

Ethics Editorial

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Rutland Institute for Ethics Events

Annual Ethics Day
October 14th, 2020

Cherry Braswell and J. T. Barton
Scholarships
November 1st - December 31st, 2020

STAR Model Workshop
November 10th, 11th, & 13th, 2020

STAR Model Video Contest
Deadline: December 1st, 2020

CHANGE Programming Events

Introducing Hemp Plants in South
Carolina - September 29th, 2020

Ethical Foundations for Entering the
Business World - November 19th, 2020

Environmental Market Failures and
Possible Solutions - November 12th,
2020

TBD:
Medical Policy Making in the Age of
Corona Virus

Human Nature Documentary Film
Screening

You can follow CHANGE on Instagram @clemsonchange or their website (clemson.edu/ethics/change) for more information about their events!

McCoy's Corner



Dr. McCoy in discussion with two Clemson University students at a reception.

There are certain things that occur in life that simply cannot be erased from your mind. Some of those occurrences are happy memories and some are memories one would rather forget. My happiest memories include my doctoral graduation, flying my great-uncle from his home in Alabama to Illinois to

celebrate my grandmother's 80th birthday, and accepting the offer from Clemson University to work as the Director of the Rutland Institute for Ethics. I also have memories that I'd like to forget: the untimely death of my mother, the loss of personal relationships that I once treasured, and the great sickness I endured in 2018. Each experience in life has taught me to regroup, reflect, and renew my sense of purpose.

A good portion of 2020 will be remembered for the amount of change and adaptation necessary to survive; societal changes filled with unrest and uncertainty. Changes have occurred at every level; locally, nationally, and even globally; yet we continue to push forward through it all, in anticipation.

There is a sense that we can and will endure. We cleave even more to the old adage: what doesn't do us in will only make us stronger. Through it all; we are survivors!

The Rutland Institute for Ethics is dealing with change just as everyone else is doing: one day at a time, but with vision and purpose. We are not resting on our laurels. We are peering through the fog of uncertainty with hope and determination, and we're strengthened by the support of our students, our faculty, our board, and our administration. While we brace for change, we position ourselves for growth and impact both on and off the Clemson University campus. In other words; we have positioned ourselves for change, as that is the only way to move forward!

Meet the RIE Advisory Board

Interview with Advisory Board member, Stephan Barton, Clemson Alum and Senior Principal, Physicians Planning Group



How has your business career and your ministry related to you being an ethical strategist?

I have been doing financial planning for physicians for many years, and that has given me the opportunity to address with them how they can use their resources and influence for good causes. I also worked to support a food provision kitchen at my church to help those needing food; we serve over 200 meals per day there. I have helped support a health clinic to help homeless and under-served people in the community, as well as an organization of churches and volunteers to help the homeless population with food, shelter, and counseling to find jobs. My diverse background and experience in ethics paved the way for me to do the right thing in business and ministry.

What is the most prevalent ethical dilemma you have faced?

There are probably too many ethical dilemmas to pick from. I worked as a chaplain at a hospital where I would offer my counsel to families and staff. There came a dilemma with a newborn child that had multiple deformities. A physician suggested it would be better to let the child pass away rather than him have to grow up dealing with multiple health conditions. The nurses opposed that plan, and physical arguments had to be mediated. There was a group doing an initial public offering for a company. Others and I on my team found out that the CEO was stealing money from the funds from the offering for personal gain. I consulted with others to turn it into the appropriate government agency. We then had a board meeting with the CEO in which he would not attend. He was fired and charges were brought against him. I think he ended up leaving the states. Those were two of my most notable struggles to overcome.

What are you most looking forward to as you continue serving on the RIE board?

The only thing worse than no business is BAD BUSINESS. So many people are corrupted in business. There's this idea that if I don't get caught it's okay, and that's just wrong ethically speaking. It will be great to see how the institute expands its influence outside of Clemson. I look forward to seeing how we



can teach industries and businesses to be ethical and continue to see RIE grow from there. There really is no limit on what kind of influence we can have. I hope that we can continue to bring up the voice of people doing the right thing.

How did your father instill ethics in you?

My dad always said to be fair. During the summers, I was hired at my father's textile plant, and I would watch how my dad treated the employees. He was always fair and supported them even if it meant physically helping employees with machine work in very hot conditions. After seeing all of my father's efforts along the years, it allowed me to have a greater focus on ethics and morals and recognizing every individual's inherent worth..

How did the J.T. Barton, Jr. Memorial Ethics Scholarship come about, and what made you want to endow the scholarship?

I was good friends with a fraternity brother and track and field teammate who got me involved with strategic planning meetings and board meetings at Clemson. Talking one afternoon at the Madren Center in 1999, we discussed the next big issues in business such as Wall Street embezzlements and "cooked financial books", and various ethical dilemmas with corruption in the finance industry. We then saw the extreme need to start a conversation of ethics at Clemson University and the community. People need to gain or enlarge their basis of moral fiber as they come through Clemson and go out into the world.

The Rutland Institute for Ethics actually came out of the J.T. Barton, Jr. Scholarship. It was named in honor of my father being such a big Clemson man. After that, I knew I had to start addressing ethical training in Clemson classrooms. We helped to get ethics as a voice in Clemson classrooms.

What makes the perfect candidate or group for the scholarship?

Someone who is doing something to advance ethical discussion and bringing parties together for solutions that promote a safe environment. Anyone who is advocating for peaceful living instead of passionate individualism or refusal is a good candidate. We have to work together in a fair way to accomplish the goal at hand.

