

## Exploration of Practical Ethics

### Call for Proposals

*Issued: July 7, 2015*

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#### I. Overview

The JHU Exploration of Practical Ethics Call for Proposals aims to stimulate innovative work in practical ethics by Hopkins faculty members. **Practical ethics** is an interdisciplinary field of study that takes on ethical issues arising in professions and scholarly disciplines, within institutions, and in society. In so doing, it seeks to bridge theory and practice and relies on many areas of expertise. Practical ethics encompasses a wide range of areas and topics in artistic endeavors, biological sciences, biomedical research, business, clinical practice, education, engineering, health care, human interactions with non-human animals and the natural environment, the humanities, international relations, the natural sciences, public health, public policy, and the social sciences. Practical ethics addresses the substance of ethical issues as well as questions about who in a society should decide what to do about those issues and by what process. Inquiries in practical ethics may work at different levels, focusing on individuals, or on authorities, or on the political process, depending on context. The field of practical ethics is not restricted to any particular society or culture and sometimes has a cross-cultural component.

The deep disciplinary expertise at Johns Hopkins University, combined with a desire to address some of the world's most vexing social and ethical challenges, provides a unique environment in which to forge new understandings and new solutions in the realm of practical ethics. Within the University, the Berman Institute of Bioethics was established to address ethical challenges in clinical care, public health and health policy, and biomedical science. The University now seeks to develop the interest and capability of Hopkins faculty to engage with other areas of practical ethics that lie outside the scope of bioethics or reach beyond it to where pressing ethical issues and challenges also abound. The JHU Provost and President, the Director of the Berman Institute, and the Deans of six University divisions – the Carey School of Business, the Krieger School of Arts & Sciences, the Peabody Institute, the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), the School of Education, and the Whiting School of Engineering – have allocated funds to support a set of pilot activities on practical ethics within and across these divisions. These funds have been matched by a gift from University Trustee Andreas Dracopoulos.

This document announces a request for proposals (RFP) from faculty who wish to conduct original research, design novel educational experiences, or develop other innovative projects in practical ethics. The common attribute of eligible proposals is that they promise to advance President Daniels' vision of One University by leveraging faculty-led innovation to “contribute substantially to the world of ideas and action” in some domain of practical ethics.

- **Targeted subject areas:** Proposals may address any area of practical ethics (*except* clinical care, public health and health policy, and biomedical science) within the disciplinary expertise of the applicant(s).

- **Project period and budget:** The total project period may not exceed one year. The total request amount may not exceed \$75,000 for single-division proposals and \$100,000 for cross-divisional proposals. Matching funds or other in-kind contributions, including faculty release time, from participating departments or divisions are encouraged.
- **Funds available:** A total of \$400,000 is available to fund project proposals submitted in response to this RFP.
- **Proposal submission deadline:** *Monday, October 26, 2015*
- **Earliest anticipated start dates for awards:** January 1, 2016

## II. Funding Opportunity Description

### II.A. Program Goals

The specific goals of the JHU Exploration of Practical Ethics are to:

- (1) Learn which topics and areas of practical ethics are of interest to faculty in relevant divisions and assess the extent to which these topics resonate across divisional lines;
- (2) Generate excitement and energy around the idea of a concerted effort in practical ethics; and
- (3) Define an ongoing program of activity in practical ethics that serves the needs of participating divisions and the vision of One University.

### II.B. Types of Proposals Solicited

Proposed projects responsive to this RFP may take a wide variety of forms and directions. Within applicants' domains of disciplinary, professional, institutional, and/or societal expertise, proposals should address important challenges in practical ethics. While the following examples may serve to illustrate such challenges, this list is far from exhaustive.

- how to understand right and wrong action (what is ethically required, permitted, or prohibited) in a particular disciplinary or professional context, sphere of public policy, or area of scholarship;
- ethical aspects of leadership, decision making, policy formation, and program implementation;
- relations between organizational cultures and the ethical behavior or character of their individual members;
- integrity, trust, and problems of corruption;
- ethical dimensions of the relations of individual citizens, neighborhoods, and communities to city, state, or national government;
- the ethics of the role of government in relation to private citizens and the private sector;
- corporate governance and responsibility;
- the production, protection, and distribution of public goods;
- resource allocation;
- relations between localized goods and values and the forces of globalization;
- protections of, and the justification of infringements on, civil liberties
- civil rights and the remediation of bigotry
- reparations for historic wrongs
- intergenerational and global justice

The major categories of desired proposals are original research, novel educational experiences, and other innovations. Proposed projects may also involve various combinations of these categories. Examples of promising objectives under each categories are: for *original research*, to identify and advance the scholarly understanding of underexplored ethical issues in one's area of expertise; for *novel educational experiences*, to identify essential but unfulfilled learning objectives for ethics competencies within or across academic disciplines and pilot-test a new approach to achieving them; for *other innovations*, to design a new policy or program solution to a problem of practical ethics. Again, these examples are far from exhaustive; applicants are encouraged to be creative. Under all three categories, applicants may propose to collaborate with appropriate stakeholder groups outside the University provided that those groups fund their own participation.

Questions about whether a given topic or project objective would be appropriately responsive to this RFP may be addressed to the Program Officer, Dr. Maria Merritt, at [practicaethics@jhu.edu](mailto:practicaethics@jhu.edu).

