Announcing the 2024-2025 Community Advisory Board!

We are excited to announce our 2024-2025 Community Advisory Board! We welcome incoming Board members Dr. Danielle Thomas from Life Crisis Center and Doncella Wilson from Minary's Dream Alliance. Board members provide the REACH team with feedback and insight in the direction of REACH services, which is essential as we grow our initiative into a regional ethics hub. Advisory Board members also serve as an additional point of contact for people looking to learn more about REACH. Board members officially started in their new roles July 1 and participated in an orientation to learn more about REACH's goals and current initiatives.

Learn more about our Community Advisory Board on our website.

Looking to Bring on an Intern?

Is your organization looking to bring on an undergraduate student intern? REACH is developing an internship program, anticipated to launch in the spring semester. Students eligible for REACH internships are juniors or seniors with strong GPAs who are majoring in a variety of fields of study. Student interns work 10 hours a week in your organization and are supervised by a member of the REACH team. If you are interested in working with an intern, please contact us at **REACH@salisbury.edu**.

Deferred Authority: Who Is in Charge?

In professional roles, determining the right approach to policy implementation in complex institutional partnerships can be challenging. When a professional role requires approval, review, or reporting to multiple external partners or oversight groups, it is easy to become confused as to who is actually in charge and how to approach authority. Here are a couple of cases:

- The Maryland Blueprint requires changes that try to break down barriers between schools and the communities they serve. To that end, designated Community Schools are hiring people into a new role that is overseen by a county board but placed within a school. This role would require navigating school-anchored programming and partnerships but is funded and responsible to the Maryland Department of Education through the county authority. Whose priorities are most important? School leadership? State standards? Or the leadership at the county board? If a new program requires approval, who would you go to first in this role? And how do you make sure that community priorities are authentically present in programming given these complex partnerships where authority is shared?

- Correctional Libraries are required to run multiple programs throughout the year to provide opportunities for rehabilitative educational and intellectual experiences to incarcerated people. These positions, because of their connection to reentry, are supervised and guided by policies in the Department of Labor, but they must also follow substantial rules and regulations that are overseen by the Department of Corrections. A new librarian wants to develop a program that involves incarcerated people and their children reading the same books on a weekly schedule, which also requires the support of local libraries and hence county authorities. Where should they start seeking approval?

- A community group provides drive-by services for food insecure households supported by the Maryland Food Bank. These services provide nutrition, which is a basic component of community wellness, but no one on the team has expertise in nutritional wellness or other services that could be provided to enhance community health. There is a new position at a local hospital whose purpose is to enhance community wellness, including nutrition, but they could likely offer other services as well. How do the staff and volunteers of the local food bank gain access to community health services? Is there a role for county boards of health, or are there laws and policies around providing access to community health services outside of a hospital setting that the organizers should be aware of?

If you were to advise someone occupying one of these roles, how would you characterize who is "in charge" of programs like these? In circumstances such as these, partners can quickly become overwhelmed by what we could think of as "deferred authority," that is, partnerships at the edge of an agency's authority, but that would need to be developed, approved and reported through multiple agencies. Because of the complexity, it's not uncommon that authority gets deferred from one agency to another. One set of approvers looks to the other to be the authority and will defer to their authority without realizing that the other agency is also deferring authority to them at the same time.

What are some strategies that can be used to navigate situations where authority loops back and forth between different agencies, each expecting the other to take the lead? Here are some ideas:

- Recenter the conversation on shared mission and values
- Clearly define roles for partners
- Document organizational approval or co-approval processes as they are developed
- Look to develop needs assessments
- Expect and actively seek critical feedback on policies and procedures
- Return to the expectation that authority must be proactively and explicitly given by each oversight partner
- Develop a process for periodic check-ins with organizational partners
- Make note of and have direct conversations with partners about the cases in which impasses of authority raise ethical concerns or inhibit the realization of each partner's mission

REACH Model Presented to the International Town-Gown Association

In June, REACH team member Dr. Michèle Schlehofer traveled to University of Maryland College Park to present on the REACH model at the International Town-Gown Association Conference (ITGA). ITGA is a premier conference on how to create, foster and sustain mutually beneficial community-campus partnerships and draws attendees working in university administration, as well as from the government, business and nonprofit sectors. In the presentation, Dr. Schlehofer introduced attendees to the REACH model's concept of *Ethical Enfranchisement,* making the case for the prioritization of underserved community voices in directing university-community partnerships.

REACH Services Available to the Public

The REACH team is available to assist on a variety of projects. Our specialization is in providing guidance for grappling with thorny problems, including, but not limited to, inter-organizational conflicts, concerns about how to move your advocacy work forward and issues with how to best-address a community or organizational concern. We offer workshops, facilitate dialogue with representatives of identified stakeholders on an issue that your organization or group is working through and identify points of ethical convergence, and can create ethics analysis white papers which can be used to impact policy or to convince a skeptical partner of a way forward around a difficult issue. Brief ethics consultations are always free. Contact us at **REACH@salisbury.edu** to schedule a free consultation. You can learn more about these or any of our services on our website, salisbury.edu/reach.

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