We are now the International Neuroethics Society

During the 2010 Annual Meeting in San Diego, the members present voted in favor of a proposal to add the term “international” to the name of the Society. The name change is in response to member input and signals our commitment to attracting and engaging members from around the world. To honor that commitment while minimizing the confusion that can be produced by a name change, the executive committee voted to simply add the term international to the original name, producing the “International Neuroethics Society.”

What does the change of the name mean? The Society’s logo will remain the same, with the addition of “international” in the name. The url of our web site will not change, it will stay neuroethicssociety.org. Most importantly, our mission remains “the promotion of 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.”

An Interview with Dr. Mark Frankel, By Chelsea Ott INS Administrator

Mark S. Frankel directs the AAAS Scientific Freedom, Responsibility and Law Program and is responsible for developing and managing AAAS activities related to science, ethics and law. He serves as Staff Officer to two AAAS committees: the Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility and the AAAS-American Bar Association National Conference of Lawyers and Scientists. He has directed the AAAS series of judicial seminars on emerging issues in neuroscience since 2006. He is editor of Professional Ethics Report, the Program’s quarterly newsletter, and is a Fellow of AAAS.

International Neuroethics Society: In the past you have spoken about “responsible science” and the need for scientists to be socially responsible for explaining to the public both risks and benefits of new technologies. The work of many of our members has, and will continue to lead to many new breakthroughs, but if applied in the wrong situation can have negative side effects (bioterrorism, wrongly convicting a person in court, etc.) How would you encourage Neuroethics Society members to promote their research while still being responsible scientists?

Mark. Frankel: One could write a very long essay on this topic, but I will resist the temptation. Of course, members of the Society are already very likely sensitive to the professional responsibilities associated with neuroscience research and its potential impacts, so that makes it a bit easier. While ultimate responsibility rests with each individual scientist, the professional group—her collaborators, her institution, her close peers—has a collective responsibility to make expectations about behavior clear to all members and to provide guidance for meeting or exceeding those expectations (examples of the latter include “best practices,” ethics codes, educational Continued on Page 4…
Engaging in Neuroethics by Dr. David Sloan
Dr. Sloan is a post-doc in sensory neuroscience at the University of West Virginia.

The stated mission of the Neuroethics Society is to "promote the development and responsible application of neuroscience through interdisciplinary [collaboration]". It is a mission which requires an open and fluid dialogue between neuroscientists, clinicians, ethicists, policy makers, and everyone else with an interest. Among the obstacles to fostering this dialogue is this: neuroscientists may find themselves underrepresented in the discussion.

The proportion of neuroscientists with an interest in the field of neuroethics is high. A quick sample survey of the Neuroethics Society membership finds that neuroscience PhDs are the second highest represented field, behind professional ethicists. Considering that the goal of the field is to study the application of the science they produce, the average neuroscientist doesn’t need to be convinced of its importance. But being interested isn’t the same thing as being engaged, and being engaged isn’t easy for the average neuroscientist.

After all, the paradigm of the field is that the scientist produces the new data, and the ethicist or policy maker does the analyzing and publishing. Publications about neuroethical topics don’t necessarily help on the NIH grant applications that pay their salary. Most of the writing in the field is done in the vernacular and format of academic ethical writing, with which a scientist may have no experience. Also, a large proportion of neuroscientists don’t work in a sub-specialty with an immediately recognizable application to society. They may wonder, what’s in neuroethics for them?

Neuroscientists of any ilk should know that there is value for themselves and for society in directly seeking out neuroethical dialogue. Those who are trained to think from the neuron out have a unique perspective that is crucial for the growth of the field. Ethicists should seek out opportunities to not only talk with the basic scientist, but to collaborate in research projects and co-publish. Raw neuroscience data should be well represented at the annual meeting poster sessions.

Most of all, neuroscientists have to know that they are needed. Everyone likes to feel needed. And there’s probably a neurobiological explanation as to why.

