

Ethics Editorial

Vol. 9, Issue 1
Fall 2026



ABOUT THE EDITORIAL

The Rutland Institute for Ethics was established 25 years ago, with a vision to provide support and encouragement for ethical conversations and leadership across all disciplines at Clemson University. As a branch of the Institute, the CHANGE (Creating Habits and Norms Guiding Ethical Decisions) Student Organization was established in 2019. To further the impact of the Rutland Institute, the Ethics Editorial was created in 2019 and has been published each fall and spring since. CHANGE hopes to shed light on real-life ethical dilemmas and highlight the people who make CHANGE across Clemson University's campus! We hope this feature encourages you to continue strengthening your ethical decision-making and to lead by example in your own life and within your community.

FROM THE EDITOR

Brandi Williams



With the opening of Volume Nine, we begin not simply another issue, but another chapter in how we think, question, and lead within the Clemson community. When many think of ethics, they often mistake it for a set of rules—fixed, rigid, and confined to textbooks or ancient philosophy. But in truth, ethics is lived. It unfolds in conversations after class, in research decisions made behind lab doors, in leadership choices that shape campus culture, and in the quiet moments where there is an importance to being earnest.



This editorial edition is an invitation to examine what we believe and why we believe it. To challenge our inherited assumptions. To recognize that growth requires discomfort. To understand that integrity is less about always being right and more about being willing to reflect. In an age of rapidly advancing technology where our world rewards speed and certainty, ethical reflection demands something different from us. Assemble your patience, humility, and courage for this read and in your everyday life. As we turn this page, may we approach our community not as passive observers, but as thoughtful stewards who are committed to compassion, accountability, and the upmost principled action. Welcome to Volume 9.

Meet Morgan Stone

A senior Business Management major with a minor in Economics, representing Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of Business. Morgan joined CHANGE in Fall 2024 and served as Vice President for two semesters. In her role, she oversaw everything member-related—from recruitment and interviews to maintaining the standard every member strives to achieve as an ethical leader.

Reflecting on her journey, Morgan shared that CHANGE has been, “fulfilling because it allowed me to use my role to bring people closer together through a common interest and desire to leave an impact.” She joined because of her passion for ethics and her desire to build relationships with people she may have never met otherwise. “I joined CHANGE because not only do I have a desire to learn about ethics, but I also wanted to meet people from all walks of life,” she says.

Her time in CHANGE has been defined by growth, leadership, and connection—from serving as a College of Business liaison in Spring 2025 to helping lead campus initiatives as Vice President. Looking ahead, Morgan is excited to watch CHANGE grow in recognition and impact while she supports the organization as an alum during law school. Morgan encourages others to join CHANGE because it is more than an organization—it’s a community. “If you want real leadership experience, meaningful friendships, and the chance to leave something better than you found it, CHANGE is the place to do it.”

“I joined CHANGE because not only do I have a desire to learn about ethics, but I also wanted to meet people from all walks of life”



EXECUTIVE SPOTLIGHT

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Michael Cunningham

Say hello to Michael Cunningham! Michael Cunningham is the CEO of AnMed Cannon and the Vice President for Community Health Partnerships with AnMed Health System. In addition to serving in his second year on the Rutland Institute Advisory Board, he brings a diverse set of community leadership experiences to his work.

Mr. Cunningham serves the community through a variety of board and leadership roles, including the Anderson Free Clinic Board, Pickens Rotary Club, and the Salvation Army Advisory Board, to name a few. When asked about his extensive community involvement, he shared, “I’ve been very fortunate that there is alignment in the things I’m involved with, the things I hope to see professionally working for a healthcare system, and the things that relate to a healthy, happier community.”

Mr. Cunningham has a unique perspective on how access to healthcare, ethics, and responsibility of patient care intersect. He explained that as a not-for-profit health system, providing care to everyone is both a mission and a legal obligation. “The question becomes: how do you do that efficiently and equitably, and how do you pay for it?” he said. “Not everyone we provide care for can pay for that care. However, as healthcare providers, our responsibility to provide care remains. So how do we meet that obligation?”

