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# Teaching Ethics:

## A Key Role for Educators

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## ETS on Educator Ethics

June 25th was a landmark day for the teaching profession. It was the day the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) released the country's first-ever national Model Code of Ethics for Educators. If that doesn't sound like a big deal, consider that a poor response to an ethical dilemma can ruin careers, wreck reputations and harm vulnerable children.

Codes of ethics are common in professions that require specialized knowledge, training and formal credentialing and that impose heavy fiduciary obligations on their practitioners, a description that fits teaching. Doctors, lawyers, accountants and other professionals have long benefited from formal guidance on navigating the ethical thickets of their work.

To say that a model code of ethics for educators is overdue is an understatement: The American Medical Association, for example, adopted its first code of ethics when James Polk was president — which is to say 1847.

And yet educators, licensed by government and entrusted with the cognitive, academic and emotional well-being of impressionable often at-risk children, have mostly been left to apply their own personalized sense of how to handle dilemmas whose complexities are matched only by their perils, which can be grave and permanent.

The need for ethical guidance has grown more urgent given the power and ubiquity of social media. Even a well-meaning but misunderstood email can circumnavigate the globe — and a school district — in seconds, with no hope of retraction.

To be sure, various teacher organizations have developed ethics codes for their own use. While commendable, this has resulted in a state-by-state patchwork that ranges from aspirational standards of ethics to codes of *conduct*, which are used to sanction educators after the fact rather than guide them in the moment.

NASDTEC stepped into this vacuum. With support from ETS, the University of Phoenix's College of Education and the National Network of State Teachers of the Year, it formed a task force of educators from across the country.

Its Model Code of Ethics for Educators comprises common principles to help prospective educators and those already on the job make ethical decisions that promote student safety and welfare and foster public confidence in the teaching profession. It will also provide opportunities for educators to discuss difficult issues without fear of being misconstrued, whispered about or vilified.

One thing the Model Code is not is a mandate. It is, as its name says, a *model* that state licensing authorities can adopt or adapt as they see fit, and that educator preparation programs can use in their curricula.

NASDTEC deserves tremendous credit. It has been at the forefront of promoting high standards for educator conduct for almost 90 years. I'm proud that ETS contributed to the effort by convening an Ethics Teaching Symposium in 2012. Helping educators manage the ethical dilemmas they often face is an important part of our work. We developed the Georgia Ethics Assessments, and we recently launched the *ProEthica*™ Program, a series of research-based, interactive video simulations and activities. Aligned with the Model Code, it's designed to inform, challenge and hone ethical decision making.

Ethics go beyond a simple calculus of right versus wrong, and good intentions aren't enough to drive good decisions. Serious, even criminal issues often start with small daily challenges.

The Model Code of Ethics for Educators will help protect teachers, promote the public interest and support the teaching profession. The Code puts it well: It "honors the public trust and upholds the dignity of the profession." And it's long overdue.

Sincerely,

**Janet Cook**

Executive Director

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# Introduction

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To many educators, few teaching subjects are as important as ethics. Whether taught in separate courses or embedded into study of many subjects, ethics go to the goal of producing decent human beings and good citizens, not just those who have specific skill sets.

The news articles and essays that follow illustrate some of the ways that educators are talking about and debating ethics and the teaching of ethics.

*Inside Higher Ed* will continue to cover this important subject and welcomes your reactions to these pieces and your ideas for future coverage.

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# Why 'Vocation' Isn't a Dirty Word

By Colleen Flaherty

Author of book on "purposeful graduates" says colleges must talk to students about the importance of creating and living meaningful lives.

Some 15 years ago, the Lilly Endowment funded a massive experiment to see what happened when colleges asked students to think critically about how they might lead meaningful lives. Such purposeful exploration programs, as they were called, popped up on 88 campuses, at a few million dollars each.

More than a decade later, and long after the initial Lilly funds ran out, many of these programs still exist. Why? Because institutions and students raved about them, reporting various spiritual and professional gains: students finding work they felt mattered, creating strong partnerships with friends and family, and a maintaining a desire to do good. Vocation, many participating colleges and universities

determined, was much more than its common application: that is, not merely a job but a calling.

Self-admittedly predisposed to meditations on living a meaningful life, Tim Clydesdale -- a professor of sociology at the College of New Jersey and author of the 2007 book *The First Year Out: Understanding American Teens After High School* (University of Chicago Press) -- wanted to get a closer look at the Lilly data.

He had a hunch they might illuminate current national conversations about vocation -- and they did, judging by his newest book, *The Purposeful Graduate: Why Colleges Must Talk to Students About Vocation* (University of Chicago Press). Through careful examination of the Lilly grants and follow-up research, including personal interviews,

Clydesdale now makes the case for all colleges -- not just those religiously affiliated ones that were part of the Lilly experiment -- to talk to their students about living meaningful lives.

What follows is a written Q and A with Clydesdale about *The Purposeful Graduate*. It has been edited for length and clarity.

**Q: How do you define "vocation," and what is the current national conversation about the purpose of college missing?**

A: In *The Purposeful Graduate*, I define vocation as the broadest possible exploration of the ideas of purpose, meaning and calling, including these ideas' religious underpinnings. To some, exploring vocation means listening to the voice within. To others, it means hearing humanity's call to compassion and justice. And to still others, it means devoting one's resources and skills to the service of God and humankind. *The Purposeful Graduate* is not a theological treatise, however. It is an empirical evaluation of a grant initiative begun in 2000 by the Lilly Endowment that invited religiously affiliated campuses to engage their students with the idea of vocation, for which some 400 colleges and universities applied and 88 received grants.

