

USC Law and Global Health Working Group - Meeting Notes
September 22nd, 2015
12:45pm-1:30pm PST

Participants

Lourdes Baezconde-Garbanati, Lyn Boyd-Judson, Laura Ferguson, Marientina Gotsis, Sofia Gruskin, Ian Henry, Charles Kaplan, Shubha Kumar, Doe Mayer, Alexandra Nicholson, Allison Renteln, Adam Rose

Meeting Summary

This was the first meeting of the academic year for the Law and Global Health Working Group. The meeting began with introductions, followed by a brief recap of last year's work, to orient us and bring everybody up to speed.

There were five meetings last year, ending with general consensus that the group should continue into this year despite lack of funding. As a part of the process last year, we engaged in explorations of what different disciplinary perspectives had to bring to the intersection of law and global health. Different participants gave informal presentations based on their disciplinary perspectives and research interests, organized around the same set of conceptual and operational questions [Minutes available for each meeting upon request].

We began this meeting by agreeing we would take a single topic which we would explore in depth over the coming academic year. We noted that the fact that we represent such different perspectives, if this could somehow be harnessed, would allow us to engage in some interesting and potentially valuable work. Regarding topics, we found particular collective interest in aging and dementia, but also much concern with the health and rights impacts of the ongoing refugee crisis, recognizing the topic as timely, critical, and likely to remain important. While it would be possible to explore one topic one semester and another the following semester, participants noted that last year, we barely scratched the surface of a single, narrow topic (criminalization of HIV transmission) in one semester. Participants agreed that there is a definite way to combine these topics, in that there are clear issues related to aging and dementia in the refugee crisis. For now, however, participants agreed that we would focus on aging and dementia as an entry point, but keep in mind the refugee crisis as an important focus within it.

Regarding the law and global health focus, participants then delved a little deeper on aging as a potential area of focus. Particularly regarding aging and dementia, at a global level, the law and global health issues dovetail nicely with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the work of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights of older persons. Regarding national and regional differences, aging and dementia bring up all sorts of important legal capacity issues, issues of bioethics and law, and interesting cultural variations as people have different experiences in various regions of the world, including differences in familial and societal support, as well as institutional options. Additionally, this topic lines up well with issues of interest to the university and may be useful for bringing together faculty from across the university.

As far as outputs, participants discussed a few possibilities. Most obvious of course is that at the end of this year we come up with a fundable multidisciplinary research proposal. If we did it consciously, and took the time to lay the groundwork, this might be an interesting way forward. Also, given the composition of this group, this effort could lead to putting together a

large scale research conference for next summer or the beginning of fall, bringing in other institutions working at this intersection. Participants noted that the Lancet has just put together a commission on law and global health, and that this effort might also help to position USC as leader in exploring the law and global health intersection. Additionally, participants noted that pedagogically, it would make sense to think also about whether our work ought to be used to pull together an interdisciplinary course.

Next, participants discussed logistics and potential funding sources. First, participants recognized that none of us around the table has the requisite substantive knowledge to help shape a discussion of the law and global health dimensions of aging. We discussed the amazing expertise that exists at USC in this area and agreed on a few people who would be approached to join the group and help bring us up to speed on current issues and hopefully help ground the substantive orientation of our work over the coming year. For the current work of the group, a short term Zumberge might be a great way forward: they provide 10k and can be granted on a rolling basis but we agreed that until this happens we will continue to ask participants on a rolling basis to host lunch. Finally, we agreed it was important for the group to have a web presence and several options are being explored.

Action Items

- Reach out to potential participants to bring us up to speed on aging and dementia
- If you have not already done so, please fill out the Law and Global Health Working Group Matrix
- Look into the possibility of a Zumberge Interdisciplinary Small Grant
- Set up web page
- Organize next lunch meeting [**Thursday, Nov. 5th, from 12:30pm-1:30pm in Room 114 at the Law School**]