

Northern Plains Ethics Institute Advisory Board meeting

Viking Room, Sons of Norway

30 October 2015

1. Board members and NPEI staffers were greeted by Professor John Helgeland, Advisory Board Chair. Professor Helgeland related the NPEI's founding and history since 1995, and when it was approved by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education in 2000.
2. NPEI Director Dennis Cooley quickly briefed everyone on past and current projects. Among them are:
 1. *The Northern Plains Ethics Journal*. The journal is part of the NPEI's mission to inspire popular democratic participation in ethical and social issues affecting the Red River Valley region and beyond. The journal is designed to be a venue for academic, community, and student scholars to publish articles that will engage community members in all areas.
 1. The success of articles such as Roby Barrett's work on solutions to the Middle East crisis were discussed. The Barrett article, for example, was well received in Washington, DC, and caused Professor Barrett to be asked to prepare a far more developed work for the State Department.
 2. The Unconference. This joint effort with the North Dakota Humanities Council brought together academic scholars and community members to create projects across the state.
 3. Research on changing values and moral decision procedures in western North Dakota. Felix Fernando, the NPEI's former administrative assistant, pursued research in this area for his dissertation and the NPEI's outreach. Dr. Fernando is now recognized as the state's expert on the oil boom's impact on communities.
 4. Public Fora. There are a variety of these including a session on America and Iran, The Morality of Rudeness, which was a treatise on Asian thinking about how community members should interact, Forgiveness for the Unforgiveable, which focused on acts committed in the Holocaust, and others.
3. Advisory Board members were asked for their advice.
 1. There is a clear need to make the NPEI more visible in the region. The NPEI has been successful nationally and internationally as evidenced by its invitation and inclusion in the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics and international venues. For the former, the NPEI sponsors and organizes the business ethics track for the annual conference, whereas the latter has led to a consortium with the University of Montreal and Karlstad Institute in Stockholm on an international seminar series on genetics.
 1. Dr. Fernando should write up a page about what his research is and what impact it has had. This will be placed on the NPEI website.
 2. The NPEI should do more local research and events.
 3. The NPEI could partner more with local organizations for its activities.
 2. Board members suggested assessment methods of placing interactive questions at the end of *Northern Plains Ethics Journal* articles and surveys of the public fora.
 1. The former would ask readers to evaluate the impact/usefulness of the article, did it change the person's perspective, and a request to leave comments.
 2. The latter involved surveys that would ask attendees about what they had as takeaways, what they thought most important, what they thought could be improved, and ideas about what additional activities the NPEI could take to develop the issue.
 3. Find a method to see if there was an impact on public policy or other public change.
 3. Panels and projects

1. An Ethics Commission for the ND Legislature
 2. Research on community value change in the area with refugees coming in.
 3. Fargo's new stance on Indigenous People's Day taking the place of Columbus Day.
 4. The area police wearing body cameras.
 5. The issue of why more people are not involved in voting – democratic participation. This would be a series of panels given the complexity of the issue.
 1. How to engage.
 2. How to inform.
 3. Why don't younger demographic sections vote more, since they are heavily engaged in the community?
4. Instead of two meetings a year, it was decided to meet quarterly. The Viking Room was chosen as the meeting site.