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Do any of you remember traipsing up to the second floor of Gilkey to see your college advisor? The grim stairwell and shabby-chic quarters were hardly a marker of our success. No longer. Fall 2016 marked the college’s move into a new home in the extensively renovated Bexell Hall. A visit to our beautiful new Student Services area reveals a bright, open and inviting space where students can see an advisor any time, study or find respite in a busy day.

We’re proud to show off Bexell Hall to the campus community, and we now have a place that will impress high school students who are considering coming to Oregon State, along with their families. We have long known about CLA’s outstanding faculty, programs and opportunities for students. Finally having a home that showcases that excellence makes us all proud.

Our move coincides with another way we’re promoting student success: our new 4-Year Graduation Guarantee. Students who follow CLA’s easy-to-meet guidelines will only have to pay for four years of college, which will help focus their education and relieve a daunting financial burden. Additionally, we have elevated career counseling as a major feature of our student services offerings to help students plan their next steps after graduation.

CLA is the first college at Oregon State to institute such a guarantee. We are serving as a model for the rest of the university, and our success will provide a map for other colleges to follow.

We have also made great strides in the arts this year by welcoming Bob Santelli as CLA’s director of performing arts and popular music. Bob comes to us from an eight-year tenure as executive director of the GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles. He has spent a long career steeped in American music and culture, all with the aim of educating others about the importance of the arts. He comes to us not only with this passion and experience, but an extensive list of connections in the music industry. All will help him in his mission to enrich the university and put Oregon State on the map as an artistic powerhouse.

With more than 30 events to date, CLA’s collaborative initiative, SPARK: Arts+Science@OSU has also been a success. Our goal is to illustrate the intermarriage of the arts and sciences, how they depend on each other and how the creative process fruitfully overlaps among disciplines. This success has depended on cooperation across the university, especially with the colleges of Science and Education, along with the Division of Outreach and Engagement. Our partners know that the connection between arts and science is as natural as it is necessary, and collaborating across these areas is critical to elevating the university.

We have much to look forward to in the College of Liberal Arts. We hope you stop by Bexell Hall on your next visit to campus and see in person the strides we are making.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Rodgers
Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Opening the Floor

A class on racism and African American resistance encourages everyone to speak up.

Story by Celene Carillo

Dwayne Plaza knew the name of the class, African American Resistance in the Era of Donald Trump, would not go unnoticed. That was by design. “I wanted the class to get attention,” he says. “But the class is really about helping students see the historical parallels in African Americans’ current social, economic and political conditions, and how they will figure out how to resist.”

Plaza, who is Afro Caribbean, actually taught an iteration of the class long before Trump filed candidacy papers in 2015, but it had gone dormant in 2012. Plaza and CLA advisor and co-teacher Marilyn Stewart, who is African American, decided to resurrect the class the day after Trump won the presidency in 2016.

“Racial tensions have never disappeared and have escalated recently, but there is an intentional effort not to teach these topics with the hope they will go away,” Plaza says. “The past doesn’t just go away. You can still see evidence of how racism expresses itself today in where people live, what opportunities people have, education systems, health care systems, real estate patterns. American culture tells us to live in the ‘now.’ But when you forget about the past, anything can be repeated.”

CLA Dean Larry Rodgers joined Stewart and Plaza to teach the winter-term class. Rodgers’ academic expertise is in multicultural and regional American literature, particularly the Great Migration of southern African Americans throughout the 20th century.

In addition to literature, Plaza, Stewart and Rodgers built the class to look at African American resistance in sports, art, music, film and policy. Think Colin Kaepernick, whose controversial kneeling during the national anthem echoes African American athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos’ Black Power salute on the medal stand at the 1968 Olympics. Think Dr. Martin Luther King and Angela Davis. Think millions of African Americans rejecting the Jim Crow South, moving to cities like Chicago, New York and Los Angeles and leaving an artistic imprint that is still bearing fruit.

“Resistance became about ways African Americans would not let the lens of white supremacy define them,” says Plaza. “They found a way of resisting in a situation that seemed hopeless.”

