

International Team reviews CBEC as it turns Ten

*Anika Khan**

Inaugurated in October 2004, the Centre of Biomedical Ethics and Culture, SIUT in Karachi will turn ten years old this fall. The first (and still the only) such Centre in Pakistan, its stated objectives are to serve as an academic and intellectual resource for Pakistan and the region; to enhance national capacity in bioethics; to undertake socially and culturally relevant education and research; and to establish Pakistan's presence within the international bioethics community.

Following a request by Dr. Farhat Moazam, CBEC Chairperson, to Dr. Adib Rizvi, Director SIUT, a team of national and international educationists and scholars (see table) was invited to visit the Centre to assess its progress towards achieving its goals over the decade, its strengths, and areas requiring improvement. In addition, three renowned American scholars involved with CBEC since its inception were asked to provide, in writing, observations and comments about the Centre: Dr. Renee C. Fox, Professor Emerita of Social Sciences, University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Judith P. Swazey, Adjunct Professor, Boston University Schools of Medicine; and Dr. Paul Lombardo, Professor of Law, Georgia State University.

The review took place from April 28 to May 8, 2014 overlapping with the last sessions of CBEC's Public Health and Research Ethics Module. Reviewers met with CBEC faculty and were provided a written report and oral presentation about the Centre's educational programs, research activities, national and international involvement and collaborations. They interacted with students enrolled in the Postgraduate Diploma in Biomedical Ethics and Certificate Course programs and observed sessions taught by CBEC faculty and its alumni. Meetings were also arranged with CBEC alumni in Karachi and via Skype with alumni based outside Karachi or in other countries. This provided reviewers an opportunity to get a feel of the "bioethics network" beginning to take shape through the Centre's alumni and to assess the impact of CBEC programs on individuals and institutions.

It is hoped that the Review Team report will help CBEC faculty in charting the direction for the next decade.

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CBEC Review Team (in alphabetical order)

- * Dr. Aasim Ahmed: Chairperson, Bioethics Group, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan
- * Dr. Tasleem Akhtar: Professor Emeritus, Khyber Medical University, Peshawar, Pakistan
- * Dr. Rizwan Azami: Vice President, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan, Karachi, Pakistan
- * Dr. Alastair Campbell: Director, Centre of Biomedical Ethics, National University of Singapore, Singapore
- * Dr. Richard Cash: Director, International Health Research Global Health, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, USA
- * Dr. Amar Jesani: Human Rights activist, Editor, Indian Journal of Medical Ethics, Mumbai, India
- * Dr. Fozia Qureshi (Coordinator): Chairperson, Department of Medical Education, SIUT, Karachi, Pakistan
- * Dr. Mala Ramanathan: Sociologist and Researcher, SCTIMST, Kerala, India