

Editorial

Setting up a new journal is always an uncertain process, and it has been pleasing to see a very good response to the launch of *Genomics, Society and Policy* in terms of numbers of manuscripts submitted and in ideas for special issues. We now take the view that it would be beneficial to have some reflection on the nature of the field itself. This issue includes a paper by Banner and Suk mapping the social science landscape, but we intend to take this further and initiate a series of guest editorials on the relationship between genomics and policy, and on the nature of the multidisciplinary field within which it is studied. The relations between Genomics, Society and Policy have been in the news in the last week with former US President Bill Clinton's speech to the UK Labour Party conference, on the implications of the Human Genome Project for policy. He made much of the small proportion of the genome that was different between human beings, and of the finding that there is less variation between population groups than within. Just what conclusions can be drawn from such findings, however, about identity, difference and equality, remains a controversial issue. It is hardly the case that certain political positions are proven by scientific developments, although some positions may be undermined when they appeal to supposed facts which have been shown to be false. Certain eugenic policies of the past, for example, rested on bad science as well as bad ethics and politics. This issue also contains a paper by Aultman on what can be learned from this for the 21st century, which remains critical for policy and regulation in this field.

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