For JoyAnna Virtue, who is white, the class has been a revelation. Injustice was not something that presented itself often in her home-schooled, computer-based curriculum. “A lot of things that are common knowledge are new to me, like lynching or the history of slavery and its relation to the treatment of black bodies in sports,” she says.
Though some of the names and dates are new, the concepts are familiar for Capreece Kelsaw, a junior majoring in political science. Growing up African American in Portland, Kelsaw saw — through her own experiences and personal reading — many of the injustices the class examines.

“Things are more modern now, but the issues are the same: Black people still get killed and disenfranchised, are imprisoned more and portrayed unfairly in the media. They deal with more injustice in the education and health care systems,” she says.

Knowing that some of her classmates are hearing about these issues for the first time can be frustrating, Kelsaw admits. But it’s encouraging, too.

“We spend a lot of time talking about race and the history of African Americans. It’s not really common on campus. This class is one of the better options to do that,” Kelsaw says. “People are more willing to speak compared to the beginning of the class, and that’s cool.”

An atmosphere where students — regardless of race — would contribute in a class about race and racism required Stewart, Plaza and Rodgers to consciously set a stage.

“We very deliberately created a space where all students would feel safe talking. It’s a very difficult thing to do,” Stewart says. “These are not topics we talk about every day. We shaped our environment so students and guests would feel comfortable with backlash regarding what they were saying. We created the class to have historical context, but we wanted students to see and voice other similarities from this era. We wanted students to be able to learn something from someone with opposing views and not try to shout someone down.”

For Brooke Bishop, who is white, and whose goal is to become an English teacher, these conversations are hopeful.

“There’s something really cool about being in such a diverse room, including the teaching team. You’re seeing all sorts of people raising consciousness. Some have lived what we are talking about. Some want to learn. It gives me hope people can have common ground without color blindness — that we can understand differences instead of burying them.”
An Advocate for Student Success

Story by Celene Carillo

Johnathon Hoover’s opportunity to travel to the White House opened his world and helped confirm his goals.

Michelle Obama’s introduction to a GRAMMY Museum event at the White House featuring singers Yolanda Adams and Michelle Williams was especially resonant for Johnathon Hoover, a junior speech communication major who attended with a group from Oregon State.

“She talked about how important education was. When you think about it, education is the only thing you can control. You may have problems in your life, but if you get that degree, no one can say you didn’t earn it,” Hoover says. “She took the time to tell us that, and the high school kids there got to hear it too.”

Hoover, who has cerebral palsy, never thought he would make it to college. That changed when his childhood friend, Roberto Nelson (‘14) helped secure a place for him managing the Beaver men’s basketball team — then coached by Obama’s brother, Craig Robinson.

During his tenure at Oregon State, Hoover has made a point to speak to young people — especially young people of color — about staying on track and staying in school. “After one of my talks, a kid thanked me and said I motivated him to stay in school. He got out of the gang he was in and left that lifestyle behind,” Hoover says.

Hoover’s goal when he graduates is to coach basketball and continue to motivate others to get an education.

An avid music lover, Hoover got another surprise after the GRAMMY Museum program. Bob Santelli, the former executive director of the museum who now leads popular music and performing arts in the College of Liberal Arts, introduced the Oregon State group to singer-songwriter Janelle Monae and the rapper Common. The two were rehearsing for an evening show at the White House.

“I couldn’t believe it,” Hoover says. “I thought, ‘I just got done being in the White House. Now I’m meeting Common. What else is going to happen on this trip?’”

For Hoover, “what else” meant visits to the Holocaust Memorial Museum and the recently opened National Museum of African American History and Culture, as well as trying food that was new to him, like paella.

“It meant a lot more than just a trip to D.C. for me. I’m glad I was one of the people they thought represent the college well,” Hoover says. “It was an amazing trip. You need to be taken out of school and brought back. I want other students to have that experience too.”
A Life in Music

Story by Celene Carillo

CLA welcomes its new Director of Performing Arts and Popular Music

Bob Santelli.

Interviewing Beyoncé, Sting and Public Enemy. Bringing hundreds of students to the White House to meet music’s luminaries. Getting a behind-the-scenes look at GRAMMY Award rehearsals. It all seems like an exciting and glamorous way to spend time.

And let’s face it, it is.

For Bob Santelli, these are just a few markers in a career in which music — and more specifically educating people about music’s place in American history — has been a consuming passion and unerring North Star.

