatry generally open and embracing of brain enhancements?

PRW: Well, sociology does not make normative judgments, so when I am wearing my sociological hat I can only describe social phenomena empirically. I have gone over to the dark side, however, and function often as an ethicist, or at least someone who is asked to make normative judgments about ethics, and there I can draw on my social science background to make different kinds of points than my philosophy and theology colleagues in ethics tend to make. But one could use those tools to come down on either side of the enhancement questions.

NS: Aside from brain enhancement, what do you see as the most interesting and important issues in neuroethics today?

PRW: I think it is a bit frightening how readily the public, and policymakers, and even experts from other fields grab onto reported neuroscience findings and start proposing policy changes or companies or products. The capacity of neuroscience to cause mischief is great, since it seems so simple – trait “A” is generated by region “B” which can be identified, or can be modulated by process “C” – so let’s go do it to all the “A”的s!

NS: Whoa, that is a bit frightening. Are there examples of this pattern of reasoning that you could point to?

PRW: Oh, for example, in criminal justice they are always looking for the brain processes that cause criminal behavior, sexual predation, and so on. In fact, Penn does a lot of that work, and does it well. But often the quick and uninformed response of lawmakers is that it proves that criminals have lower brain function in, for example, the orbitofrontal cortex, so let’s start screening our kids! Let’s examine the incarcerated offenders and see who has the tendency to be violent by looking at their OFC! Of course, insofar as it a valid finding it only identifies the rare very violent offender, and we do not know how many people have lower brain function in the OFC who do not offend, and so on. Neuroscientists have to be very careful to make sure their work is not distorted or misused in those kinds of cases.

NS: Is this something you are working on with your colleagues at Emory? Tell us a bit about your new ethics center and what some of its activities are.

PRW: The Center for Ethics at Emory is not a bioethics center, it is a general ethics center, so we work in many other areas as well – business ethics, legal ethics, social welfare ethics, ethics and the arts. But that allows us a lot of latitude to do creative things. For example, we are partnered with the Alliance Theater, a major Atlanta theater, and we pick a couple of shows a year that have an ethics theme and the actors, playwright, director, and so on come to the Center, do readings from the play, and discuss ethical issues. In Spring, 2011 we are presenting a show called Carapace, written by David Mitchell Robinson, which is the winner of the 2010 Kendeda Graduate Playwriting Competition. Carapace is about an alcoholic father and his daughter who stutters, and the nature of pathological and compulsive behaviors. We will have neurologists and psychiatrists to bring a clinical and neuroscientific component to the discussion, as well as ethicists, neuroscientists, and so on. I really enjoy those interdisciplinary programs that draw from science, ethics, the arts, medicine, psychology, and so on.
Feedback on the Ethics Pledge by Curtis Bell

Last month we emailed the membership about an ethics pledge for neuroscientists, written by NS member Curtis Bell. Although the Society does not take official positions on matters such as this, we are committed to encouraging discussion of ethics in neuroscience, and therefore circulated the pledge and invited comment. Several members signed the pledge and four sent comments, reprinted here. A reply to these comments, from Bell, follows.

I would suggest that some of these issues are a good deal more complicated that this pledge would lead one to believe. There is, for example, no consensus on what constitutes a "fundamental human right." Is healthcare a fundamental human right? The voters in Missouri don’t think so, since they just voted in a referendum to reject the principle of universal coverage behind the recent federal healthcare reform bill. Or more relevant to neuroscience, is privacy a fundamental human right? Certainly absolute privacy is not—witness the census and mandatory cancer registries. Where then should the line be drawn and how does a neuroscientist know that he or she is about to cross it?

With regard to "aggressive war," the boundaries become even blurrier. Who is the aggressor when one nation launches a preemptive assault against a neighbor that is believed to be preparing an attack? How certain does that attack have to be? How imminent? And how does one prevent technologies that are developed with potential military applications from being used in whatever kind of war an army is ordered to fight? Should neuroscientists never work on technologies with any possible military use, since they could some day be employed in an aggressive war?

I’m afraid that this is one area in which the fine-sounding language of human rights and peace doesn’t get us very far. Anyone signing a pledge as vague as this will be free to interpret it just about any way they choose.

