COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS

Director, Bioethics Section

Department of Medical Humanities and Ethics

College of Physicians & Surgeons of Columbia University

New York, NY

THE SEARCH

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University (P&S) is seeking an outstanding leader in bioethics to assume the position of Director of the Bioethics Section in a new Department of Medical Humanities and Ethics. The new Department, now in its planning and approval phase, will have as its overall mission to bring knowledge and methods from the humanities, including ethics, to bear on the clinical, educational, and research enterprises of P&S. General internist and literary scholar Rita Charon, MD, PhD will chair the Department, currently in its formative stages. Its work will include targeted research and scholarship regarding specific ethical and humanities-driven issues in clinical and scientific settings, using a variety of empirical and normative methods, as well as examinations of the most fundamental conceptual understandings of the work of physicians and scientists. A combination of collaborative research projects within and beyond Columbia, educational undertakings, creative work, and consultative services will spread the reach of the new Department to include those already deeply engaged in ethics and humanities work and those newly attracted to its promise.

The Bioethics Section will include a robust, externally funded research program and educational activities directed at the broader P&S community. The Director will augment scholarship and research in bioethics already underway in various sites throughout P&S while inaugurating or continuing projects focusing on precision medicine and human genetics. As clinical medicine incorporates emerging technology for both diagnostic and treatment purposes, the Bioethics Section Director will lead Columbia’s effort in translational medical ethics.

The Director must have a strong history of scholarship and funded research in bioethics. P&S seeks a leader with intellectual vision, a passion for bioethics, experience working collaboratively with humanities scholars, and the track record to inspire excellence. S/he will require a deep and broad understanding of the challenges raised by the changing healthcare and scientific landscapes. Academic appointment will be made at a level commensurate with the successful candidate’s credentials.

Columbia has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search.
BACKGROUND

Columbia University and Columbia University Medical Center

Founded in 1754, Columbia University in the City of New York encompasses more than a dozen graduate and professional schools and over 6,000 undergraduates. The main campus is located in the Morningside Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. Columbia offers access to all of New York City, the ultimate classroom, and is surrounded by a residential neighborhood lined with bookstores, cafes and parks. Called "the quintessential great urban university," Columbia is diverse in every way: students come from 50 states and over 90 foreign countries; over half of undergraduates are students of color; and over 500 student organizations are offered, including 31 Division I Ivy League athletic teams and dozens of community service organizations, performance Sections, political clubs and publications. The renowned Core Curriculum unites all Columbia undergraduates by providing a common foundation in literature, philosophy, science, art, history and music, and caps classes at 22 students to afford close interaction with Columbia's renowned faculty. Columbia University Medical Center is situated on a 20-acre campus in Northern Manhattan and accounts for roughly half of Columbia University's nearly $4 billion annual budget. The Medical Center provides global leadership in scientific research, health and medical education, and patient care. CUMC includes the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Mailman School of Public Health, the College of Dental Medicine, and the School of Nursing, with more than 3,676 full-time faculty and 3,510 students enrolled in 86 departments and programs, including 45 centers and institutes. With a long history of contributing to valuable discoveries and advances in science and medicine, its faculty are leaders in initiatives that address the most pressing health issues of the day. CUMC’s major teaching hospital affiliates are NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital and the New York State Psychiatric Institute, both of which share the CUMC campus.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons (P&S), founded in 1767, was the first school in North America to award a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree (in 1770), and its legacy of innovation continues. Major curriculum changes implemented in 2009 reflect the changing practice of medicine in the 21st century. The new Bassett Track trains students for primary care work in rural environments. P&S is one of the most research-intensive medical schools, and its students’ MCAT scores and grade-point averages are among the highest in the country.

CUMC is especially proud of its relationship with the surrounding Washington Heights community, many of whose members have roots in the Dominican Republic and other Spanish-speaking countries. CUMC’s Office of Government and Community Affairs serves as the primary liaison between the Medical Center and the community. Currently, CUMC has more than 40 active research and clinical programs in Northern Manhattan, including Harlem, Washington Heights, and Inwood.

Medical Ethics and Bioethics at Columbia University

Educational Programs in Bioethics

Columbia’s bioethics degree and certificate programs, housed in the School of Professional
Studies, address critical issues concerning the ethical, legal, and social implications of advances in biotechnology and biomedicine, enabling students to study with faculty from across the University, and to draw on the extraordinary resources of its top schools. Programs span law, literary studies, philosophy, social science, history, genetics, environmental science, policy, and ethics. These educational programs in medical humanities and bioethics will continue to operate at their current sites under the current directorships.

