Dr. Joseph H. Guth, J.D., Ph.D., Research Scientist in the School of Public Health and member of the Berkeley Center for Green Chemistry (BCGC), has received an EU Center of Excellence 2011-2012 Faculty Summer Curriculum Development Grant to assist development of a course entitled “Public Ethics For Greening Chemistry: An Experiential Learning Approach.”

The new course will enable students from a variety of disciplines to understand and participate in the resolution of ethical issues faced by scientists, policy-makers, consumers, corporations, regulators, and advocacy groups who are confronting society’s use of toxic industrial chemicals. The grant will support the integration of Europe’s approach to chemicals policy into the new ethics course. These new EU policies embody some elements of a precautionary approach that are intended to address our ethical obligations (including those to future generations, to nature and to other polities outside a nation’s own borders) more effectively than cost-benefit analysis which is relied on extensively by US environmental policy-makers.

The new course will be offered for the first time during the fall 2012 semester. The project will be led by Principal Investigators Professor Alastair Iles (Environmental Science, Policy and Management), Professor Christine Rosen (Haas School of Business) and Dr. Megan Schwarzman, M.D., MPH (Research Scientist, School of Public Health), as well as Dr. Guth.

This new course will form an additional component of BCGC’s developing Designated Emphasis in Green Chemistry. This semester (Spring 2012), BCGC is offering three new 1-credit graduate seminars, including one that will serve as a laboratory for developing the new course: Ethics & Decision-making in Green Product Design: Business, Science and Policy Perspectives (ESPM290 or Haas296, CCN 30165). The first course in the Designated Emphasis, Green Chemistry: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Sustainability, was first offered in Spring 2011. The Designated Emphasis will ultimately consist of a suite of graduate level courses offered to students from a wide variety of disciplines on campus who will be able to take their graduate degrees (PhDs and Masters) with an additional credential in green chemistry.

Dr. Schwarzman received an EUCE grant to support development of BCGC’s first course in Green Chemistry. NSF is supporting BCGC’s development of the new ethics course through a $300,000 grant.