He’s now bringing this passion to the College of Liberal Arts, where he joined the faculty this winter as the director of performing arts and popular music.

“I define myself most as a teacher,” Santelli says. “I have a natural interest in history and a desire to marry music, history and education. Having those basic components has allowed me to get to where I am.”

Santelli has written for Rolling Stone magazine and authored or edited more than a dozen books, including an encyclopedia of blues music and the “definitive” book on folk icon Woody Guthrie. He served in leadership roles at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, the Experience Music Project in Seattle (now called MoPop), and most recently the GRAMMY Museum in Los Angeles, where he was executive director for eight years.

“All of my experiences have been focused on education,” Santelli says. “As a writer, you impart information and incite passion. As a curator, you tell a story in a different way. You’re always teaching people to become more sophisticated listeners.”

He’s already doing that at Oregon State. In 2015, the university became an official affiliate of the GRAMMY Museum, which opens students to music education programs and internships.

Last October, Santelli took a delegation of seven CLA students to the White House for the last of 15 programs the GRAMMY Museum produced during the Obama presidency. There, they joined nearly 100 high school students from Washington D.C. and Newark, New Jersey, to see first lady Michelle Obama speak, as well as African American singers Michelle Williams and Yolanda Adams.

“These programs have been a big part of my life for the last eight years. And it’s a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for these kids,” Santelli says. “The artists focused on achieving dreams, being focused, accomplishing goals and the long journey to fulfill their dreams.”

On campus, Santelli has been in the classroom teaching popular music, giving community lectures on the GRAMMY Awards show and helming a group of students and community members who are songwriters.
Abigail Losli stands in front of her series, “Life and Living,” which depicts the patterns of movement in water. Losli, a 2016 fine arts alumna, participated in a research trip aboard the Pacific Storm last summer. Photos by Nicki Silva.

**SPARK Celebrates Creative Collaborations**

When we embarked on SPARK: Arts+Science@OSU in the fall of 2016, we knew our yearlong initiative would successfully celebrate disciplines that may to some folks seem disparate and disconnected. We also knew SPARK would explore creative processes that uncannily resemble each other and have fruitful results in the lab, the classroom and the studio.

SPARK has done all of these things.

At the helm of the effort is CLA’s Charles Robinson, who was tasked with creating excitement and momentum for the initiative.

In just five months, SPARK has created or contributed to nearly 50 events and projects across campus and throughout Oregon. Notable among them was art alumna Abigail Losli’s voyage aboard the research vessel Pacific Storm, alongside Hatfield Marine Science Center researcher Sarah Henkel. The journey focused on understanding life on the ocean floor in preparation for offshore wind energy projects. As researchers gathered data, Losli assisted them and documented the movement of water in paint.

Losli’s work reminded Henkel and her crew of the ocean’s vast beauty, and the voyage gave Losli an in-depth look at ocean life. Most of the paintings she created on the Pacific Storm will hang on permanent display at the new Marine Studies Initiative building in Newport currently under construction. One painting, commissioned by the college, will hang in a newly renovated portion of Ballard Hall that will open this fall as the CLA Research Center (CLARC).

This project exemplifies the strong, longstanding ethos of collaboration at Oregon State. SPARK has taken it several steps further, bringing together not only six main campus units, but nearly two dozen organizations from across campus, the Corvallis community, the state and beyond.

Beaver Tales: A Celebration of Beaver Art, is just one example of new partnerships. The exhibit, a cooperation between SPARK, the Wetlands Conservancy and others, features more than 150 artists’ renderings of Oregon State’s mascot in multiple media. It hung at the Giustina Gallery on campus throughout February and then began its journey to five other venues throughout the state. The exhibit will conclude in Portland at the Oregon Zoo in September.

These collaborations are what most impress me about the SPARK initiative. I cannot overstate the willingness of Oregon State faculty, staff and students to work across academic aisles in creative ways that inspire and educate others. Our role in the liberal arts is often to synthesize and enlighten people about the beautiful complexities life offers. I am happy to say SPARK does that.

This spring, be sure to visit spark.oregonstate.edu for more events and keep a close eye out for details of our festivities surrounding the total solar eclipse on Aug. 21.