**Master of Science in Bioethics**
The Master of Science in Bioethics grounds students in historical, philosophical, legal and social-scientific approaches and models to address bioethical challenges. The program prepares students to work in various capacities within this new and ever-growing field, and includes a concentration in global bioethics—the first of its kind in the United States. [Learn more.](#)

**Online Certification of Professional Achievement in Bioethics**
Online certification prepares practitioners in medicine, law and research to address challenges through an innovative learning experience featuring live webinars, multimedia, and collaborative course activities. The specially designed online curriculum gives a sophisticated analysis of the historical, philosophical, legal, social scientific, and practical, hands-on aspects of bioethics. [Learn more.](#)

**Program in Narrative Medicine, including Narrative Ethics**
The Master of Science in Narrative Medicine seeks to strengthen the overarching goals of medicine, public health, and social justice, as well as the intimate, interpersonal experiences of the clinical encounter. This pioneering and multidisciplinary program is offered for both full and part-time enrollment. Students are health care professionals and trainees from clinical disciplines as well as from the fields of literature, creative writing, anthropology, oral history and religious studies. Seminars in narrative ethics are included in the narrative medicine program, and are offered to both ethicists and clinicians. [Learn more.](#)

**Center for Research on Ethical, Legal & Social Implications of Psychiatric, Neurologic & Behavioral Genetics**
The Center for Research on the Ethical, Legal and Social Implications of Psychiatric, Neurologic and Behavioral Genetics comprises a group of researchers focused on understanding the implications of the rapidly developing area of genetics. Although psychiatric, neurologic and behavioral (PNB) genetics present particular ethical, legal and social (ELS) challenges, the Center’s interests extend to ELS issues in genetics more generally. The central goal of this Center is to grapple with these challenges, thereby helping our society responsibly realize the promise of this area of genetics.

The Center is funded by the National Human Genome Research Institute at the National Institutes of Health. Established in 2010, it is designated as a Center of Excellence in Ethical, Legal and Social Implications Research.

The Center includes a research development service aimed to assist researchers contemplating or undertaking research that addresses or includes attention to the ethical, legal and social
implications of PNB genetics. Consultation services, which include assisting researchers to identify suitable collaborators, facilitating networking, helping researchers improve their research plans, including methodologies used to address ELSI issues, and advising on dissemination strategies, are available through the Center. Learn more.

**The Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research**

The Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research is the academic and intellectual home for the next generation of clinical and translational research investigators at CUMC. The goal of the Irving Institute is to more directly utilize medical research advances to benefit patients and the community, converting knowledge into practice. Its focus is to transform the way clinical and translational research is conducted, enabling medical investigators to develop new treatments faster, and to deliver those treatments to patients more efficiently and more effectively.

Senior faculty provide support and resources to Institute users including research in biomedical informatics, biostatistical and clinical trial design, bioethics, regulatory issues, patient-oriented research, and core laboratory resources, among many others. The Institute provides research ethics consultation through its Regulatory Knowledge & Support & Ethics Resource (RKSER). RKSER services are available to the research community at CUMC, and include educational programming, training and consultation. Learn more.

**Departmental and Divisional Activities in Bioethics**

Columbia physicians and scientists have made lasting contributions to contemporary medicine in protecting the rights of human subjects of research, addressing privacy and disclosure issues in the age of the human genome, and helping patients choose goals of care at the end of life. Many disciplines of P&S including human genetics, stem cell research, precision medicine, law and psychiatry, narrative medicine, primary care, reproductive technologies, and palliative care have taken part in this work.

Many of P&S’s clinical departments—medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, family medicine—have developed means to address particular issues in the humanities and ethics as they abut their own practice or investigations. The Department of Genetics deliberates the ethical implications of wide-spread pre- and post-natal genetic screening. The Fertility Center in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology must consider the consequences of heightened choices now available to parents choosing advanced technologies of reproduction. Divisions entrusted with organ transplantation address the equity issues embedded in the provision of scarce, life-saving resources. Internal ethics boards or committees have become permanent features of many of these sections or services. Consultative resources are available to these many departments and divisions from a variety of sources, including the New York Presbyterian and Children’s Hospital of New York Ethics Committees and ethics consultation services. In some cases, individual faculty within the clinical departments develop familiarity with the ethical principles and practices and function as their division’s ethics consultant.