Mr. Cunningham notes that the answer to these questions lies in raising awareness and engaging in thoughtful advocacy. He explained, “Hopefully we can be advocates as our leaders are making policy so that they understand the complexity of what we do each day, and we can work together to continue to come up with ways to navigate that.” These challenges shape how Mr. Cunningham views ethical leadership not only in healthcare, but also in everyday community life. Reflecting on the impact individuals can have, he stated, “We don’t walk around this world alone. We interact with people every day, and you hope that those interactions are meaningful and that they help our communities and the places we live become better places. Ethics makes that work, and I think that it’s one of those foundational aspects of what a healthy community looks like.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Stephanie Beitle serves as the Policy & Procedures Chair for CHANGE as well as a representative for the College of Computing, Engineering, and Applied Sciences. She is a doctoral candidate in the Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Department with a focus on mammalian cell culture and has completed an Engineering Science Education Teaching Certificate. Upon completion of her doctorate, she will either pursue a post-doctoral position in academia or continue into the biotechnology industry.

Stephanie Beitle



College of
**ARCHITECTURE, ART
AND CONSTRUCTION**



*Bend or Break
Building Competition*



College of
**ENGINEERING, COMPUTING
AND APPLIED SCIENCES**



Lego Building Competition



College of
**AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY
AND LIFE SCIENCES**



Food for Thought



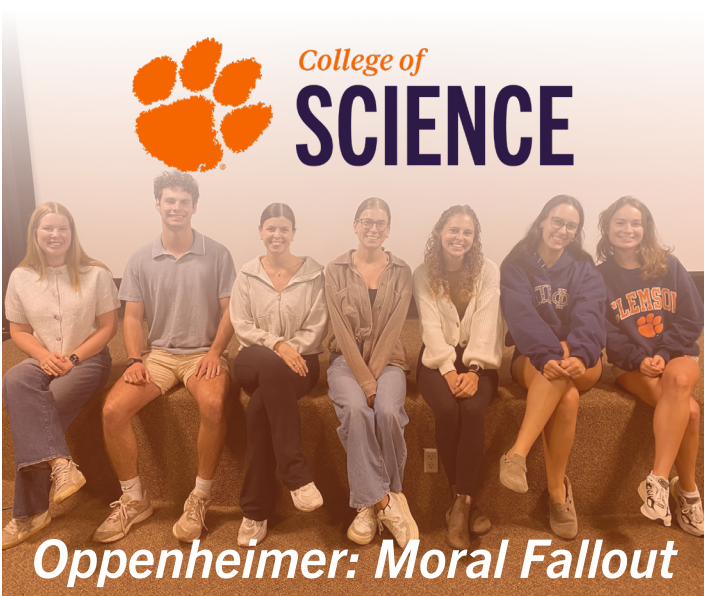
Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of
BUSINESS



*Pickleball:
Anything but a Paddle*



College of
SCIENCE



Oppenheimer: Moral Fallout



College of
EDUCATION



Ethical Time Capsules

EVENTS RECAP

MEET OUR GREEK PARTNERS

The purpose of the Rutland Institute's Greek Partnerships is to recognize and cultivate outstanding ethical leadership within Greek organizations serving the campus of Clemson University. Our Greek Partners are campus leaders who exemplify ethical leadership and have outstanding commitments to service. Our partners are Delta Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc. and Beta Upsilon Chi fraternity.

GET TO KNOW OUR *Presidents!*



My role as President of Beta Upsilon Chi has been an incredible opportunity to lead and motivate others during a time of growth, challenge, and learning. Leadership provides direction and sets an example for others to follow. I have seen how strong ethical leaders, both within Greek Life and across campus organizations, can inspire people to think differently, serve their community, and make a lasting impact.