Wellcome Trust Funding PhDs in Ethics for Students from Low or Middle Income Countries

The Wellcome Trust will be supporting PhD candidates studying Ethics from low/middle income country (LMIC) nationals http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/International/wtdv026086.htm. Applicants need to be proposing a piece of research within the remit of the Wellcome International Ethics Program http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/Funding/Biomedical-ethics/International-ethics-grant-schemes/index.htm, leading to the award of a PhD registered through either a LMIC or a UK or Republic of Ireland institution. Applicants should not yet have started their PhDs.
The dinner was attended by a small, but enthusiastic group of researchers from a range of disciplines: Dr Adrian Carter (School of Psychological Sciences, University of Melbourne, Australia), Dr Daniel Buchman (National Core for Neuroethics, University of British Columbia, Canada), Assoc-Prof Judy Grisel (Departments of Psychology and Neuroscience, Furman University, US), Prof Wayne Hall (University of Queensland Centre for Clinical Research, Australia), and Dr Wrye Sententia (Centre for Cognitive Liberty and Ethics, University of California Davis).

The conversation focussed on questions around what addiction was, how it could be defined, and the limit between addictive and non-addictive behaviour. Of central concern was the question of the nature of addiction and the impact that it had on individual’s ability to choose to use a drug or not. It was suggested that addicted individuals were compelled to use drugs as a result of drug-induced changes in the brain. It was also pointed out that many addicted individual’s can and do stop using drugs for various reasons and without medical assistance. A debate ensued about whether these people were, in fact, addicted, highlighting the lack of a clear bright line between addictive and non-addictive behaviour.

This debate was played out again when someone raised the question about the existence of the so-called “behavioural addictions”. While all agreed that people could become addicted to certain activities, notably gambling, there was less certainty when the debate shifted to more common activities, such as using computers, shopping, and exercise. At what point did engagement in an activity constitute an addiction? Is “addiction” used to describe any form of repetitive harmful behaviour that the person finds difficult to desist from? What does society mean when they describe behaviour as addictive? The group canvassed a range of uses of the term “addiction” in society from the flippan ("I’m addicted to chocolate") to the pathological. Is there a risk that the label could be extended so far that it loses any clinical meaning?

Conversation also covered the broader use of drugs within society and the often conflicting and contradictory laws and attitudes that apply to the use of different classes of drugs, whether for therapeutic or non-therapeutic reasons. Dr Sententia drew attention to the striking contrast in attitudes towards the increasing use of prescription drugs for a growing range of psychiatric disorders, and the strong opposition to the use of “recreational” drugs. Why is the non-therapeutic use of some drugs to enhance cognition acceptable to many while the “recreational” use of similar classes of drugs to enhance mood or induce euphoria socially unacceptable, and often illegal? What freedom do we have over the use of drugs? Under what circumstances is it appropriate for society to prohibit this freedom?

These are deep and fascinating questions that strike to the heart of our sense of self, of moral responsibility and freedom, that operate at the intersection of neuroscience research and public policy. Unfortunately the dinner concluded before we were able to consider the implications of this debate for the use of emerging neurotechnologies in the treatment and prevention of addiction. This will have to wait for another time.

The Working Group is currently seeking to finalise the organisational structure of the group and its governance, and it clarify its aims and outcomes. Anyone wishing to be involved in the Addiction Neuroethics Working Group should contact Dr Adrian Carter (adrian.carter@uq.edu.au).
opportunities, and so on). The Neuroethics Society has the expertise and the responsibility to consider how best to discharge its collective responsibility.

INS: The next generation of scientists sometimes feels that when they are concerned with ethics, their fellow scientists see them as “traitors” limiting the progress of their work. How can we change this misconception?

MF: I’m not persuaded that “traitors” is the right word, but there is a tension between those who want to ensure a place for ethical assessment in the research process and beyond and those who may view such efforts as obstacles to be overcome in order to “get on” with their science. However, in the 35 years that I have been working on the relationship between ethics and science, I have seen quite a change in scientists’ attitudes about the role of ethics in their work. In part, this is due to new government policies and increased exposure to ethics education. However, I believe the most influential force behind these changes has been public demands for greater accountability on the part of all professions, including science and engineering. It will take time, but the seeds have been planted and gradual change is visible.

INS: How important is it to consider the international scene when trying to create the norm of responsible science?