As an accredited teaching hospital, New York-Presbyterian Hospital at CUMC supports two
large and very active Medical Ethics Committees, one for adult patients at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital (NYPH) and one for children at the Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital of New York (CHONY). Both committees promote the highest standards for family-centered care by developing and providing ethical guidelines through consultation, policy formation and education.

**THE ROLE**

The Director of the Bioethics Section will work with Core Faculty in the Department of Medical Humanities and Ethics to engage the resources at the Medical Center and University to inaugurate scholarly and research projects in bioethics. The Director will address the following opportunities and challenges:

*Shape and articulate a vision.*

The Director of the Bioethics Section will be expected to engage colleagues to imagine and build a truly interdisciplinary medical ethics presence at Columbia University. The new Department and its Bioethics Section will be a focal point for the academic efforts in medical humanities and ethics at the Medical Center, integrating theory with empirical data and practice. While Columbia has strong localities of bioethics research and practice, there is untapped potential, both in integrating these activities and in filling the intellectual and educational spaces they do not yet address. The Director of the Bioethics Section will engage with ethics practitioners throughout P&S toward developing new resources or services as core features of the Section.

*Be the guiding voice for ethics issues related to changing translational research technology, including precision medicine and human genetics.*

As the time from bench to bedside shrinks and new technologies flood the clinical scene, so too will new ethical implications with new economic and legal consequences. The Director will be the guiding voice for engagement with these translational ethical issues and dilemmas. He/she will work closely with the leadership of the Precision Medicine Institute, the Institute for Genomic Medicine, the Irving Institute for Clinical and Translational Research, and the Ethics Committees to identify the implications of emerging technologies. He/she will ensure that Columbia is properly engaged locally, nationally, and internationally with the ethical repercussions of new technologies.

*Build research infrastructure and secure funding.*

Bringing her or his own research excellence and funding success to bear, the Director of the Bioethics Section will develop a sustainable program of externally funded research. In addition, recognizing the importance of developing a cadre of young investigators, the Director will lead or co-lead grants to engage and teach new investigators. Moreover, he or she will explore new philanthropic opportunities for the broad array of issues to be addressed and connect these opportunities with faculty to ensure innovation and excellence in research and training.
Develop educational opportunities for junior faculty and trainees.

Currently, many of the faculty members, residents, and graduate and medical students interested in medical ethics do not have experience doing ethics research. The Bioethics Section will develop fellowship opportunities and training efforts to encourage and nurture these burgeoning research interests. Columbia is committed to ensuring that interns and residents have a strong ethical compass and understanding of the direct and indirect consequences of their work, and the new Director will work with interested departments to expand and strengthen current ethics training efforts. He/she will envision and execute a comprehensive ethics curriculum for graduate students that goes beyond teaching the basics and encourages scholarship and research.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

The College of Physicians and Surgeons seeks a leader with intellectual vision, a passion for medical ethics, and the track record to inspire excellence. Academic appointment will be made at a level commensurate with the successful candidate’s credentials. Columbia seeks candidates with a combination of the following experience and abilities:

- MD, PhD or other doctoral-level degree in a field related to medical ethics.
- National or international stature as a scholar and teacher of medical ethics.
- Track record of conducting empirical research in medical ethics, supported by external funding, and of extensive peer-reviewed publication in the field.
- Ability to formulate a vision for bioethics at CUMC, including both research and educational components.
- Demonstrated leadership skills in program development and management of personnel.
- Skill in developing collaborations across specialties and disciplines.
- Ability to work effectively with the leadership of CUMC, its individual schools, centers and programs, New York-Presbyterian Hospital, and related entities.
- Proven record as an inspiring teacher and mentor of students, residents, fellows, and junior faculty.
- Well-developed communication skills to articulate the Bioethics Section’s and the Department’s mission and goals to outside constituencies.
- Experience in the ethics of genomics and precision medicine.
- Exceptional academic values, an appreciation for scholarly work and academic culture, and a history of support for academic excellence.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills.
- An encompassing, collegial, and entrepreneurial approach to the development of new programs.
TO APPLY

All nominations and referrals are invited. The search will remain open until the position is filled but candidate materials should be received as soon as possible. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent in confidence to:

Nancy Mauill, Vice President
Ariannah Mirick, Managing Associate
Laura Uvena, Associate
Isaacson, Miller
263 Summer Street, Floor 7
Boston, MA 02210

www.imsearch.com/5799

Columbia University Medical Center is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Women and members of underrepresented minority groups are encouraged to apply.