Marion Rossi
Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Other Campus Partners
Marine Studies Initiative
Hatfield Marine Science Center
OSU Robotics Program
The Co.
College of Engineering
Spring Creek Project
The Little Gallery
Oregon Sea Grant
Anarres Project for Alternative Futures
Enhancing STEM Education
Free-Choice Learning Center

Off-Campus Partners
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The Wetlands Conservancy
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Honors College
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Major Partners
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Walking into Bexell Hall today is walking into a space transformed. The staid wood paneling that marked the building for decades has been exchanged for brightly lit walls festooned with art, along with spacious, flowing areas for students, faculty and staff.

And now, it’s the new home for the College of Liberal Arts.

Last fall, CLA moved into Bexell after completing a multimillion-dollar renovation and overhaul that created a fresh, open and modern space.

Planning and construction on the project began in 2014 when the College of Business moved to Austin Hall. CLA Associate Dean Marion Rossi led the renovation efforts, with an eye toward improving the space while preserving details that gave Bexell — which was built in 1922 — its character.

“We love being in a building steeped in Oregon State history that we’ve modernized and innovated. In many ways, this reflects where CLA is as a college. We have longstanding strengths in the liberal arts and continue to prove we are on the cutting edge of our fields. Having this new, innovative space will help us create even more positive experiences for our students,” says Rossi.

Bexell now houses CLA Student Services, the Dean’s Office and the School of Public Policy, which comprises the disciplines of sociology, political science, economics and public policy. The renovation is the first major building project for the college in decades.

“We have been able to create administrative and advising spaces that illustrate CLA’s values: transparency, openness and tradition coupled with innovation and new technology that enables the success of learners from across campus,” says Rossi. “The new design reflects that feeling of an established history with a modern sensibility.”

Chief among these improvements is a vastly expanded space for CLA Student Services, which includes a student lounge, open spaces for advising and an area for career counseling.

“Student Services is often a prospective or incoming student’s first stop on a campus visit. They are also critical to making sure a student is successful throughout their time at OSU,” says Rossi. “These new spaces are not only appealing but will signal to students they are the college’s top priority.”

This holds true for all students who take classes in the new Bexell Hall. “CLA collaborated with partners across campus to create classrooms on every floor where technology and flexible spaces and furniture come together in new ways to enhance learning,” Rossi says.

The college has also prioritized graduate students in public policy. Students in the brand-new Ph.D. in Public Policy program, as well as those in the highly
successful Master’s of Public Policy program, have new dedicated spaces, including graduate hubs and a computer lab on the first floor, as well as conference and seminar rooms throughout the building. "We are proud of the collaboration and investment from across campus that has allowed us to achieve such a wonderful result in Bexell Hall for CLA students, faculty and staff," says Rossi. "Our goal is to help even more CLA students be successful in their time here at OSU."

Come visit us!
When Empathy Fails

Undergraduate Amber Fultz’s research explores the communication challenges presented by electronic synthesizer devices.

Story by Claire Sykes

A mber Fultz has always been fascinated by social interaction. As a freshman, her curiosity propelled her into a psychology major and into professor Frank Bernieri’s Interpersonal Sensitivity Lab. There, Fultz became one of 90 psychology undergraduates to perform research alongside a faculty mentor.

Fultz’s most recent work in the lab focused on empathy and whether highly empathetic people could solve some of the interpersonal communication challenges presented by electronic synthesizer devices.

Millions of people with neurodegenerative disorders use these devices. Having to type or use a joystick to move a cursor means that their conversational partners sit in silence, waiting for their conversations to continue.

“We theorized that the more empathetic the listener, the more considerate they’d be, and that the quality of interaction would be higher,” Fultz says.

Fultz’s study is part of a larger collaboration between Bernieri’s lab and Bill Smart, an associate professor with the robotics program in the College of Engineering, along with several students in each program.

To initiate the study, one of Smart’s robotics students attempted to predict the moment that partners who were conversing with people using electronic synthesizer devices would become disengaged. Smart invited Bernieri’s group to get involved to track the degree of conversational engagement between partners.

“We’re bridging two fields of study that are so far apart, and getting meaningful results from them is really hard to do,” says Smart. “But there’s actionable information from psychology that can advance robotics and vice versa. That’s where collaboration works best. We couldn’t do our part on our own.”