MF: Very important, as research becomes more global and collaborative across borders and cultures. It makes no sense to refer to “American norms,” or “Chinese norms” of science. This does not mean that there are not varying perspectives with regard to how different cultures view the value of science and the manner in which it should be done. There is much we can learn from these perspectives. Nevertheless, there is a need to search for commonality and to examine differences very closely for their normative foundation to assess what is really driving behaviors that clash with long-standing normative principles associated with science. This may be especially true in neuroscience, where different cultures may view the brain-mind interface and mental illness, for example, from different value premises and normative constructs.

INS: Do you think that outside ethicists who are not trained in science are helpful in regulating science? Would it be better if the change came from within?

MF: It would, indeed, be desirable for change to come from within the profession/discipline. Experience, however, shows us that such change rarely happens without external prodding or more explicit force. Since World War II, a combination of public control and self-regulation has served both science and society reasonably well. Maintaining the proper balance, which itself may be subject to change in the face of shifting public values and scientific advancement, is always a challenge. Trained ethicists who take time to learn the basic intricacies of neuroscience can, I believe, contribute to that balancing process. Those who don’t understand the science involved, are least likely to advance science-society deliberations in a useful direction.

INS: What is the greatest lesson you have learned working for the AAAS Scientific Freedom, Responsibility, and Law Program? What has been your largest frustration?

MF: Good questions. I wish I could identify the “greatest” and “largest” with regard to lessons learned and frustrations experienced. Instead, I will generalize. As the only director the Program has ever had, I have come to appreciate how much credibility is associated with the work of AAAS by a large international group of scientists and non-scientists alike. I hope that the work we have done in the SFRL Program has contributed in some modest measure to the way people perceive AAAS, what it stands for, and what it does to advance science in a manner consistent with broader social values and public needs. Perhaps my most persistent frustration is not having the resources that would enable us to do more.
International Neuroethics Network (INN) Updates
Ania Mizgalewicz, NN Manager

Recognizing the vote of the membership at the second annual meeting of the Society, the Executive Committee has finalized a name change that fully embraces our international community. Please see the exciting news on page 1.

Attending a meeting this spring? We want to hear about it!

There are lots of meetings coming up this spring where neuroethics will be discussed: the Cognitive Neuroscience Society in San Francisco, the American Academy of Neurology in Hawaii, the American Psychiatric Association in Hawaii and the annual Towards a Science of Consciousness meeting in Stockholm. There are even more small meetings coming up – check our calendar section for some of them.

Your fellow NS members will be interested in knowing about talks and panels in which neuroethics is discussed – So please write a short (100-200 word) report on the neuroethics scene at your favorite spring conferences and send it to us. We’ll publish it in the next newsletter.

How to Update Your Profile Information on the Neuroethics Society Website

1. Login in using your username and password on the NS website
2. Click on “Members” on the horizontal toolbar on the right hand side
3. Select “VIEW PROFILE” – Your Name Page should appear; at the top right there is a pencil next to an “Edit” tool – click the word edit - Here you can change your basic contact information, username, password, current institution, etc.
4. Click the save button

We are encouraging all members to check your profiles and make sure that all of your information is up to date.

Our “Books By Our Members” Page Has Been Launched

The NS website now has a “Books by Our Members” Page which displays new books from authors in our membership. Check it out to learn about new great reads and to see what your fellow members are working on. Also if you have recently written something, we encourage you to send us a brief description of your work and a link to where the book can be purchased and we would be happy to display it. Information can be sent to Chelsea at chelsea@neuroethicssociety.org.
Brain Waves Releases its First Two Modules, By Chelsea Ott

INS Administrator

Brain Waves Module I: Neuroscience, Society and Policy and Module II: Neuroscience: Implications for education and lifelong learning was recently published by the Royal Society.

The first module is a collection of essays broken into three sections, an introduction, Contemporary Neuroscience and Technology, and Neuroscience and Society. The chapters are written by leading experts in neuroscience, bioethics, and science and technology policy, and they delve into issues such as neuroimaging, neuropsychopharmacology, and neural interfaces.

The authors examine the risks and benefits of the applications of these technologies, and make judgments as to what the government’s role needs to be in regulating such practices. The introduction is authored by chair Colin Blakemore FRS (Oxford) and one of the chapters is from the Neuroethics Society’s own Barbara J Sahakian (Cambridge). For the full report, please follow this link.

