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### Jul 12, 2011

## Chair of Obama's Bioethics Commission Ignores Ghostwriting on Her Own Campus

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By PAUL THACKER

Yesterday, POGO sent a letter to President Obama asking that [Dr. Amy Gutmann](#) be removed as chair of the commission that advises the President on bioethics. We did so because Dr. Gutmann has ignored [serious allegations of research misconduct](#) regarding a senior professor at the University of Pennsylvania, where she is President.

If Dr. Gutmann cannot deal with bioethical concerns on her own campus, with her own faculty, then how can taxpayers trust her to advise the President of the United States?

Quite frankly, I don't have a clue.

Here are the facts. Last November, POGO [sent a letter to Dr. Francis Collins](#) at the National Institutes of Health about four cases where federally funded researchers used a ghostwriting company paid by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) to write manuscripts that were favorable to Paxil, an antidepressant sold by GSK.

According to [documents we included with the letter](#), GSK apparently paid a ghostwriter to write a scientific editorial for a medical journal with the byline of Dr. Dwight Evans, Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

Just so you know, [Penn has stated publicly](#) that they consider corporate-funded ghostwriting in medicine to be plagiarism. So how did Penn respond to this allegation of plagiarism? Did they launch an investigation? Did they take the matter up with the faculty senate?

Nope. They just blew it off.

A university spokesman [told Penn's student newspaper](#):

While we support any effort to promote scientific integrity, we believe that the allegations of ghostwriting made by POGO regarding a short editorial authored in 2003 by Drs. Evans and Charney are **unfounded**. (Emphasis added)

How judicious.

On Friday, a senior professor of psychiatry at Penn filed a [complaint](#) against Dr. Evans that includes allegations once again of potential ghostwriting in *another* study that favors GSK and Paxil. And because this study that Dr. Evans signed his name to was funded with taxpayer dollars, the complaint was sent to the federal government for investigation.

Until the University concludes a sincere and transparent investigation of these charges and takes decisive action to deter future ghostwriting, Dr. Gutmann should step aside as chair of the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues. This Commission advises President Obama on bioethics.

Dr. Gutmann's bona fides on bioethics—to borrow a phrase from Penn's own spokesperson—appear to be “unfounded.”

Students should really be pissed off that professors get away with [this type of fraud](#) when students receive steep penalties. What makes this all even more bizarre and insulting is that [Dr. Evans is on the board](#) of Penn's Scattergood Program for the Applied Ethics of Behavioral Healthcare, a program dedicated to healthcare ethics.

“Ghost writing is definitely a form of cheating. It's definitely punishable,” said Aaron Roth, a junior majoring in engineering and a member of Penn's student Honor Council, in a [story last year in The Daily Pennsylvanian](#).

According to Roth, the punishment for plagiarism can range from a semester-long suspension to expulsion from Penn. And the punishment will get documented on a student's transcript.

That's for students. But for fully mature, grown-ass men running Penn, like Dwight Evans....Dr. Gutmann just looks the other way.

- [Read POGO's letter to President.](#)
- [Read Dr. Jay Amsterdam's letter to the Office of Research Misconduct.](#)
  - [Read the attached documents](#)



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- [Read Dr. Jay Amsterdam's letter to UPenn.](#)

See also: [Medical Ghostwriting: Why Hidden Industry Influence is a Threat to Public Health.](#)

*Paul Thacker is a POGO Investigator.*

Posted at 12:16 PM in [Ethics](#), [Ghostwriting](#), [Public Health](#) | [Permalink](#)

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**Chris Myers**

I'm with POGO: My civil rights have been gravely taken advantage of. I had surgery less than 2 months after moving to a particular state in the US. When the swelling went down, I knew something wasn't right. This doctor, whom I barely knew, obviously and willfully placed an illegal implant(s) in my right large toe and grave things have happened with this. He did not inform me, he did not consult with me--nothing, not prior, during or after surgery nor has he even sent me a bill for this. I found the following on your site, and have been in touch with others who went to the Bioethics Committee and I too feel Ms. Gutman should step-down.

Posted on: [Mar 29, 2012 at 08:06 PM](#)

**[Suzanne LeBoeuf](#)**

We at Electro Well, Inc. ([www.CointelproToday.org](http://www.CointelproToday.org)) also ask that Ms. Gutmann step down.

We are an organization of human test experiments who have already approached Ms. Gutmann and the Bioethics Committee. We have had no success in obtaining any further investigative activities to help the cause of stopping all non-consenting human experimentation. We at Electro Well, Inc. also ask that Amy Gutmann be investigated herself beyond stepping down because she has not answered our requests to have our complaints investigated or addressed in some way by the Commission.

Posted on: [Jul 17, 2011 at 10:22 PM](#)

**[John M. Nardo MD](#)**

A+!

As you say, the people in high places that don't act to protect the integrity of academic institutions are as guilty as the offenders. What else are they for, if it's not that? And what good is a Bioethics Commission if its members are there for the prestige, and miss the point of the task at hand?

Posted on: [Jul 13, 2011 at 06:37 PM](#)

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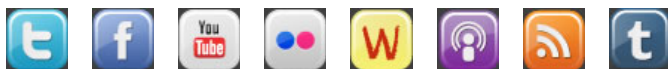
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