-Paul Appelbaum

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Neuroscience Pledge

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The pledge states: “A government which engages in aggressive wars should not be provided with tools to engage more effectively in such wars.” Virtually all neuroscience research may provide some advantage to be gained in war. The United States is currently engaged in an aggressive war in Iraq. If the United States should not gain advantage militarily from neuroscience research, does it make sense for the United States to fund neuroscience research? In regards to the researcher; accepting funding from a country engaged in an aggressive war that may then use that knowledge to their advantage in prosecuting that war seems morally suspect at best. I believe anyone considering signing this document should give this relationship serious consideration.

-Bob DeWeese

This is just a gut reaction, followed up by post-hoc explanation, but I find the whole idea of a neuroethics pledge a bit weird and, frankly, kind of creepy. (Kind of like a new babysitter who says, “Thanks for hiring me. And just so you know, I’m definitely not going to torture your children.”) It’s not that I have any intention of doing any of the nasty things that are mentioned in the pledge. I just find it odd to be formally pledging not to do them. I drive a car, but I never signed a pledge promising not to use it run people over. Given that almost any knowledge or technology can be used for ill, I don’t see why neuroscientists need to be signing pledges anymore than anyone else who has knowledge or expertise that can be misused.

So, am I inclined to sign this? Not really. But if everyone else is signing it, do I want to be the one guy who won’t stand up and say he’s not going to help torture people? Not really. But if it were up to me, we wouldn’t be in the pledging business. -Joshua Greene

I was interested to read the Neuroscientist Pledge, and I applaud the concept. However, I am concerned that neuroscientists have little or no control over the application of neuroscience in the way Curtis Bell has proposed.

The ‘drugs which enhance the effectiveness of soldiers on one side, drugs which damage the effectiveness of soldiers on the other side, and robots that move, perceive, and kill are readily available to governments and others. A neuroscientist may not ‘knowingly’ participate in the application of neuroscience to violations of basic human rights or international law, but simply by conducting the research on drugs and publishing the results to better understand their effects for, say, therapeutic purposes, enables those with intentions to violate human rights to benefit from the knowledge gained by others. Nothing new there.

I agree that Neuroscientists should pledge ‘to make ourselves aware of the potential applications of our own work and that of others to applications that violate basic human rights or international law such as torture and aggressive war.’ Just by being aware of how the research can be applied is a significant step forward.

In my view, a pledge such as this exposes a neuroscientist to critical analysis of the motives of their research, and the implied lack of control over how that research is used in a very difficult position. They could be condemned for doing the research in the first place and ignoring the possible consequences.

-Elaine Snell

Thanks to the Neuroethics Society for opening up this dialog about the neuroscientist pledge in which neuroscientists commit to: a) being aware of possible applications of neuroscience to violations of international law such as aggressive war and torture; and b) refusing to participate knowingly in such applications. The full pledge may be accessed at http://tinyurl.com/neuroscientistpledge

Several of the comments reveal a common misunderstanding about the pledge - that it would proscribe work in any area of general or potential relevance to torture or aggressive war. But that is manifestly impossible, since most of neuroscience has such potential. What the pledge in fact proscribes is knowingly working on applications of neuroscientific knowledge to the war-making or torture capabilities of a government engaged in aggressive war or torture.

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Paul Applebaum raises the issue of the difficulty of defining “aggressive war”, and the same can be said, as we all know, about “torture”. But the difficulty of defining immoral or illegal actions does not and should not preclude our opposition to such actions. “Aggressive war” is defined in international law as a war that is neither in self defense nor supported by the United Nations Security Council. Prevention of such wars was the major reason for the founding of the United Nations.

Joshua Greene seems to agree that applications of neuroscience to aggressive war and torture are immoral, but finds the pledge unnecessary and even “creepy”. I argue, however, that torture and aggressive war are major scourges of our time, that the threat of misuse of neuroscience for these purposes is real (see references at http://tinyurl.com/neuroscience-references), and that a refusal by professional groups to use their knowledge for such purposes can help reduce the likelihood of misuse.

