

Institution

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth)

Title of Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

Beyond Silos: Enhancing Ethics Education in and across the Health Professions

Contact

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Executive Summary

“Beyond Silos: Enhancing Ethics Education in and across the Health Professions” is an outgrowth of the mission, vision, and strategic planning of UTHealth. *The goal of this QEP is to develop, implement, assess, refine, and ensure the long-term sustainability of interprofessional ethics education at UTHealth by strengthening and building on the Campus-Wide Ethics Program (CWEP).* This goal, we found after having broad-based discussions, meetings, and focus groups, is consistent with what various constituencies at UTHealth’s professional schools have indicated that they would like to see developed. And, moreover, this goal is supported by an empirical study we carried out to determine the need for such education at UTHealth.

The critical issue to be addressed by the UTHealth QEP is the current “silo-ed” approach, an approach that is disjointed and unorganized, to ethics education. One reason that interprofessional education at UTHealth has been difficult is because the six schools are separated by time (calendars and schedules) and space (different buildings and campuses). Part of the strategy to overcome these difficulties—in other words, to go “beyond silos”—involves developing online interprofessional ethics education. Some specific strategies for breaking down the silo effect include:

- providing professional development for faculty from all schools for the teaching of ethics;
- creating online materials, such as annotated bibliographies, for the teaching of ethics;
- developing UTHealth-wide online training modules in professionalism, clinical ethics, and research ethics;
- incorporating interprofessional ethics cases and teaching resources, such as scripts for standardized patients, into existing curricula; and
- promoting venues for interprofessional discussions of clinical, research, and public health ethics.

The UTHealth University Action Plan is a five-year plan. The timeline includes a period for faculty development, curricular development, assessment of our University Action Plan, further curricular changes based on the assessment, and the writing of the Impact Report. The QEP organizational structure includes appropriate persons (e.g., staff persons, consultants, faculty, and administrators) who will carry out all aspects of the plan, and the necessary resources have been dedicated to enable the success of the plan and to assess its effectiveness.

QEP Website: <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/hhhs/programs/qep/index.html>