The second module looks at how our ability to understand how we learn should be taken into account when creating education policy and educator training programs. The report also discusses the roadblocks we face when trying to bring neuroscience into the classroom settings and learning environments.

Brain Waves will be releasing an additional two modules Neuroscience, Conflict and Security; and Neuroscience, Responsibility and the Law. Please stay tuned to the Brain Waves website for up to date information on the upcoming modules.

Available Job Openings

Please see our website for additional information

National Core for Neuroethics, University Of British Columbia:

1. Cross-Cultural Neuroethics Postdoctoral Fellow Division of Neurology, Department of Medicine

   The research will involve:
   - Facilitating sharing circles
   - Collaborating with community based researchers
   - Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data
   - Creating culturally relevant materials
   - Organizing workshops
   - Teaching within our collaborating communities

2. Postdoctoral Fellow, Division of Neurology, Department of Medicine

   The individual will:
   - Lead the collection, analysis and interpretation of data
   - Participate in grant writing and the pursuit of research funding
   - Manuscript writing
   - Present at national and international meetings
   - Develop and carry out independent research
   - Participate in other scholarly activity related to neuroimaging and neuroethics initiatives

Both UBC positions are 1 year, renewable

Contact: Please submit a cover letter with a statement of your research interests and career goals, curriculum vitae, and the names of three referees willing to provide letters of reference by March 15. All information should be sent to Janice Matautia, at matautia@interchange.ubc.ca.

Vanderbilt University Law School

Associate Director for the Law and Neuroscience Project

The Associate Director will report to the Director and will be responsible for assisting in both the substantive and procedural management and operation of the project. The term runs through June 30, 2012, with up to two additional years possible. Candidates must relocate to Nashville. For a detailed job description, see: http://law.vanderbilt.edu/recruitment/lawneuro/index.aspx

To apply, please send or email a C.V., transcript, brief writing sample, and a letter of intent to: applylawneuro@vanderbilt.edu
Neuroethics Event Calendar

Share your event with us at administrator@neuroethicsociety.org

March 12—21 Ethics and the Brain, University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri. Keynote by Steven Pinker and talks from Patricia Churchland, Joseph Dumit, Adam Kolber, Nancey Murphey, Jesse Prinz, Adrian Raine. This is a free event, for more information please see http://muconf.missouri.edu/sciencesocietysymposium/index.html


Present – August 14 Brain: The Inside Story, Exhibition: American Museum of Natural History. This exhibition offers visitors a new perspective and keen insight into their own brains through imaginative art, vivid brain-scan imaging, and dynamic interactive exhibits for all ages., brings visitors up to date on the latest in neuroscience, highlighting the brain’s surprising ability to rewire itself in response to experience, disability, or trauma, and showcases new technologies that researchers use to study the brain and treat conditions such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s. See this link for more information.

March 21—26 Vegetative State: A Paradigmatic Problem of Modern Society Munich, Germany. Interdisciplinary sessions on five different topics including a presentation from each participant, methodological workshops such as a comprehensive training on interdisciplinary presentation and working in interdisciplinary teams; excursions to a functional neuroimaging laboratory, a special rehabilitation center for VS patients and a palliative care unit; movie matinee and round table discussion with presentation of the workshop results; social events such as a concert, a city tour, joint dinners and a get-together party http://oxbionet.medsci.ox.ac.uk/conferences/21-26-march-2011-vegetative-state-a-paradigmatic-problem-of-modern-society

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

April 1-3 Imaging the Mind? Taking stock a decade after the “Decade of the Brain,” Amsterdam. International conference on the relation between neuroscience, psychology, and philosophy and the prospects of the scientific endeavor of understanding the mind. http://www.imaginingthemind.info/

April 8-9 Exploring Human Enhancement: A Symposium Renaissance Hotel, Richardson Texas. The Center for Values in Medicine, Science, and Technology invites submissions of abstracts of up to 250 words exploring ethical, cultural, humanistic explorations and evaluations of human enhancement, from existing and emerging technologies to speculative technologies. We are especially interested in submissions relating to interdisciplinary work and on new developments in the field. With this in mind, we invite submissions from philosophers, scholars in arts, literature, bioethics, cultural studies, and from scientists and technologists who take a humanistic perspective on their studies. Each author should only submit one proposal. Proposals for group presentations, panels, and workshops with innovative formats are also welcome. http://www.utdallas.edu/c4v/human-enhancement-symposium/

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 this link for more information.