Those seeking more information about the pledge or wishing to help gather support for it can access a short statement about the pledge at: http://preview.tinyurl.com/statement-about-pledge

-Curtis Bell

Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Neuroscience Launched

In January 2010 Wiley-Blackwell launched a new publication entitled Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Cognitive Science and edited by Professor Lynn Nadel of the University of Arizona, USA. It is aimed at both novice researchers and experienced scientists, addresses key topics from the perspectives of neuroscience, psychology, computer science, linguistics, philosophy, anthropology and biology, and is available via complimentary online access. Issues 1 - 4 can be viewed at http://wires.wiley.com/cogsci

Meeting Round-Up

Conference on Clinical Neuroscience and Society, Philadelphia, July 23-25, 2010

Have you ever questioned how the raw signals from an MRI or PET machine becomes a brightly colored scan, and then the controversial cover of a magazine? Or wondered how Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) is performed? Or thought about how our schools and workplaces would be transformed if cognitive enhancing medications were widely used? Or pondered the ethical implications of tests that would identify sociopaths on brain scans? Over a hundred clinicians and researchers--neurologists, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists and others--attended Penn's Conference on Clinical Neuroscience and Society to hear a series of talks by researchers, clinicians and attorneys, followed by discussion and lively audience interaction. Organized by Penn's Martha Farah and Anjan Chatterjee, the conference highlighted the growing ethical dilemmas posed by the advent of novel technologies and increasing knowledge of brain function. The conference provided an opportunity to assess these advances as they impact the practice of medicine, the law and society as a whole. By turns practical, theoretical, and speculative, the conference was an exciting glimpse at the future of neuroethics.

David Elkin, MD
Clinical Professor
UCSF

Congratulations Daniel Buchman

Daniel Buchman at the National Core for Neuroethics, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada was recently awarded the Frederick Banting and Charles Best Canada Graduate Scholarship from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). It is a 3-year scholarship to support his doctoral studies in the area of Addiction Neuroethics.

Please send "Honors and Awards" information to administrator@neuroethicssociety.org for posting with approval at the discretion of the NS Executive Committee.
FEATURED GROUP: FUNDACIÓN CRIMSON – A NEUROETHICS GROUP IN ARGENTINA

Fundación Crimson is a non-profit organization established in Argentina in 2006 to foster excellence in education, science, and technology. It aims to contribute to the use of scientific and technological innovations for the advancement of society, and strives to support a new generation of leaders who will be able to respond to society’s needs with ethically sound research.

Fundación Crimson partners with world-renowned universities, leading to productive collaborations between Argentina and the world’s preeminent educators, innovators, and researchers. In fewer than five years, it has become internationally recognized for its world-class training programs on cutting-edge technologies and ethical issues. At present, Fundación Crimson is committed to expanding the frontiers of neuroethics which, for the moment, a scarcely explored field in Argentina.

To carry out such a challenging task, the first Argentinean neuroethics group has recently been established at Fundación Crimson. This interdisciplinary team of professionals is directed by Miguel Velardez, the current CEO of Fundación Crimson. Miguel is a neuroscientist with more than 15 years of experience in research. He obtained his PhD degree in Argentina and then worked as a scientist in the Division of Neuroscience at Children’s Hospital Boston. Miguel teams up with Soledad Llarrull (Biotechnology/Scientific Communication), Elian Pregno (Law), Victoria Ruiz (Psychology/Computer Sciences), Arleen Salles (Philosophy) and Fernanda Velázquez (Philosophy/Cognitive Neuroscience).

As a first approach to expanding the neuroethics debate in Argentina, the group is organizing the first neuroethics workshop in the country. It will be held in November 2010. The workshop will focus both on applied neuroethics, i.e., ethics questions that arise from neuroscience and neurotechnological advances; and on fundamental neuroethics, i.e., questions concerning how knowledge of the brain’s functional architecture and its evolution can deepen our understanding of human thought, including moral thought and judgment. The course will also deal with the clinical perspectives (e.g., to what extent a patient with a neurodegenerative disorder suffers from a reduced capacity for decision-making), and cultural perspectives in neuroethics (e.g., how different countries prioritize and apply different aspects of neuroscience, especially in the legal system). The workshop’s director is Kathinka Evers from Uppsala University (Sweden) and lecturers are internationally recognized experts in neuroscience and philosophy. Professor Jean Pierre Changeux from the Collège de France will be the keynote speaker. The workshop is open to advanced undergraduates, graduate students and young professionals from Argentina and abroad. Through this activity, Fundación Crimson strives to set up the first neuroethics network within Argentina, and its incorporation to the existing international web.

