

Salisbury University's Re-envisioning Ethics Access and Community Humanities (REACH) Initiative: Integrating Community and Curricular Ethics is grant-funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Humanities Connections Program. REACH, led by Co-Directors Michèle Schlehofner, Timothy Stock and Jennifer Nyland, focuses on ethics, ethics literacy and ethics agency through new curricular and co-curricular resources, and connecting with the community.

REACH Welcomes Inaugural Community Advisory Board

We are excited to officially welcome our inaugural Community Advisory Board! Board members provide the REACH team with feedback and insight in the direction of REACH services, which is essential as we grow our initiative into a regional ethics hub. Advisory Board members also serve as an additional point of contact for people looking to learn more about REACH. Board members officially started in their new roles July 1 and participated in an orientation to learn more about REACH's goals and current initiatives.

Learn more about our Community Advisory Board on our [website](#).

Ethics Focus: Recognizing When You Need to Slow Down

Have you ever visited a doctor's office and felt as if the staff weren't fully understanding the experiences that are concerning you? What about a public office where the rules and procedures seem to be something that only you don't understand? What about a situation where you were treated unfairly but didn't know who to talk to about it?

Many clients find themselves in this situation on a regular basis. When people fail to hear, understand or communicate about areas they are concerned about, it leads to the problem that ethical situations can be **misrecognized** and thus never rise to the level of policy or procedure. In our network, organizations large and small deal with ethical situations through training, reporting and various oversight strategies. But with multiple stakeholders (including employees, boards, local authorities and clients), these layers of oversight can only ensure that, in the ordinary course of business, decisions are made according to rules and norms that account for what that organization ordinarily encounters. But how do you deal with unanticipated circumstances?

In advance, you can consider:

- *Who would you check in with if you wanted to slow something down? Would everyone in your organization feel comfortable checking in with you?*
- *Would your organizational structure support or discourage clients or employees from putting their work on pause to raise an issue?*
- *Does your training and communication reflect the fact that rules of procedure may not be sufficient in every circumstance or may need to be revised?*

As you answer these questions, consider as a best practice the **recognition of ethical situations** and the **ability to maintain informal information gathering**, as well as **providing moments to slow down** your day-to-day operations.



REACH Services Available to the Public

The REACH team is available to assist on a variety of projects. Our specialization is in providing guidance for grappling with thorny problems, including, but not limited to, inter-organizational conflicts, concerns about how to move your advocacy work forward and issues with how to best-address a community or organizational concern. We offer workshops, facilitate dialogue with representatives of identified stakeholders on an issue that your organization or group is working through and identify points of ethical convergence, and can create ethics analysis white papers which can be used to impact policy or to convince a skeptical partner of a way forward around a difficult issue. Brief ethics consultations are always free. Contact us at REACH@salisbury.edu to schedule a free consultation. You can learn more about these or any of our services on our [website](#).

ETHICS PROFILE: Jaime Riley

Assistant Director, Maryland Department of Human Services

Tell us about your organization and what you do.

Wicomico County Department of Social Services (DSS) is Wicomico County's human services provider. We are part of the Maryland Department of Human Services, providing help to vulnerable populations in our community. We provide assistance with buying healthy foods, obtaining medical assistance, and helping at-risk children and adults with a stable environment. As the assistant director of local general administration, I oversee all the internal functions that allow our agency staff to provide the support that Wicomico County families need.

When I was at Wor-Wic Community College working on my associate degree in chemical dependency counseling, Dr. Ryan Messatzzia told us in CDC101 that this is the only job where our only goal every day is to put ourselves out of business. At Wicomico County DSS, I start each day with a goal of providing our staff what they need to solve the problems our community faces. While we haven't found the ultimate solution yet, I know that we can't solve anything alone, and that any solutions we find are rooted in community partnerships.

What drew you to being a part of the Community Ethics Network?

Several years ago, I was working with a gentleman. I wanted to help him find housing. He lived outside in the woods. It was coming up on winter; it



was colder in the evenings. I thought he needed housing. I was sitting in his camp one day talking with him about some options, and during a break in conversation, we could hear the birds chirping and he looked at me and asked me why he would ever want to live anywhere else other than that spot where he could hear the birds chirp anytime he decided to stop talking. He talked to me about being able to look up at the stars at night. What I realized in that moment was that he had a right to live outside, whether I thought he should or not. Here's the problem, my job was to find him housing. My job was to make sure he didn't freeze in the winter. My job was to find him safety. That's when I became interested in community ethics. Where do we draw the lines between what society wants and what individuals want. As I continued through my career, I found myself working in these broader systemic spaces of

racism, health inequality, justice reforms and LGBTQIA+ rights, and for me, it all came down to the same thing: treating humans as humans. When I found the Community Ethics Network, I realized I had found the place I needed to be to have these conversations. We all have the same goals – to be treated with autonomy and respect and have our rights prioritized – we may just have different ideas about how to reach those goals. CEN helps us to have the conversations about the path we take to reach the goal and the ways in which we include everyone in the ability to walk that path.

How does ethics improve the work that you do?

Ethics is the foundation of all my work. From the way I use the data I find, and the data we collect here locally, to the way I provide support to my agency. All of it is rooted in ethics. To be trusted, I have to be trustworthy, and I ask people every day to have difficult conversations that require trust. Without those conversations I don't know what the community needs, and I especially don't know if what I am doing is what the community it is intended for actually wants. In order to lead, I have to be worthy of following, and I will never be worthy of following without ethics. We are in a time where marginalized groups don't know who is an ally, so I have to be able to show I am an ally in the work I do.

Looking to Bring on an Intern?

Is your organization looking to bring on an undergraduate student intern? REACH is developing an internship program, anticipated to launch in the spring semester. Students eligible for REACH internships are juniors or seniors with strong GPAs who are majoring in a variety of fields of study. Student interns work 10 hours a week in your organization and are supervised by a member of the REACH team. If you are interested in working with an intern, please contact us at REACH@salisbury.edu.

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