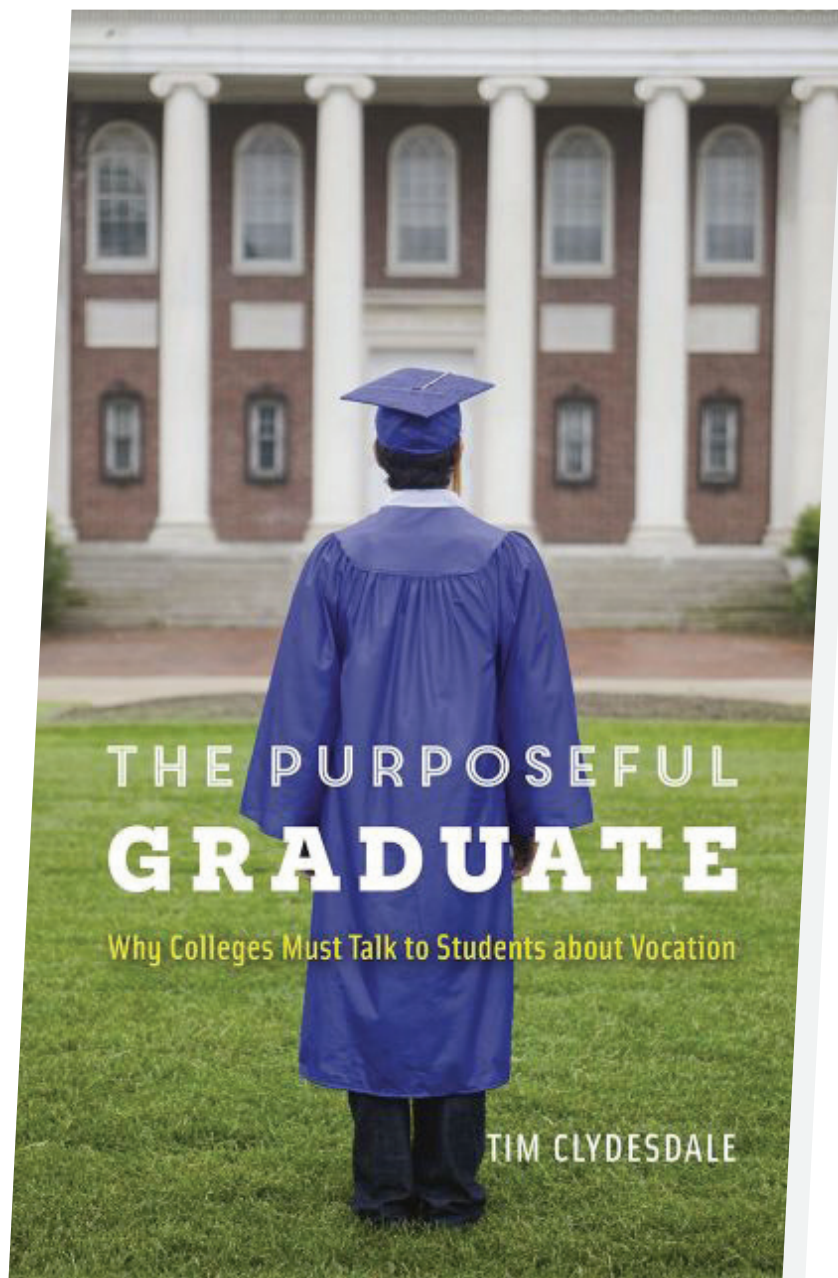
These creative programs had a positive and lasting effect on their participants -- be they

students, faculty or staff -- and benefited those of varied and no religious commitments. Thus, learning about these programs has transferrable value to educators on any campus who want more of their students to be deeply engaged in, and intentional about, their studies and postcollege lives.

What the national conversation about the value of college is missing is the very purpose of college itself: to educate and graduate thoughtful, purposeful and globally aware citizen leaders. We are not job training centers, and even our professional schools -- which have the closest relationship to the workforce -- seek to prepare leaders for tomorrow's professions, not applicants for this month's job openings.

But if the national conversation was to shift to our true purposes, we would not fare much better. The supply-side model of citizenship-leadership development that we practice (i.e., spend four years in our intellectually rich environment and somehow depart a citizen leader) is predicated upon student demand, and save for a few exceptions, that demand does not exist. Nurturing citizen leaders requires more than the content mastery that professors prioritize and more than the self-confidence that student professionals encourage.

It requires engaging students in a wide and thoughtful conversation



about what matters to them and why, helping them explore these things during their college years, and mentoring them as they translate these deep values and interests into a purposeful

life trajectory. We could have purposeful graduates streaming out of our campuses, but won't if we continue the status quo.

**Q: What made the Lilly grants for purpose exploration**

### **programs a right fit for further examining the idea of vocation?**

A: First, campuses designed programs themselves that fit with their institutional histories and organizational cultures; these were not top-down, external programs that campuses had to implement. Second, these were programs designed for exploration and conversation, creating safe places for students to share their deepest stories and find community; they were not at all dogmatic. Third, they encouraged participants to generate a constructive and proactive story about their lives and what they might be able to contribute to the world; they countered the critical deconstruction that can feel oppressive to students. Fourth, they provided a host of exploratory opportunities, from service trips to mentored internships to certificate programs in social justice; they did not offer theoretical or futuristic ideas only.

### **Q: Is there any continuum between *First Year Out* and *The Purposeful Graduate*? If so, what are some parallels or similarities?**

A: *First Year Out* was, with some notable exceptions, a sobering portrait of American teens. The primacy of daily life management helps most teens successfully navigate the first year after high school, but at the cost of neglecting deeper identities and the wider

world. I was dubious in *First Year Out* if much would change in the second, third or fourth years after high school.