To create a more global social awareness of neuroethics issues, the neuroethics group at Fundación Crimson is working on various communication projects which, together with the establishment of productive collaborations, aim to make an impact on the Argentinean government, legal system, and society as a whole. Next August, Fundación Crimson will launch the first nation-wide advertising campaign on neuroethics.

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Neuroethics Event Calendar
Please check our website for the most up-to-date listings. Share your event with us at administrator@neuroethicssociety.org


September 16  Café Scientifique  Neuroscience and Genetics before the Court: The Cases of Mr. Dugan and Mr. Abdelmalek  Pavia, Piazza Vittoria. Speaker: Kent Kiehl (University of New Mexico) and discussants: Nita Farahany (Vanderbilt University Law School), Marina Boccardo (IRCCS Fatebenefratelli de Brescia), Daniela Ovadia (Angenza Zoë), and Amedeo Santosuosso (University of Pavia). For more information check out enlsc@unipv.pt or email Barbara.bottalico@unipv-lawtech.eu.

September 17  Neuroscience in European and North American Case Law  Milan, Italy. The European Centre for Life Sciences, Health and the Courts, University of Pavia, in cooperation with the Court of Milan, Collegio Ghislieri in Pavia and the international group on Neuroscience & Law presents an excellent one day conference from 9am—5:30pm. Contact Scientific Secretary Barbara Bottalico at Barbara.bottalico@unipv-lawtech.eu for more information.

September 24  “Can ‘Willful Misconduct’ become a ‘Brain Disease’: The Case of Drug Dependence”  University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. From 4:00pm - 5:30pm, A. Thomas McLellan, PhD, Deputy Director and Chief Scientists at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy will come and speak at Silverman Hall in the Penn Law building. For more information, email info@neuroethics.upenn.edu

Welcome Dr. Angie Kehagia: New manager for the INN

Angie Kehagia will be joining the National Core for Neuroethics as a Postdoctoral Fellow to work on the translational aims of the ongoing neuroimaging program. She trained in experimental psychology at Oxford and cognitive neuroscience at Cambridge, where she completed her PhD and postdoctoral research using neuroimaging and pharmacology in Parkinson’s disease. Angie will be extending this work to encompass the ethical, legal and social issues surrounding advances in neuroimaging in the definitions of health and disease.
Neuroethics Society Event Calendar
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Brain: Can we become smarter, happier people? For more information see http://ieet.org/index.php/IEET/eventinfo/fmcb10/


November 11-12 Neuroethics Society Annual Meeting San Diego, CA. See cover story and http://www.neuroethicssociety.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=115735&orgId=ns

November 13-17 Society for Neuroscience Annual Meeting San Diego. See http://www.sfn.org/am2010/index.aspx?pagename=preliminary_program for more information. This meeting will be featuring many events of relevance to neuroethics including:

Nov 13 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM Dialogues between Neuroscience and Society: Bringing Change to Mind on Mental Illness G. CLOSE

Nov 13 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM Ethical and Policy Issues Poster Session

Nov 14 1:00 - 3:00 PM Social Issues Roundtable - Child Poverty and Human Capital: New Insights from Neuroscience - M. J. Farah, chair

Nov 15 10:00 - 11:10 AM The Neuroscience Revolution and Society - H. T. GREELY

Nov 16 6:45 - 8:45 PM Neuroethics Social: Psychopharmacology: Treatment and Lifestyle Drug Use - B. J. Sahakian, chair


November 22-26 Expanding the Frontiers of Neuroethics Buenos Aires, Argentina. The course consists of one week of intensive lectures and discussions, with 30 participants from around the world. This course in Neuroethics will be interesting and useful for a varied group of students and professionals working in different fields and with distinct levels of education. The course is aimed for graduates, as well as for young professionals in various areas, such as neuroscience, social science, philosophy, health care, and law education. The course is founded in direct collaboration with Uppsala University, and Fundación Crimson. http://www.fundacioncrimson.org/program.php?p=24&subsec=program

December 3-4 “Transforming Humanity: Fantasy? Dream? Nightmare?” University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. This event suggests three of the main approaches that have been taken in addressing human enhancements, namely that it is unrealistic to expect significant changes to human nature through enhancements, that significant changes are both possible and desirable, and that significant changes are possible but are highly undesirable. We invite papers from all academic disciplines that address any aspect of the conference theme, especially where scientific and technological breakthroughs may call for novel approaches to dealing with human transformation. Scheduled Speakers: Allen Buchanan (Duke), Arthur Caplan (Penn), Martha Farrah (Penn), Ronald Lindsay (CFI), Maxwell Mehlman (Case Western), Jonathan Moreno (Penn), Rosemarie Tong (UNC-Charlotte). http://www.centerforinquiry.net/research/conferences/

December 7-8 Neurological Futures: Speculation, Value and Promissory Hope in the Bioeconomy James Martin Institute, Oxford University.