Fultz brought empathy into the study. Over two years, Fultz conducted 80 videotaped research sessions and tasked the 120 participants with filling out a written empathy questionnaire.

Fultz’s results were surprising. Participants who rated higher for empathy experienced a lower rapport with people using voice synthesizers.

“One interpretation is that the high-empathetic listener felt more distressed by the device and tried hard to be polite by not making eye contact. But that can be received as disinterest, which doesn’t help build rapport,” Fultz explains. “And the low-empathetic person was undeterred by the device and didn’t feel a need to look away. But we can’t confirm this without further research of nonverbal behaviors.” Still, the study’s findings could change the way health care providers and caregivers of people with physical disabilities are selected and trained.

This winter, Fultz’s work won Best Poster in the undergraduate category from the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, beating out hundreds of others worldwide. It was displayed during the society’s January 2017 annual meeting, which was attended by more than 4,000 international members.

But the award, Fultz says, is more about collaboration than individual effort. “The most exciting thing for me is the opportunity to represent OSU and the School of Psychological Science and have them get national recognition for the great research that OSU is doing.”
The Wisdom of the Armadillo

Ethnic studies alumna Nicthé Verdugo reimagines a classic game in service to her community.

Story by Rebecca Olson

The armadillo is the only animal that doesn’t walk backward. It moves forward, over obstacles and across dusty terrain — and never looks back.

It’s one of Nicthé Verdugo’s favorite symbols. According to the 2016 ethnic studies alumna, the armadillo is a powerful metaphor for the resilience and perseverance she sees at the heart of the Latinx/Chicano communities.

“My dad always told me to keep moving forward, just like the armadillo — to never look back unless it is to see where you came from and how far you have come,” she says.

The armadillo is one of 54 iconic pictograms Verdugo incorporated into her senior capstone project — a handmade Lotería game featuring shared symbols and imagery of lived experiences gathered from the oral histories collected in the Oregon Multicultural Archives at Oregon State University.

Lotería is a traditional Mexican game of chance, similar to bingo, which uses images on a deck of cards. The images in a traditional Lotería speak to deep cultural archetypes — the rooster, the devil and the melon.

“It’s a game that always brings people together,” Verdugo says. “I wanted to create something which would connect people and educate us about our own histories, while also making space to be proud of our cultural identity.”

Verdugo knew she wanted her project to give back to her community. To figure out how, she started listening. In the Oregon Multicultural Archives, Verdugo found hundreds of hours of oral histories from local immigrant and migrant families.

“The cool thing about the stories was that it was not just parents or students, but all perspectives — all reflecting on their hopes and dreams for what they would accomplish in life,” she says. “I was listening for points of connection between the stories to give me a better sense of the common narrative.”

She found recurring themes: tradition, family, sacrifices and the drive to give back. She wanted a way to visually translate these values into something that could be shared to improve her community.

Verdugo’s Lotería deck features images that speak to the experiences of the immigrant families she heard in the archives, mixed with those meaningful to her own experiences — a butterfly, an armadillo, a Christmas ornament, for example. 16 copies of her hand-drawn deck were donated to the university’s statewide Juntos program to be used as a tool for community outreach and education.

After graduating, Verdugo relocated to Medford to work as a field organizer for Unite Oregon, where she has continued the community-building and organizing she became passionate about during her time at OSU — raising wages for rural workers, ending police brutality and addressing issues of affordable housing.

“I love community organizing,” she says. “I can’t see myself doing anything else.”
Life and Death Choices

Courtney Campbell helps hospitals decide how to answer challenging questions about medical treatment.

Story by Joe Donovan

Medical ethicist Courtney Campbell deals in thorny questions. If there’s a shortage of chemotherapy drugs, for example, how do you ration them? Who receives a flu vaccine if there isn’t enough to go around? When should medical treatment be stopped and death allowed? Finding answers to these seemingly intractable questions, though, is critical to developing fair medical policies.

Campbell, who is the Hundere Professor in Religion and Culture in the School of History, Philosophy and Religion, has been pursuing these questions since he was in graduate school at the University of Virginia in the late 1980s.