What my research for *The Purposeful Graduate* revealed was an important opening for engagement of deeper issues that came in the second year after high school -- at least among traditional-age students attending the primarily residential colleges and universities of this grant initiative (though these students and institutions comprise a shrinking proportion of American higher education, their stories are nonetheless insightful and can aid conversations in other contexts).

Once settled into the college student role, and anchored by the relative stability of enrollment at a four-year college, many sophomore and junior students will ask bigger questions about themselves and the world. It isn't all sophomores or juniors, to be sure, and the majority remain focused on the pragmatic concerns of meeting degree requirements and enjoying their social lives.

But a sizable minority of sophomores and juniors will ask questions like "Am I in the right major?" "Am I at the right college?" or "Do I really want to go to graduate school?" which are but the tip of the iceberg questions, with "Who am I?" and "Who do I want to become?" floating below the surface.

So one of the things I did in this book was flesh out my two-category typology of students from *First Year Out* to a six-category and more helpful typology (Obsessive-Compulsive Achievers, Utilitarians, Minimalists, Future Intelligentsia, Reforming Activists and Rebels). Purpose exploration programs were very popular with the Future Intelligentsia and Reforming Activists, because they affirmed the passionate core of these two types.

But they were also appreciated by anxious Obsessive-Compulsive Achievers and Utilitarians for the space they provided to think through and possibly reconsider their high aspirations, and these programs became invaluable to quite a few Minimalists who, waking up in jail or hospital beds, realized they had to positively redirect their lives -- and fast.

### **Q: Describe your study methodology and some key findings.**

A: I supervised a research team that studied 26 college and university campuses, out of the 88 that received vocational exploration grants. We assembled dossiers for these campuses before our multiday visits, met with dozens of people on each campus and wrote extensive field notes, conducted formal interviews with 284 students and alumni and 274 faculty and staff, did one-year-postgraduation interviews with 60

student participants (and with 65 students from campuses without these programs, for comparison purposes), and did a follow-up web survey of participants on 9 campuses that netted 2,111 respondents.

The effects on student participants fell into four broad categories: retention (participants stayed at their schools and completed their degrees), life trajectory calibration (participants proactively explored ideas and reflected on experiences to forge plans for their college years and afterward), pro-exploration communities (participants formed groups that encouraged skill development, interest identification and service, and countered the partying and materialist norms of student cultures in general), and maturity (showing greater life satisfaction, resilience and intentionality after college than those who had not participated in these programs).

The effects on faculty and staff included revitalization of careers, more rewarding teaching experiences, greater appreciation for college or university mission, new scholarly research programs, more satisfying mentoring conversations with students and broader connections to the campus community, including more friendships across the faculty/staff divide.

And the effects on campuses

as a whole? More than 80 percent continued to fund these programs more than three years after grant funds expired. And this despite the brutal budgetary challenges faced by private colleges and universities in the U.S. beginning in 2008 (when the grants expired). Why? In short, the answer I heard was that these programs had become central to the identities and mission of these campuses, and powerful in their impact on students and employees alike.

**Q: Can you talk a little bit about Melody and Katie, and how their stories speak to your research as a whole?**

A: I begin with the story of Melody and Katie because these two students were so similar in upbringing, activities and interests when they entered university, yet so different by the time they graduated and launched their postcollege lives. And the chief difference was the opportunity Melody had (and took) to participate in her college's purpose exploration program -- an opportunity that Katie did not have and could not take because her college did not offer such a program.

Melody's course work opened her eyes to a world of gross inequality and the place of privilege from which she engaged it; her service experiences put her face to face with injustice, both locally and abroad; and her mentors helped her apply and successfully enroll at an

Ivy League university for a master's in international development.

Katie earned good grades, but her course work was not particularly memorable, her service involvement was limited to sorority fund-raisers and her career was in her father's insurance company after she set aside both her dream and training in journalism. Had Katie had the opportunity to participate in a purpose exploration program, and taken it, her life story -- as well as her satisfaction with it -- might have been quite different. She might have also been a flourishing, resilient and intentional global citizen like Melody.

I write this not to critique Katie, nor careers in insurance, but to express a wish that Katie had had the same opportunity to participate in purpose exploration programming as Melody. National surveys reveal that one out of two entering first-year students indicates "finding my purpose in life" is a "very important" reason why they are attending college (see Astin, Astin and Lindholm, 2011).

Every student, therefore, should be invited to reflect on and explore ideas of purpose and calling, to do so among supportive peers, with service opportunities to tangibly explore their emerging interests, and with faculty and staff mentors who share a desire to live meaningfully and compassionately. The unexamined life has not gained any value in the



two millennia since Socrates first cautioned us against living it; there are many ways to examine life, of course, but campus-based purpose exploration programs have shown themselves to be effective among many and diverse participants.

**Q. The Lilly grants all went to religiously affiliated colleges. How might secular institutions adopt similar programs?**

A: More than a dozen campuses that received these awards considered themselves resolutely nonsectarian; their affiliations with religion were historic only. Much of the programming effort on these campuses went into introducing the idea of purpose and vocation, including their religious or spiritual underpinnings, as valid, public topics of conversation on campus. Sadly, there is a common misconception that to be secular means banishing any and all mention of religious or spiritual topics from the public square. This is not only outdated philosophically, it is dangerous, as it smothers religious expression and can antagonize some devout individuals.

The only thing banishment of religious and spiritual speech on campuses has accomplished has been to make us less able to talk civilly with each other about honest differences. We will undoubtedly need ground rules for discussing potentially divisive issues, and there are various strategies for

how to do so (Eboo Patel's books and his Interfaith Youth Core are especially helpful in this regard). But the really interesting thing about a purpose exploration conversation is that it almost always assumes a narrative form, and narrative tends to elicit additional narratives, facilitating conversation and understanding.