As leaders at Clemson, we are called to a higher standard in how we act and how we influence those around us. Ethical leadership is essential because it shapes not only what we do, but why and how we do it. It encourages integrity, responsibility, and a commitment to making decisions that benefit more than just ourselves. When leaders act ethically, they create a culture of trust and purpose. I see ethics in action at Clemson through students who lead with intention and care for others. Through my time here, I hope to help create more ethical leaders who think about the impact they make, how they make it, and the values that guide their choices.



Tina Patel

DPhiL

As President of Delta Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc., my role goes beyond running meetings or managing logistics. I help set the tone for our chapter by leading with accountability and care for the people in it. I work closely with our executive board and serve as a primary liaison between the chapter, university administration, and our National Board.

My goal is to support my sisters by ensuring that decisions are made fairly and with the chapters best interests in mind. A large part of my role is creating an environment where everyone feels respected, supported, and heard. Ethics and ethical leadership matter because leadership impacts real people. The way leaders make decisions shapes trust, morale, and the overall health of an organization. Leading ethically means being honest, transparent, and willing to take responsibility, even when it is uncomfortable. It also means holding yourself to the same standards you expect from others. At Clemson, ethics are reflected in expectations around academic integrity, accountability, and inclusion. Policies for students and organizations emphasize honesty and responsibility, showing that Clemson values character alongside achievement and encourages students to do what is right, not just what is easy.

August Larson
BYX





Land, Homes, Health, and Ethics of Living Together

Olumayowa Idowu

Where people live influences how they feel, how healthy they are, and how well they can plan for the future. Because of this, land-use and zoning policies are not just technical rules; they are ethical choices about fairness, opportunity, health, and shared responsibility (Marmot et al., 2008; WHO, 2018). Housing affordability is a fundamental social determinant of health, and the United States currently faces a significant housing affordability challenge.

When housing costs are high, households are at greater risk of instability and homelessness, which are linked to poorer health outcomes and increased health care utilization. Cost burdens also divert resources from essential needs, including food security, transportation, and access to employment opportunities (Gowlovech, 2025; National Low Income Housing Coalition, n.d.).

Studies show strong links between zoning rules, housing affordability, neighborhood conditions, and health outcomes (Wilson et al., 2008; Rossen & Pollack, 2012; Meltzer & Schwartz, 2016; Chen et al., 2022). Communities with affordable housing, safe streets, and nearby services tend to have better health. However, many U.S. cities still use exclusionary zoning requirements, such as large lot sizes, parking minimums, and strict limits on multifamily housing that tend to reduce the supply of affordable homes (American Planning Association, 2023).

For many families, a home is their primary financial asset. Concerns about property values, traffic, school crowding, or public safety feel real and personal (Crosbie, 2003; Song & Knaap, 2004; Wo, 2019). From an ethical perspective, these concerns reflect a duty to protect family stability. However, ethics also asks whether protecting one group's comfort justifies limiting another group's access to basic shelter.

Low and middle-income renters bear the highest costs of these restrictions. High rents, housing instability, and long commutes are associated with increased stress, disruption of family life, and worsening physical and mental health (Desmond & Kimbro, 2015). Children may change schools often, and adults may delay medical care. From an ethical perspective, policies that knowingly contribute to these harms conflict with the principle that everyone deserves a fair chance at a healthy life (WHO, 2014).

Large corporate investors add another layer to the dilemma. The growing purchase of single-family homes by profit-driven firms has been linked to rising rents and reduced access to homeownership (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2023). Reports of algorithmic rent-setting systems that push prices higher also raise concerns about transparency and fairness. While profit itself is not unethical, ethics demand limits when profit-seeking deepens inequality, exploitation, greed, housing insecurity, and worse health outcomes.

“...land-use and zoning policies are not just technical rules; they are ethical choices about fairness, opportunity, health, and shared responsibility.”