CHANGE Exchange

Leadership Positions

- Landan Hydrick
President
- Kendra Gordillo
Vice President
- Ansley Cordero
Chief Financial Officer
- Allie Lindler
Chief Marketing Officer
- Louise Frank
Chief Administrative Officer
- TBD
Chief Alumni Relations Officer

CHANGE has been establishing an election process set for each academic year. Candidates will announce their candidacy followed with an active member participation for electing an officer. Half of the student group will have to vote. A succeeding candidate must have two-thirds vote. The president or vice president will act as the election's chair.

A Brief Discussion and Survey of the Ethics of Mask Mandates

What, if anything, do we owe the people around us? Is it just for the government to value community health over individual rights, or vice versa? Does everyone have an ethical responsibility to “reduce the spread” or does this come down simply to preference? These and other ethical questions spring up everywhere as we navigate the current global pandemic—but less commonly discussed are the principles we can use to answer them. In this short piece, we will discuss two ethical theories—utilitarianism and the harm principle—and how they can be applied to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Utilitarianism, most broadly, is the view that the morally right action is that which produces the most good. Thus, when utilizing a utilitarian mindset, one must not only consider their own benefit, but the net benefit that the choice causes. Furthermore, utilitarianism values everyone’s happiness or benefit equally, so the best possible choice is that which has the best outcome for the most amount of people—not necessarily what is easiest or best for you personally. The individual actions we take in response to COVID-19 can clearly be seen in this light: A young person suspects they have COVID-19, perhaps because they know that they have been exposed and are displaying several of the symptoms, but chooses not to get tested in order to remain out of quarantine. Weighing exclusively their own benefit, they continue to go about their lives without self-isolating, maximizing their own social benefits. However, if they were to approach this decision with a utilitarian framework, they would consider and choose the action that yields the greatest net benefit, get tested when they believe they have been exposed, and self-isolate if positive regardless of how they are feeling. This way, their individual happiness is not maximized, as they must isolate regardless of how sick they actually feel, but the net happiness of every individual they would have seen and potentially exposed to the virus is maximized.

Another ethical theory commonly used and discussed is the harm principle. The harm principle was written by John Stuart Mill in his book *On Liberty*. In short, the harm principle states that an action is permissible as long as you are not harming others in the process. If you do not like someone’s actions, that is not a reason to limit their freedom. However, if their action harms another individual, then there is cause to restrict that behavior. For example, drinking alcohol is allowed because you are affecting yourself. Drunk driving, however, is illegal because that could seriously harm or kill another person. So, how does this principle apply to wearing masks? Masks are worn to help prevent and limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. By not wearing a mask when in appropriate situations, such as in close contact indoors, it is possible to spread the virus to a susceptible person who may get sick, and in some cases, require hospitalization or even death. This would be harming another person and therefore mask requirements in specific scenarios such as situations where social distancing is not possible or being indoors, should be encouraged to prevent harm, or in this case, illness.

While ethics may not always offer us clear answers, practical ethics provide us with new tools and lenses to view difficult situations we encounter everyday. These are only two of many ethical theories one can use to look at various policy initiatives used throughout this global pandemic. Below we have included a list of further readings that can serve as a springboard for more discussion and reflections:

Philosophical readings:

John Stuart Mill: *On Liberty*
Jeremy Bentham: *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*
Gerald Dworkin: “Paternalism”
Immanuel Kant: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

Readings specific to the coronavirus pandemic:

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/08/sandel-explores-ethics-of-what-we-owe-each-other-in-a-pandemic/>

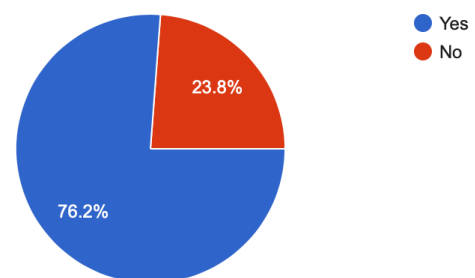
<https://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/blog/face-off-the-ethics-of-compulsory-mask-policies>

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/19/health/covid-ethics-masks-allan-wellness-wisdom-project/index.html>

Edited by Kendra Gordillo and Louise Frank

Do you think that there should be a federal mask mandate?

63 responses



Brief Survey taken from current Clemson Students

Join the Distinguished Ethics Scholars Program Today!



- Gain a co-curricular transcript.
- Earn a scholar designation with the chance to enhance your regalia at graduation with a cord or medallion.
- Enhance critical thinking skills in ethics education.
- Get involved with ethical leadership, ethics programming, and ethics coursework.

To register and find more information go to: clemsun.edu/ethics/ethicsscholars



CHANGE is an officially recognized student organization on campus. Among its activities, CHANGE is the creator of the Rutland Institute for Ethics bi-annual newsletter.

For more information about CHANGE, please contact Landan Hydrick at landanh@clemsun.edu or 864-656-5379.



Scholarship Opportunities

Cherry Braswell Rutland Memorial Scholarship

This scholarship is designed to recognize a student at Clemson University who exhibits ethical leadership through excellent decision-making skills. A minimum of one award will be presented annually in the amount of **\$1,000** to an eligible student who embodies the spirit of ethical leadership.



J.T. Barton, Jr. Memorial Ethics Scholarship

This scholarship is awarded to a singular student and/or a student group on the Clemson University campus who programmatically uses the award to in part or fully advance good ethical decision-making skills. Three awards are provided annually in the amounts of **\$1,500, \$1,000, and \$500**.

Scholarship applications open November 1- December 31 at clemsun.edu/ethics/awards-scholarships