So the first thing secular institutions can do is green-light this conversation. And when they do, they'll discover three things. First, there are a goodly number of faculty and staff who would be happy to participate in this conversation, and to share their own stories. Some of these faculty and staff will be devout adherents of traditional religions. Some will be spiritually open and seeking. Some will be humanists and a-religious.

Second, students are eager to talk about these things – and more than just those who actively follow a religion. Beneath the silence that students widely observe on matters of religion lies a fount of questions, observations, frustrations and more. In the sociology of religion class I teach at my state college, I begin with a few ground rules for civil discussion, ask students to relay their religious autobiographies after sharing my own and by the end of the class students are thrilled to be talking with their peers about religion and spirituality, and doing so with

honesty and respect.

Third, there will be some outspoken opponents of any public conversation along these lines. These opponents, or secular hawks, as I label them in the book, will insist there is no place for this conversation on a university campus or in a classroom. But a university that banishes public exploration of ideas, or silences conversations it does not like, does not merit the name university. Observing either a formal or informal silence about matters of purpose or vocation or faith is a disservice to students, leaving them unprepared to discuss religion civilly or to understand matters that are of vital importance to billions of the world's inhabitants.

Additional things that secular campuses can do is read together. Some of the virtually unaffiliated campuses read widely on topics of "work and meaning." Some read about "lives of character." Some created courses on these topics, and invited students in them to speak freely about these matters. Some put concerted effort into developing their internship offerings, especially in the area of nonprofit organizations and international justice organizations, and some linked these internships to credit-bearing seminars where faculty with expertise in philosophy or ethics assigned texts, fostered discussion and nudged thoughtful

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reflection.

All of the virtually unaffiliated campuses did much to recognize and affirm the role of their religious, residential and student life staff – as these educators contribute much to the citizen-leadership goals of the college or university. And all of these campuses did much to identify purposeful alumni and bring them back to campus to share their stories – whatever those stories involved.

**Q: What has the feedback on this research been so far?**

A: Audiences have been very

receptive. Many in higher education feel beleaguered and more than a few feel defeated. Those who have done some vocational exploration work tell me it has been most rewarding and important work they have ever done. Those who hear about it for the first time tell me they have long wanted to have such conversations with students but did not know how or where to start.

And those whose children are either in or recently graduated from college tell me there's no more important conversation for

colleges to have with young adults, and then they ask me for advice about how to help their twenty-something find a direction and become independent.

I try to tell them that the global economic and macrocultural change are chiefly responsible for the lengthening pathway to adulthood, and they seem to understand that – but they nonetheless wish that colleges did more to broadly prepare their students for such a transformed economy and world. And on that point, I could not agree more. •

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/06/24/author-new-book-purposeful-graduates-says-colleges-must-talk-students-about-making>

## 'The Stanford Prison Experiment'

*By Jacqueline Thomsen*

New film renews attention on a study that is still taught in college -- and that resonates to some in light of ethics debates in psychology.

**T**he Stanford University prison experiment was abruptly ended 44 years ago after treatment of pseudoprisoners by pseudoguards, both played by students, escalated too far for the

researchers to tolerate.

The study has since found a hallmark place in Psych 101 and AP Psychology courses as books and documentaries on the topic have been created. And in summer of 2015, a feature film on the experiment was released, cementing an already well-established place in popular culture.

*The Stanford Prison Experiment* has received positive reviews from critics, echoing reactions to the film's first screening at Sundance Film Festival last year. But the timing for a movie revolving around the ethics of psychology could not be more relevant, as reports on the involvement of top officials



Scene from the film

at the American Psychological Association being complicit in the torture of others by U.S. agencies emerge.

During the experiment in the summer of 1971, 24 young men were assigned the role of either a prisoner or a guard and quickly adapted to their roles, maintaining the appearance of a 24-hour prison in the basement of a hall on Stanford's campus. The guards, who worked in eight-hour shifts, took advantage of their power, and the prisoners rebelled within 36 hours of the start of the experiment, but each individual soon forgot that they were subjects in an experiment and not people in a prison.

The movie is no different. The first half of the movie is completely dedicated to describing the

setup of the study and the first 48 hours. Tensions run high, prisoners attempt to escape and the psychologists running the show find themselves more deeply intertwined in the process than they had anticipated.

Philip Zimbardo, the Stanford University psychology professor who oversaw the original experiment, said he has been trying to make the film a reality for 35 years. Today at 82, an emeritus professor of psychology at the university, he said he closely collaborated with the screenwriter and director of the movie to make the film as accurate as possible.

Zimbardo said that as he was writing his 2007 book on the experiment, *The Lucifer Effect*, he would send chapters to the screenwriter, Tim Talbott, to help

develop the script. He also said all dialogue between the prisoners and the guards was taken straight from the recordings of the experiment, which was filmed in its entirety.

Only one scene in the film didn't sit well with Zimbardo. At one point in the film, Zimbardo's character is approached by another Stanford professor, who asks what the independent variable in the experiment was. Zimbardo said the scene came across as if he didn't know what the experiment was about, and he asked for it to be removed, but it was too late in production to do so.

"Of all of the things in the movie, this is probably the most negative because it looks like I didn't know the answer," Zimbardo said.

The experiment itself has come

under fire over the years. Peter Gray, a research professor at Boston College, decided not to include the Stanford prison experiment in his psychology textbook because he didn't believe the study, which was never published in a peer-reviewed journal, was a legitimate experiment and that it was essentially fabricated by Zimbardo.

Gray, whose book is now in its sixth edition, called the study "an embarrassment to the field of psychology."

"He got a bunch of college kids to pretend they're prisoners and another group to pretend they're guards, told them what they're supposed to do and then they did it," he said.

Gray has not seen the movie, but said so many people have asked him about it that he may watch it in the future.