April 26–28 II International Symposium on Disorders of Consciousness Santiago de Cuba. Main topics include: Pathophysiology of consciousness generation, theories of consciousness, PVS, MCS, neuroimaging techniques, neurophysiologic tests, pharmacological treatment, neurorehabilitation, neuroprotection, neurocritical care and neuromonitoring, new trends in cerebral cardio-pulmonar-cerebral resuscitation. American citizens can legally attend this meeting. For more information email brindo@infomed.sld.cu or see http://www.engraciacal.com

May 3-4 Nordic Biobank Research - Obstacles and Opportunities Uppsala Konsert & Kongress. Registration deadline: April 13. The aim of the conference is to discuss Nordic collaboration in biobank based research. The Nordic countries have a long history of utilising biological samples, patient records and health registers to study disease in the population and develop new forms of intervention, treatments and medications. Biobanking, however, raises ethical questions on how to address integrity, privacy, access, legislation and protection from in

Continued on Page 8…
The INS 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 postdoc or staff member? Are you looking for a position in neuroethics? Would you like to interview one of your fellow INS 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!

INS Newsletter
Martha J. Farah, Editor
Chelsea Ott, Assistant Editor
P.O. Box 34252, Bethesda, Maryland 20827

www.neuroethicssociety.org

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.

The Neuroethics Event Calendar...

formation excess in light of the possibilities to understand and treat diseases using new technology. This is a free conference. See this link or contact secretary@ncbio.org 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. Submit completed abstracts by February 1 in a word document (file name: FIRST AUTHOR NAME.doc) by emailing them to neuroethics@ircm.qc.ca with the subject line “Abstract Brain Matters 2” For more information please see www.brainmatters2.com

June 23-25 The Brain, the Person, and the Social: Probing neuroscientific ideas and practices from STS & history of science perspectives. Zurich, Switzerland. This workshop aims to look behind these well-known neuro-stories by investigating what is behind the media-hype about neuro-knowledge, focusing on (but not limiting to) the following questions: Research Practice; Perception of Neuro-Knowledge; Application; Imaging. The work in progress-workshop is for PhD students and postdocs from science and technology studies, history of science and related areas to present and discuss their work on contemporary neurosciences. Application & Contact: johannes.bruder@unibas.ch; matus-all@wiss.gess.ethz.ch

July 22—24 Clinical Neuroscience and Society, University of Pennsylvania. This conference will review the latest developments in brain imagery, psychopharmacology, devices, competence and medicolegal practices, and explore the ethical issues raised in the context of lectures and case discussions. CME and psychology/nursing CE available. For a full overview and more information, please see this link.

July 31—Aug 10 Neuroscience Bootcamp University of Pennsylvania. Applications due February 1st. Neuroscience is increasingly relevant to a number of professions and academic disciplines beyond its traditional medical applications. Lawyers, educators, economists and businesspeople, as well as scholars of sociology, philosophy, applied ethics and policy, are incorporating the concepts and methods of neuroscience into their work. Indeed, for any field in which it is important to understand, predict or influence human behavior, neuroscience will play an increasing role. Boot Camp is designed to give participants a basic foundation in cognitive and affective neuroscience and to equip them to be informed consumers of neuroscience research. Follow this link for more information.

November 4-5, Making Sense of Mental Illness: Biology, Medicine, and Society, EMBL Heidelberg, Germany. This conference will discuss the extent and societal impact of mental illness. Experts from a wide range of disciplines will explore the ethical and social implications and explain the latest scientific knowledge on their causes and treatment. The conference will also debate a number of difficult topics including the definition of mental disorders, financial interests in their diagnosis and treatment and controversial therapies. Please see this link for more information.

Submit your events to administrator@neuroethicssociety.org