### **II.C. Eligibility**

Proposals must be initiated by applicants whose primary institutional affiliation is in one of the following six JHU divisions:

- Carey School of Business
- Krieger School of Arts & Sciences
- Peabody Institute
- School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)
- School of Education
- Whiting School of Engineering

Faculty with primary institutional affiliations in other schools, or in the Berman Institute of Bioethics, may be listed as co-investigators. Within or across any of these schools, proposals may be submitted by individual faculty, teams of faculty, single departments, or multiple departments. Proposals by early- and mid-career faculty, and by teams of faculty representing a diversity of backgrounds, are encouraged. Proposals require the written support of the chair(s) of departments and dean(s) of the schools involved.

### **II.D. RFP Timeline**

July 7, 2015: RFP released to JHU community.

July 20-28 and August 24-October 16, 2015: Program Officer available for consultation by appointment.

**Monday, October 26, 2015 at 11:59 p.m.: Proposals due.**

Friday, December 4, 2015:

Funding decisions announced.

Friday, January 1, 2016:

Earliest start date for funded projects.

### III. Application and Submission Information

#### III. A. Content and form of application

Proposals should be prepared single-spaced with 1-inch margins (minimum font size 11 point), and should conform to the following format:

1. Title and Abstract (limit ½ page)
2. Identification of Category of Proposal (original research OR novel educational experience OR other innovation OR specific combination)
3. Project Description (limit 4 pages): statement of the practical ethics question or problem; specific aims or goals of the project; significance and potential impact; explanation of what makes the project innovative in relation to other work on similar questions or problems; summary of preliminary or pilot work underway (if any); plan for implementation; anticipated outcomes; plan or vision for next phase of the work, beyond the timeframe of the project.
4. Project Management Plan and Timeline (limit 1 page)
5. References Cited
6. Supporting Materials in Non-Written Media (where applicable; provide only in consultation with the Program Officer)
7. Budget (limit 1 page)
8. Budget justification narrative (itemized; limit 1 page)
9. Appendices:
  - a. Short bio-sketches of key participants, emphasizing relevant expertise
  - b. Letters of support from involved department chair(s) and dean(s)

#### III.B. Proposal submission procedure

Proposals should be submitted via email as PDF attachments to [practicaethics@jhu.edu](mailto:practicaethics@jhu.edu).

Any non-written supporting materials should be submitted in consultation with the Program Officer.

**Deadline for submission of all materials:** 11:59 p.m., Monday, October 26, 2015.

### IV. Application Review Information

The review process will be administered by the Office of the Provost.

#### Review criteria include:

- Potential to leverage **existing strengths of JHU** in the service of **innovative** and **unique or distinctive contributions** in the field of practical ethics.
- **Strategic positioning** of proposed project in compelling **longer-term agenda** for further work in practical ethics.
- Demonstrated **strength of support** from JHU departments and divisions involved. *Note that proposals submitted without the endorsement of the relevant department Chair(s) and divisional Dean(s) will not be reviewed.*
- Feasibility with resources requested; **appropriateness of scope and cost effectiveness.**

- Specific to categories of proposal:
  - For proposals to conduct original research: realistic expectation that results, findings, or insights will be **published** in high-quality peer-reviewed venues.
  - For proposals to design novel educational experiences: clearly articulated pathway toward future **implementation** at JHU and promise of **transferability** to relevantly similar settings.
  - For proposals to develop other innovations: evidence of likely **feasibility** and potential for future **scalability**.

## V. Funding Restrictions

Funding may be requested to support all activities justified in the budget. This may include, but is not limited to, salary support and benefits for faculty, staff, or students participating in the project, purchase of materials and supplies, and transportation expenses where applicable. No indirect costs may be charged to these grants. No funds may be budgeted for personnel or collaborating entities outside JHU.

## VI. Award Administration

Award notices will be issued by the JHU Office of the Provost on or shortly after December 4, 2015. The earliest start date for funded awards is January 1, 2016.

### VI.A. Reporting requirements for award recipients

Within 60 days of the completion of the award period, recipients will be expected to submit final narrative reports detailing outcomes, successes, and reflections on anything that did not go as planned. The final report should include discussion of future opportunities that can build on the outcomes of funded work.

Award recipients will present their findings, results, and/or products at a symposium to be held in January 2017. Funded projects might yield different products (article submitted to peer-reviewed journal for publication, white paper, artistic performance, pilot data for a future project, *etc.*), but all will inform the discussion of the pursuit of practical ethics at JHU. Projects will be publicized in JHU communications (such as “the Hub” and divisional magazines) in order to highlight the recipients’ work as well as broad practical ethics work at JHU. In addition, the University may hold a number of gatherings to highlight the role that Hopkins might play in practical ethics. These events will be co-hosted by the Berman Institute of Bioethics and participating Schools of the University, and the public will be invited; award recipients may be asked to provide overviews of their projects at these events. The capstone event will be the January 2017 symposium presenting the results of funded projects.

## VII. How to Obtain More Information

Potential applicants are encouraged to contact the Program Officer, Maria Merritt, Associate Professor in the Berman Institute of Bioethics and the Bloomberg School of Public Health, at [practicaethics@jhu.edu](mailto:practicaethics@jhu.edu).