And a paper co-authored by Sam McFarland, now an emeritus professor of psychology at Western Kentucky University, found that there could have been bias in the selection of those who participated in the experiment because the word "prison" was included in the advertisement for subjects. The film opens with the writing and printing of the advertisement.

McFarland said that individuals could have been encouraged or deterred from joining a "psychological study of prison life" by the word "prison." His paper found that individuals

who responded positively to the original wording were more likely to be aggressive and narcissistic and less empathetic than those who would have signed up for only a psychological study with no mention of prison life in the wording.

Zimbardo stood by his experiment, saying that it's still "the most powerful demonstration in psychology," even if other psychologists didn't believe it was a true experiment.

As for the ethics of the experiment, Zimbardo said he believed the experiment was ethical before it began but unethical in hindsight because he and the others involved had no idea the experiment would escalate to the point of abuse that it did.

The movie ends with Zimbardo's character and some of the prisoners and guards describing how they felt throughout the experiment and some of its findings. There is also a disclaimer, saying that none of the subjects suffered any long-term or negative effects from their involvement in the study.

And as the ethics of the experiment are once again discussed with the release of the film, so is the current state of ethics in psychology. Three top officials of the American Psychological Association stepped down in June 2015 after a 542-page report described how members of the organization who worked

with the Department of Defense were complicit in the torture of individuals by federal agencies.

Zimbardo, a former president of the APA who was traveling to the association's annual conference at the time of this interview, said he hoped the film would help contribute to a conversation about ethics by psychologists.

"It raises those basic questions -- these people who are Ph.D.s in psychology, who understand human nature, whose job it is to develop a set of ethical guidelines to help psychologists deal with these very difficult issues. It's hard to perceive the whole process," Zimbardo said.

McFarland, whose study criticized Zimbardo's methods, said it was important to understand the experiment, and has included the study in his psychology courses, following it with readings on massacres in Vietnam and findings of torture and severe mistreatment in Abu Ghraib prison.

"It's a matter of balancing points and balancing perceptions, and the perception that human beings have a great capability for good and also a great capability for evil -- I think there's certainly enough real-world experience to show that," he said.

Melissa Smith, a fourth-year doctoral student at George Mason University studying human factors and applied cognition, had an opportunity to meet Zimbardo and the film's director, Kyle Patrick

Alvarez, before she saw the movie a few weeks later.

She described the film as “gripping” and “brutal.”

She said she had first learned about the experiment in middle school but had the opportunity to see some of the actual footage of

the study later.

She said that juxtaposing the actual footage with the movie’s depiction might teach students about the study and the evolution of views about it.

“No one really knew the extent of the experiment because it was

just another experiment,” Smith said. “I think being able to show them that and be like, ‘hey, this is real, what do you guys think?’ ... I think you can show that this is a true example of people being put in a prison that still impacts daily perception of life.” •

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/08/11/film-stanford-prison-experiment-resurrects-questions-ethics-psychology>

## Do as I Say, Not as I Do

By *Kate Maternowski*

College professorship in ethics may not translate into ethical conduct.

**S**o much for trusting your local ethicist.

According to a paper written by two philosophy professors, Eric Schwitzgebel of the University of California at Riverside and Joshua Rust of Stetson University, a college professorship in ethics does not necessary translate into

moral behavior. At least, that’s what the people who work with ethicists say.

“One might suppose,” writes Schwitzgebel in the paper, which has been accepted for publication by the journal *Mind*, “that ethicists would behave with particular moral scruple. After all, they devote their

careers to studying and teaching about morality. Presumably, many of them care deeply about it. And if they care deeply about it, it is not unreasonable to expect them to act on it.”

Maybe not. Equipped with free Ghirardelli chocolate to entice potential survey-takers, Schwitzgebel set out to test that assumption at a 2007 meeting of the American Philosophical Association by distributing questionnaires asking how well philosophers presumed their peers in ethics behave. Not any better than the next guy, they said.

Most of the 277 survey respondents reported no positive correlation between a professional focus on ethics and actual moral behavior. Respondents who were ethicists themselves shied away from saying that ethicists behave worse than those outside the discipline – generally reporting that

ethicists behave either the same or better – but non-ethicists were mostly split between reporting that ethicists behave the same as or worse than others.

Even those ethicists who did rank their peers' behavior as better than average said their moral behavior is just barely better than average – hardly a ringing endorsement.

Of course, Schwitzgebel said, the usual caveats apply here: smallish sample size, possible in-group bias, the chance that respondents are more likely to remember their vicious ethicist colleagues than the well-behaved ones. But if the majority is right – that studying ethics does not translate to more ethical behavior – Schwitzgebel said he'd be a little disheartened.

"If actually thinking about ethics philosophically does not help you behave any better, if that is the right conclusion to draw, I do find that disappointing," Schwitzgebel said. "I would have to hope that philosophical moral reflection is morally improving ... that it pushes you toward the good."

If being pushed toward the good means not stealing, ethicists might not be feeling the push. In another of Schwitzgebel's papers forthcoming in a peer-reviewed



Eric Schwitzgebel and Joshua Rust

journal, he looks at whether ethics books are more likely to be missing from libraries than non-ethics books.

Focusing on the especially obscure ethics texts that only specialized professors or graduate students would go looking for, Schwitzgebel found the ethics books to be slightly more likely to be unaccounted for. It's hardly proof of theft, Schwitzgebel admits, but it is an attempt at gathering convergent evidence of a certain – possibly morally unethical – behavior trend among those who study ethical behavior.

What does it all mean for ethics department come evaluation time? It's no reason to cast it from the curriculum, Schwitzgebel says.

There is, at the very least, an intrinsic interest in studying ethics, he continued – much like, say, metaphysics, where there is not

much of practical import. Ethicists contribute to public discourse, and they might inspire others to behave more morally, even if they don't themselves. Plus many who teach ethics resist – perhaps out of modesty – saying their aim is to change the moral character of a student, Schwitzgebel said.