Policy-makers can often stand between competing pressures. On one side are voters who want to protect the increasing value of their homes; on the other are residents who urgently need affordable housing. Choosing inaction may feel politically safe, but ethically, it allows known harms to continue. Leadership requires balancing short-term political risk against long-term community well-being.

Supporters of multifamily housing, often called “Yes In My Backyard” advocates, sometimes respond by blaming or shaming opponents, called “Not In My Backyard supporters.” While frustration is understandable, name-calling can harden divisions. Ethical problem-solving depends on dialogue, not moral superiority. Social cohesion grows when communities listen to one another, share evidence, and plan together (Putnam, 2000).

A fair and ethical path forward does not ignore any group. Communities can allow more housing types while investing in infrastructure, schools, and safety. Policymakers can rely on data rather than fear. Developers can be held accountable for affordability and transparency. Homeowners can be partners in shaping inclusive neighborhoods rather than barriers to change.

Housing is not just a commodity. It is a foundation for health, dignity, and belonging. Ethical land-use policy recognizes this truth and seeks solutions that promote fairness, unity, health, and shared prosperity, so that everyone has a place to live, grow, and thrive.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Olumayowa Idowu

Olumayowa Idowu is a Ph.D. Candidate in Policy Studies. His research focuses on the intersection of land-use policy (zoning), social determinants of health (housing), and health outcomes.



DILEMMA!

Rachel Brown

Rachel Brown is a sophomore Spanish and International Health major with a minor in Health Science Administration. She is involved in campus ministries, mentoring students through Clemson Hope, serves as a photographer for Sister2Sister, and participates in research on Latinx education experiences and malnutrition initiatives. An ethical dilemma of importance for Rachel is language barriers within the medical field and securing family translators.

She states “I have recently started watching *Grey’s Anatomy* and find the medical vernacular dense, unfamiliar, and sounding like a different language altogether. While I have the privilege of pausing the show, rewinding the content, and using subtitles, many patients in real-world situations do not. In some exam rooms, the patient

is not the one speaking, because they are unable to speak to the physician. They are forced to reroute their communication through another representative, often family, who may have limited vocabulary condensed down to a form that is improper for a situation of its caliber. Yet this conversation still needs to happen; it must happen for many, as there is often no medical translator readily available. Due to this confusion, errors and mistakes are bound to run rampant in these situations.”

“Realizations such as these are what have led me to be passionate about language access in healthcare. Medical interpretation for patients is often treated as if it were an optional service, but when working in a field as crucial as healthcare, it really can mean the difference between a patient being present or absent in their own care. For me, ethical healthcare is not just about providing treatment; it is about protecting the patient’s right to their own voice. Anything less than this standard may keep the system moving, but it leaves certain patients and their families behind.” Rachel plans to continue addressing this dilemma through her coursework and professional experiences.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Caroline Kidd

Caroline Kidd is a sophomore majoring in English with a minor in Political and Legal Theory. She is serving her first year in CHANGE as a representative of the College of Arts and Humanities. Caroline is passionate about involving ethics within the legal system and the study of the field.



Opinion: The Reflection Pond Never Lies

Caroline Johns

If you want to understand life at Clemson, do not check the calendar. Check the Reflection Pond. When it is full, the campus feels almost cinematic. The water reflects Tillman Hall perfectly, turning an ordinary walk to class into something memorable. Students gather along the edges, and suddenly everyone becomes a photographer. There is a quiet energy that settles over campus, like everyone collectively pauses to appreciate where they are. When the pond drains, confusion spreads just as quickly. Students stop mid-conversation to ask what happened, and newcomers realize that even the landscape at Clemson has its own personality. The weather only adds to the experience. Clemson seems determined to give us every season in a single day. A morning walk might require a jacket, while the afternoon feels like early summer. Rainstorms appear without warning and disappear just as fast, leaving behind sunshine and students returning to outdoor study spots as if nothing happened. Instead of frustrating us, unpredictability becomes part of the culture.

