AMBI Alumni Lisa M. Lee, PhD, MS is new Executive Director of the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues.

Below is the press release from the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues website. Please see http://bioethics.gov/cms/node/679 for the original article.

Lisa M. Lee, Ph.D., M.S., is the new Executive Director of the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues. Lee has been with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) since 1998, most recently serving as Chief Science Officer in the Office of Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Sciences. She starts at the Commission today, April 9, 2012.

Lee succeeds Valerie H. Bonham, who is returning to the National Institutes of Health’s Office of the General Counsel, where she worked as an attorney before accepting the post to the Bioethics Commission in July 2010.

“Lisa Lee’s background in ethics and policy issues and her deep experience at CDC will prove invaluable as the Commission navigates its next set of timely and sensitive questions,” Commission Chair Amy Gutmann, Ph.D., said. “As we welcome Lisa, we also salute Valerie Bonham for her tireless effort in helping the Commission produce its first reports on synthetic biology, unethical research in Guatemala, and human subjects research.”

Lee, who has a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins and an M.S. in bioethics from Alden March Bioethics Institute at Albany Medical College, is an epidemiologist, surveillance scientist, and public health ethicist. Lee’s work at CDC has included ethics of public health surveillance, scientific integrity, development and evaluation of surveillance systems, research on HIV and fertility, HIV/AIDS survival, HIV and tuberculosis, and data quality. She has led several agency and cross-agency committees working to establish and maintain an environment of scientific integrity and excellence.

Lee is the lead editor of Principles and Practice of Public Health Surveillance, 3d edition (Oxford University Press, 2010). She has authored numerous scientific publications and has served as a peer and guest reviewer for many scientific conferences and scientific journals. She serves on the Board of Advisors and is adjunct faculty at Georgia State University’s Institute of Public Health, where she teaches ethics.

“It is an honor to serve in this capacity,” Lee said. “I have watched the Commission from afar and have admired how its members identify and address issues that arise from advances in medicine, science and technology. These are issues that have the capacity to touch each of our lives in very personal ways and I look forward to working for the Commission to accomplish the important tasks ahead.”

Established by President Obama in November 2009, the Commission has thus far advised the White House on the benefits and risks of synthetic biology; assessed the rules that currently protect human subjects in research; and completed an independent investigation into the specifics of the U.S. Public
Health Service STD experiments in Guatemala in the 1940s. All of the Commission’s studies can be found at www.bioethics.gov.

The Commission is currently working on three additional projects. First, the Commission is reviewing the pressing privacy and access problems raised by the emergence of whole genome sequencing as a diagnostic tool in clinical care and research. Second, the Commission is considering the issue of neuroethics as it is related to notions of the person and the implications of advances in neuroimaging. Finally, the Commission recently received a request from HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius for ethical advice on the development of medical countermeasures for children.

“All three of these topics will benefit from the guidance that Lisa Lee will be able to provide in her new role as the Commission’s Executive Director,” Gutmann said. “I know I speak for all of the members of the Commission when I say we’re delighted to have Lisa begin.”