But with humanities apologists regularly having to defend their significance against the tightening of college purse strings, an ethics class that does not promote ethics could eat away at that philosophy course's justification.

"People do sometimes justify ethics courses on the assumption that taking ethics courses will improve students' behavior down the road," Schwitzgebel said, noting legal and business ethics as examples, although they are separate from ethics courses in the philosophy department. "I

think there is a potential this line of research could undercut the justification for those classes.”

But, as Schwitzgebel was quick to point out, his study does not imply that.

The jump from ethics professors’ immoral behavior to students’

benefiting (or not) from ethics courses is a long one to make, he said.

What Schwitzgebel – who has been teaching a college ethics course for seven years – hopes might come out of his work is a better understanding of the

nuances in studying and teaching ethics.

“There are certain ways of teaching ethics and thinking about ethics philosophically that can lead to moral improvement,” Schwitzgebel said. He wants to find them. •

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/06/16/do-i-say-not-i-do>

## Views

A selection of essays and op-eds about recruiting international students

# Professional Responsibility

*By C.K. Gunsalus*

Teaching ethics should be part of the job of all faculty members in all disciplines, writes C.K. Gunsalus.

**P**eople who hire and supervise others in the real world are desperate to hire people – our graduates – who have the “whole package”: substantive knowledge plus “soft” skills (basic responsibility, working well with others, ethics,

etc.) that contribute to success in the world of work. You might argue that teaching those skills isn’t our problem because we’re providing educational foundations for professional knowledge. Or that we can hardly be held responsible for failings of families and society, which ought to be the ones instilling work ethic and manners and common sense.

Still, didn’t we open this can of worms ourselves when we started arguing that colleges and universities are engines of economic development and that government should keep (or go back to) investing in education because it creates a knowledgeable workforce? When employers complain about what



they perceive as a lazy and entitled attitude among young workers, and we see an apparently never-ending stream of ethics scandals, maybe there's another way to think about this that is directly congruent with our mission and, furthermore, falls directly within our expertise: embedding ethics and concepts of professional responsibility throughout our curriculums and courses.

If you think about it, doing so is a positive and preventive approach to what many perceive as an epidemic of cheating. There is research suggesting that an educational approach can be an effective strategy, and if enough faculty members purposefully and thoughtfully incorporate ethical connections into classes, it will help those among our students who mean well and want to follow the rules. If we can help those students to find a voice and provide positive examples, we gain, too.

Over the years, I've heard countless arguments about why faculty cannot or do not include ethics in their courses, or add courses about professional responsibility to their disciplines. The curriculum is too full already, and besides, you cannot teach people not to lie and cheat if they didn't learn that in their families. The objections I hear go further, though, and betray a serious discomfort, fear even, about teaching "ethics": I don't want to

have to talk about deontology (I don't like Kant or haven't read it and don't want to); it's too hard or too subjective; I'm not qualified; someone else can handle it (bosses, the research compliance people, someone across the street, whatever).

Ethics is boring and dry. I don't know enough and don't have time to go learn another field while I'm working on getting promoted/getting the next grant/serving on too many committees. What if someone asks a question and I don't know the answer? What if I look stupid? I might come off as judgmental or not judgmental enough. A required event is going to get really bad student evaluations.

### We Can All Teach This Stuff, and We Should

As higher education experiences disruptive transformation through the changing economics of what we do, price pressures and technological upending, homing in on what we uniquely do is likely to be part of our path to the future. What is more central to that than helping students explore questions about and learn to use responsibly the knowledge we are conveying? The responsibilities of professionals — researchers, scientists, scholars, teachers — are deeply personal ones, and too important to leave to others outside our disciplines to teach. Outsourcing shortchanges our students and ourselves.

If you think matters of professional responsibility in your discipline matter, if you care about accountability and transparency and fairness and rigor, you can and should teach ethics in your field, whether that's a course or workshop that meets the requirements for responsible conduct of research education or topics that you integrate into your substantive classes — or both.

There are good reasons to teach in courses that are not about ethics, and it needn't be daunting or hard. There are some straightforward ways to do it and as a practicing professional in your field (they pay you to do what you do at work, right?), you can and you should. Here's how.

**1. Think and talk about your mistakes.** Who hasn't made a mistake at work? A big one? An embarrassing one? One you still cringe thinking about? What did you learn from those mistakes? If you've thought about it over the years, can you talk about it, obviously not naming names if that would violate confidences or confidentiality requirements?

How did you learn about, for example: How to deal with a student or colleague who disappoints you or violates your trust? What to and, even more importantly, what not to do when you make a serious professional mistake?

Have you ever looked back on something that seemed perfectly

reasonable at the time, and with the value of hindsight, thought "How could I have been such an idiot?" Or, been sitting with someone who's making a huge mistake and thought "no, no, no!"

If you can find a way to talk about those moments and the lessons you took away from them, your students will learn. Talking calmly and clearly about mistakes you have made will shape them as professionals and as people — and not so coincidentally, the world you are going to live in when they take over. (Another plus: modeling how you deal with hard stuff, and showing that life and careers rarely go in a clean, clear forward path without setbacks will be memorable and they will like you all the more for it.)

**2. Articulate one of the lessons that govern your professional life.** Where and when did you learn about the value of boundaries and when to refer students to other resources rather than trying to help them yourself? That it's easier to start out relatively strictly in a course and relax the rules as you go than vice versa? That's a lesson that extrapolates to a lot of other contexts.

How did you learn to set the ground rules for talking to reporters about your work or setting boundaries when acting as a consultant or expert witness? When have you made a hard choice about a professional topic that you

found challenging? If the lesson is connected to a mistake, it will be even more gripping to your class.