It teaches flexibility, resilience, and a shared sense of humor. These small, ever-changing details are what make Clemson feel like more than a campus. The filling and draining of the Reflection Pond, the dramatic weather shifts, and the constant motion of student life creates moments that everyone recognizes and shares. They become stories we tell and memories that connect us long after graduation. These shared moments invite reflection not only on beauty, but on responsibility. A community is shaped by how its members respond to change, care for shared spaces, and treat one another in times of uncertainty. In this way, the Reflection Pond becomes more than a landmark—it becomes a reminder that ethical living begins with awareness, stewardship, and respect for the world we share. Clemson is not perfect because everything stays the same. It is special because it never does. The change keeps the campus alive, and somehow it always feels like the best place to be.

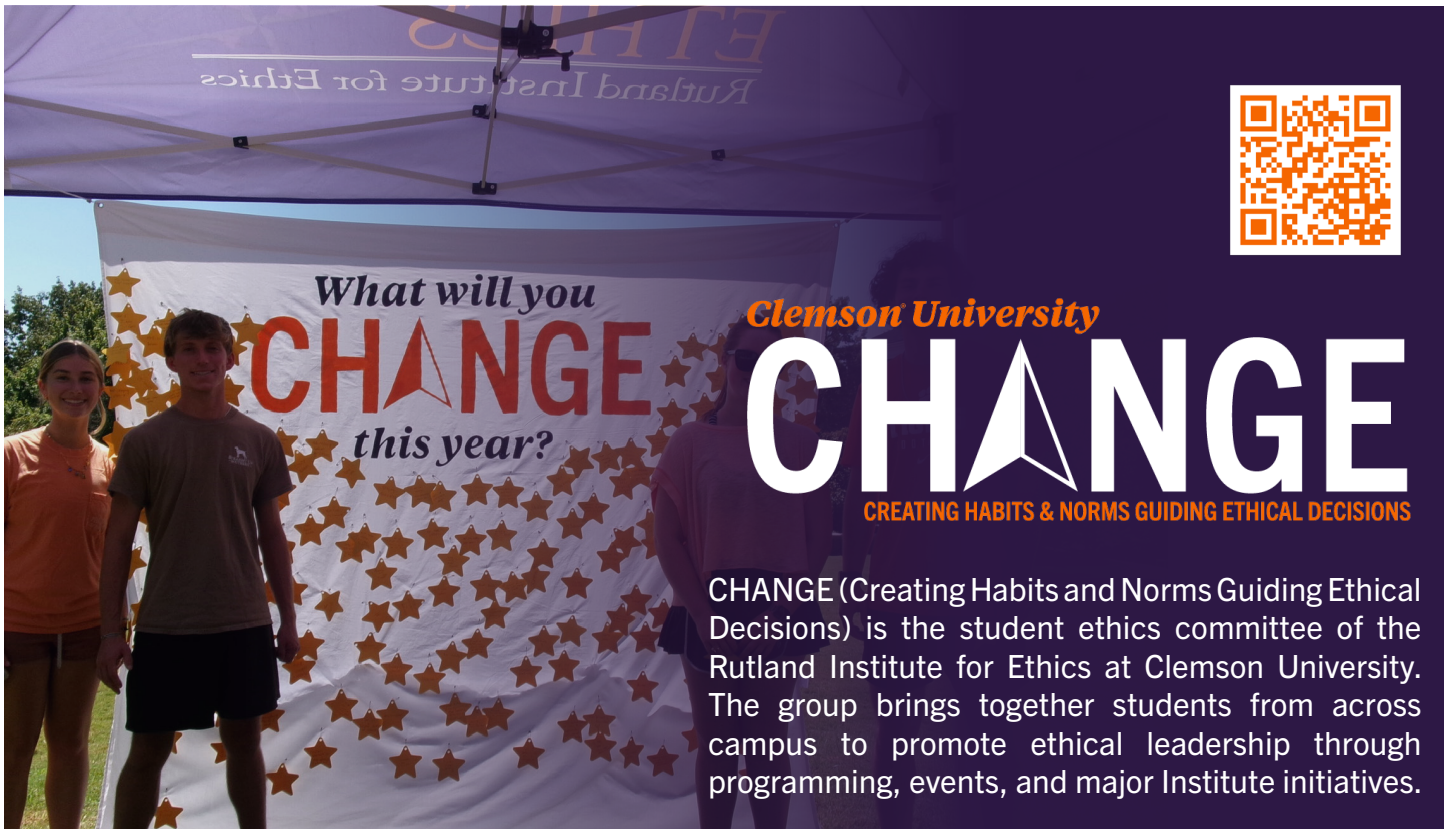


Caroline Johns

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Caroline Johns is a Supply Chain Management major and Accounting minor at Clemson University and a member of the Clemson Honors College. Originally from Lexington, Kentucky, she is actively involved on campus through the Rutland Institute for Ethics and as a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma. Caroline enjoys photography, campus life, spending time outdoors, and appreciates the unique traditions and experiences that make Clemson such a special place.

Be the *CHANGE* you want to see!



Clemson University
CHANGE
CREATING HABITS & NORMS GUIDING ETHICAL DECISIONS