April 1-3 Sixth International Conference on Ethical Issues in Biomedical Engineering Brooklyn, NY.

April 11-12 Technologies on the stand: legal and ethical questions in neuroscience and robotics Tilburg University, Netherlands. The conference will have two independent, but related tracks: Law and neuroscience and law, ethics, and robotics. See http://kolber.typepad.com/ethics_law_blog/2010/09/call-for-papers-legal-and-ethical-questions-in-neuroscience-and-robotics.html for more information

May 26-27 International Neuroethics Conference: Brain Matters II Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Ethics in Translation of Neuroscience and Research to Psychiatric and Neurological Care. For more information please contact Neuroethics@irqm.qc.ca

Submit your events to administrator@neuroethicssociety.org
September, 2010

2010 NEUROETHICS SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE
Manchester Grand Hyatt, San Diego, CA
Register by clicking on the following link

Thursday Evening November 11, 5:00pm—7:30pm
Meet-and-Greet
Working Groups break-out

Friday November 12, 8:00am—6:00pm
8:00-8:50 Breakfast Buffet and Poster Set-up
8:50-9:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks Turhan Canli, Program Chair (Stony Brook U, USA)
9:00-9:30 Opening Address: Patricia Churchland (UCSD, USA): What Role do Rules Play in Navigating the Social World
9:30-10:30 Addiction Neuroethics
Moderator: Wayne Hall (U Queensland, Australia)
Steven Hyman (Harvard, USA)
Nora Volkow (NIDA, USA)
10:30-10:45 Break
10:45-11:30 Concurrent Sessions:
Steve Hyman: Careers at the Intersection of Science and Society
Martha Farah: Teaching Neuroethics Workshop
11:30-12:00 Updates and FYIs
Moderator: Adrian Carter (U Queensland, Australia)
Presenters: Kathleen Michels (Fogarty International Center, NIH)
Others TBD
12:00-2:00 Lunch and Open Business Meeting
2:00-3:30 Poster Session
3:30-4:15 Keynote Address: Tom Insel (NIMH, USA): Grand Challenges in Global Mental Health
4:15-5:30 Setting the Agenda for Global Brain Health and Neuroethics
Moderator: Judy Illes (University of British Columbia, Canada)
Panel Speakers:
Dr. Gonul Peker (Istanbul, Turkey), Perceptions and Expectations of Neuroethics: A survey of Faculty and Students in a Major Medical School in Izmir, Turkey
Dr. Adriani Gini (Rome). Severe Impairment of Consciousness Revisited: Can Interdisciplinarity Solve the Dilemma?
Dr. Elana Brief (Vancouver, Canada). Nurturing Knowledge, Understanding, Education and Care in Remote First Nations Communities at Risk for Alzheimer’s Disease.
Dr. Gladys Maestre (Venezuela). Neuroethics Post Haiti.
5:30-5:55 Reports from Working Groups
5:55-6:00 Closing Remarks (Steve Hyman, President)

Send in items to our Job Section of the NS Website
Send in help wanted positions, student fellowships, and any other positions that may be of interest to our membership. Simply send your posting to administrator@neuroethicssociety.org and we will post it to the following link.

The NS Newsletter would welcome your ideas, reactions and reportage. Have you recently attended an interesting meeting? Are you planning to attend one? Or host one? Are you looking to hire a post-doc or staff member? Are you looking for a position in neuroethics? Would you like to interview one of your fellow NS members? There are many ways to contribute to the Newsletter, so please find one that works for you and get in touch by emailing administrator@neuroethicssociety.org
We look forward to hearing from you!

The Neuroethics Society
Our mission is to promote the development and responsible application of neuroscience through interdisciplinary and international research, education, outreach and public engagement for the benefit of people of all nations, ethnicities, and cultures. Questions and comments about the Neuroethics Society should be directed to Karen Graham, Executive Director, kgraham@neuroethicssociety.org.