If you ask the students make a connection to the topic you're teaching that day, you will likely be surprised and pleased with what emerges. And even if your examples are all from your life in academe, the examples will likely have relevant lessons for students looking at other careers.

**3. Talk with students about ethical dilemmas or hard moments they've faced (or will face).** For years, I've asked students to write a short (200 word) description of an ethical dilemma they have faced. (This is an assignment idea from Harris Sondak of the University of Utah, a friend of a friend who was kind enough to talk with me about his teaching techniques and syllabus when I first started teaching ethics in a business school.) Not only does this essay get students thinking about these issues in their own lives, properly managed it creates a wonderful set of discussion topics.

Even if you don't ask students to do exactly that, or if you adapt and ask them to write about ethical applications of your topic or questions they have, it will tell you a lot about where the students are.

In the dilemmas I've gotten over the years, the same issues come up over and over again: bosses who put pressure on

workers to cut corners to meet deadlines. Perverse incentives in reward systems. Peer pressure. Temptation and rationalization in the face of a desire to succeed. You know, all those human frailties that come up when you work with other people.

And not one of those is hard to connect to the kinds of problems our students will face in what they do after college or grad school. Believe me, they are all cued into power imbalances, fairness, and how to navigate difficult situations. Connect it to how you use what you're teaching, even if you only do that once in a while, even if it's only talking about your policy for awarding grades, and you'll be contributing to their development in a broader way.

Students who've never held a job have faced dilemmas in school, like a friend who asked for help with an assignment when it was against the rules to collaborate. That situation is relevant to most every class and a great place to use it is it when you're discussing the syllabus, especially if that's all you do on your first day (contrary to advice offered here).

If you're nervous about flying blind, take a look at the range of ethics resources, including "two-minute challenge" (2MC) collection on Ethics CORE. What's a 2MC? It's a problem that you cannot necessarily resolve in two minutes, but comes up and you

"As higher education experiences disruptive transformation through the changing economics of what we do, price pressures and technological upending, homing in on what we uniquely do is likely to be part of our path to the future. What is more central to that than helping students explore questions about and learn to use responsibly the knowledge we are conveying?"

may need to respond to it in two minutes – or less. It's the kind of problem that comes up all the time in professional life and you need to be prepared to handle. Use the same simple framework for structuring discussion of your own or other ethical dilemmas.

Don't come prepared with the "answer," and do come prepared to point out that you already know what you would do in hard situations (mostly), and that you won't be going to work with them, so it's THEIR answers that matter the most. If you are going to opine or editorialize, do it only after they've all had their say. Prepare a few questions to keep the discussion going, using the framework as your basis for that.

If you do that, based on real problems people (in the room sometimes!) have faced, you'll be doing some of the most important things that emerging research on efficacy in ethics education suggest: using short examples that carry emotional punch because they happened to real people.

Modeling a way to talk about them. Helping to analyze them by practicing. Over and over. (If any of them are musicians or athletes, ask them to talk about the value of practicing scales or free throws for a useful analogy.)

You'll be helping your students to anticipate consequences of various actions. Apply labels to what the problems are (deception, temptation, rationalization, slippery slope problems...).

Or pick articles out of the newspaper or journals in your field about someone who's crossed the line.

If you cannot find something, go to Ethics CORE and look at the recent news feed. There won't be a shortage of examples. Look for the videos. Try out some of the role plays there. Read my most recent book and use some of those examples.

There are lessons that your students will learn from you directly about professional responsibility that you can teach better than anyone else: How you deal with

temptation. What to do in the face of a bureaucracy truly stupid rules. What's the difference between exceeding a 55 mph speed limit and a regulation that 55 parts per million is the allowable limit for contamination in a sample (thanks to Bob Wengert of the University of Illinois philosophy department for that example). How you decide what's right and what's wrong. How you act on it. What you're willing to sacrifice for your principles. (Are they really principles if you're not willing to sacrifice for them?)

You are a practicing professional. Who better than you to teach your students about professional ethics in your field?

•  
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# Defining Moral Education

*By Elizabeth Kiss and J. Peter Euben*

Elizabeth Kiss and J. Peter Euben consider why and how colleges engage in a crucial form of instruction.

**W**hat might a moral education worthy of the name actually look like? While we cannot answer all of the questions, nor confront the full dimensions of the moral education debate, we can outline some key features of moral education in our own time and place. What follows reflects our own conversations and disagreements and reveals both the common ground we have come to occupy and the divergent commitments we continue to bring to the moral education debate.

The question is not whether colleges and universities should pursue moral education, but how. Moral (or perhaps immoral) education goes on constantly, if not always self-consciously. Aristotle captured this insight when he argued that every

association has a moral end, a hierarchy of values, which is cultivated through its everyday norms and practices. Colleges and universities, too, have such moral ends and purposes, expressed not only through institutional mission statements and curriculums but also, and often more powerfully, through the hidden curriculum of everyday campus life. The more these commitments remain unarticulated the less they can be subject to scrutiny and the more ignorant we remain of the ends that animate our actions and lives.

One task for moral education in the modern college or university, then, is to articulate and scrutinize the moral ends of our shared enterprise. Truth seeking, a willingness to think deeply about alternative positions

and arguments, to be swayed by evidence and argument, to acknowledge our intellectual debts to others, and to judge others on the quality of their work and not their family background, skin color, or political affiliation: these are a few of the moral commitments central to academic life that we need to articulate and explore. Other moral ends and commitments may be specific to particular institutions. But the task of critical self-reflection and appreciation remains the same, as does the importance that students experience higher education as an enterprise committed to high ideals, thoughtfully pursued.