What will you **CHANGE** this year?

CHANGE (Creating Habits and Norms Guiding Ethical Decisions) is the student ethics committee of the Rutland Institute for Ethics at Clemson University. The group brings together students from across campus to promote ethical leadership through programming, events, and major Institute initiatives.



Clemson University
ETHICS
SCHOLARS  PROGRAM

The Ethics Scholars Program recognizes Clemson University students who engage in co-curricular learning focused on ethics, ethical leadership, and ethical decision-making while earning the Ethics Scholar or Distinguished Ethics Scholar designation through experiences that strengthen their leadership and professional development.

GET INVOLVED

Fall 2026 Events Calendar

**Fact or Cap: Is this Tiktok
or Pseudoscience?**

October 2026



College of

SCIENCE

Mocktails and Mock Trials

October 28th, 2026



College of

**BEHAVIORAL, SOCIAL
AND HEALTH SCIENCES**

Lego Building Competition

November 6th, 2026



College of

**ENGINEERING, COMPUTING
AND APPLIED SCIENCES**

Powers After Dark

September 24th, 2026



Wilbur O. and Ann Powers College of

BUSINESS

Clemson University

CHANGE

CREATING HABITS & NORMS GUIDING ETHICAL DECISIONS

Follow [@clemsonethics](#) on Instagram and stay tuned for the locations and times of these events!

SPRING 2026 NEW MEMBERS



Cici Cruz Santiago
CECAS



Maia Sonenblick
CBSHS



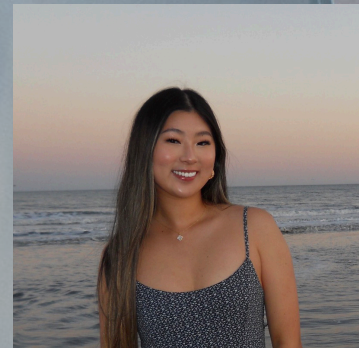
Dakota Harkey
CAH



Caroline Kidd
CAH



Caroline Koska
COB



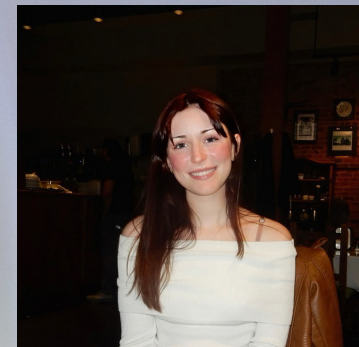
Hanna Lee
CBSHS



Ella Meeker
CBSHS



Kaylie Schwai
CAH



Grace Severson
COS



Kathleen Doran
COS

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