After graduating, he worked for the Hastings Center, a medical ethics think tank in New York, and served as a consultant on ethics committees under both the Clinton and Obama administrations.

In Oregon, Campbell has worked with hospitals and hospices — especially Good Samaritan and Benton Hospice in Corvallis — where issues arise around uninsured patients, as well as patients who don’t have a surrogate to make decisions in case they cannot make decisions themselves. He has also written about Oregon’s Death with Dignity Act and the Oregon Health Plan.

Here, Campbell talks about what an ethicist’s job is, what makes Oregon a fascinating case study and social justice’s role in medicine.

How did you become interested in medical ethics?

When I was in graduate school in the 1980s, there was an explosion of interest in medical ethics. It was the era of the first in vitro fertilization and open heart transplants. AIDS had just emerged. There was a public immediacy to these issues.

In Virginia, I was involved in some of the cases that came before the hospital where I volunteered. These weren’t abstract subjects. People were making decisions about whether they should stop medical treatment or whether they should ration intensive medical technology. There was the intellectual fascination, but also I saw that people’s lives were at stake.

I moved to Oregon in the early 1990s because the state was facing some interesting questions, like how to set up a universal health care system, which has not happened, and death with dignity. I sensed that Oregon would be a really good place to go to keep my intellectual interest but also allow me to affect real policy.

How has some of your work in Oregon affected policy?

I am on the ethics committee at Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center here in Corvallis. When the Oregon Death with Dignity Act was finally approved, the hospital system decided it should not be allowed at hospitals, since the law actually says this can’t be carried out in a public setting. But we needed to determine whether our physicians could provide the consultation and write the prescriptions for the drugs. We also needed to determine if they could opt out. We crafted a policy to address those issues.

I’m also on the Ethics Task Force for the Oregon Public Health Division. About four years ago, we took up the issue of a flu pandemic, which was extended to rationing in the event of a big earthquake. What should be the priorities in this catastrophic medical situation? Do we give special consideration to the governor or health care professionals? Do we put all our resources into Portland, or do we send them to the rural parts of the state?

In these cases, our responsibility becomes setting up concrete guidelines and an ethical framework. That’s where I can help out, with a set of values we want to see in practice and then a guide for the heads of practitioner organizations.

What kinds of principles guide you in these situations?

Ethics for me has always been about making sure we’re asking the right questions. Then we work with the principles: respect, justice, non-harm, benefit and professional integrity. We then test the policy with principles of practicality, publicity, collegiality and reversibility.

That means we need to challenge the perceived wisdom we get from political and medical authorities. Ethics is often seen as troubleshooting or problem-solving to find a solution. What are the questions we
need to ask a hospital administrator who needs to cut costs, as difficult as those questions may be? What do they need to hear so they don’t lose touch of their ethical bearings? Sometimes we need to ask these questions more than at other times.

**What kind of times are we in?**

One thing you can’t ignore in the U.S. is that we’re a market-driven economy, and so health care is viewed — wrongly in my perspective — as a commodity. When I first arrived at OSU in 1990, we used to talk about a physician-patient relationship. Now it’s provider-consumer. We’ve set up this basic relationship in medicine as a consumer transaction. It brings in the market as an overarching mechanism to determine how much is going to be paid, what your co-pay is, how long you get to see the doctor for. That’s part of our economy, and I’m not sure if it has to be part of our medical care delivery system.

Most hospital administrators are trained in corporate business, so they approach care from a corporate consumerist model. You’re almost not dealing with the ethics of medicine, but the ethics of business, and there’s not necessarily a code of ethics for business.

**Does this disparity cause issues when it comes to treatment?**

On many occasions, I think I will have an impact on hospital administrators, but most of the time you’ll have a bigger impact on individual physicians. I think hospitals and medicine have generally tried to make sure to not ration at the bedside, no matter what structural inequities might exist. It would create too much of a conflict of interest for the physician. Largely there’s kind of a buffer, and physicians are not directly confronted with that.

Ethicists help create that buffer. And the role is becoming much more formalized. One of my graduate students just got hired as an ethics consultant. What used to be a volunteer job has now become a formal position in hospitals.

As an ethicist, Courtney Campbell helps provide a moral compass for hospitals and medical providers. Photo by Chris Becerra.
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