This suggests a deeper point about moral judgment. It is commonplace today for students (and faculty) to exclaim “Who am I to judge?” But of course that, too, is a moral judgment. We make normative judgments all the time, so the question again is not whether to make them but on what basis or grounds we do so. If we cannot offer such grounds, then we may be making judgments, or acting, in ways that contradict our most basic moral commitments and ends. A second task for moral education, then, is to challenge moral evasions, whether in the classroom or the streets, and to teach the practical wisdom that enables us to discern and explore the grounds of the judgments we

are making.

It is important to recognize that argument and debate play a key role in pursuing both tasks we have outlined so far. Critics of moral education contend that ethics cannot be central to the university's mission because this would require a substantive moral consensus that is contrary to critical inquiry and academic freedom. Yet these same critics acknowledge that universities pursue intellectual excellence not by deciding in advance which of the competing views of such excellence is right but by continuous argument over what's true, right, and persuasive, including argument over what the standards should be for good intellectual work. Similarly, argument about and over ethics, and about the ethical ideals and norms we should teach and promote, is not inimical to, but actually helps constitute, the pursuit of moral education.

Indeed, arguing over what's right, fair, and just is one of the central ways in which human beings "do ethics." This reaches across cultures and religions, from traditions of ethical argument expressed in Talmud, in the Islamic ulama, or in the common law, as well as in fundamental moral confrontations such as those between Socrates and Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic*. We enact new forms of this tradition when we invite students to engage

debates and controversies, asking them, for instance, to argue for or against human rights, stem cell research, or the International Criminal Court, or to assess different interpretations of Antigone, or weigh alternative approaches to educational policy.

But rigor and argument are not enough. Ethics cannot be reduced to analytical argument but needs to be attentive to the broader variety and complexity of moral life. Argument alone does not capture the moral insights of great literature, nor does it yield the lessons present in a work like Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. Arendt argues that Eichmann was thoughtless; that he was unable to put himself in another person's shoes. What Eichmann lacked was moral imagination, which in Arendt's terms requires the ability and willingness to go visiting another. You do not move in with them, or stand in their place, but next to them. The prominence of the Golden Rule in so many moral and religious traditions points to the centrality of moral reciprocity and the qualities of curiosity, compassion, and imagination it requires. The cultivation of a capacious moral imagination is a third task for moral education.

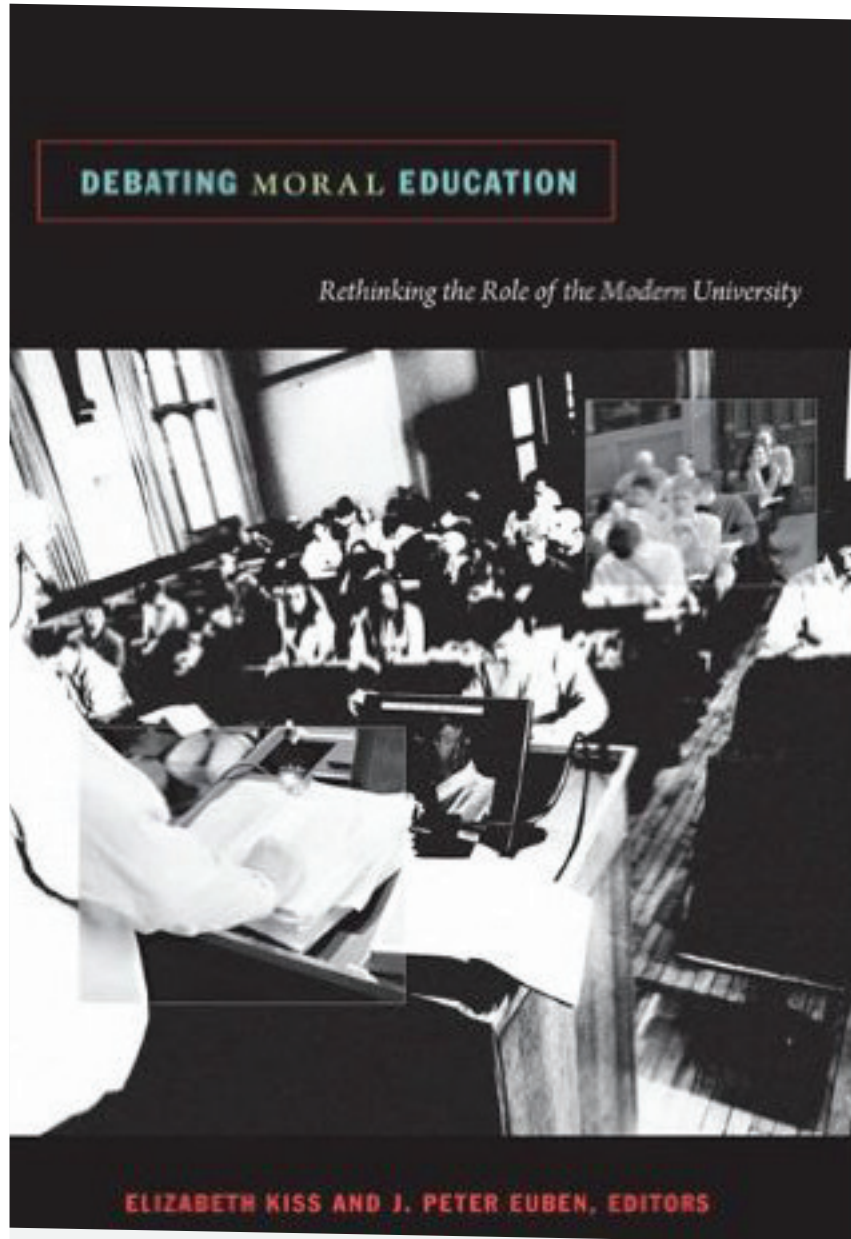
But ethics is more than a set of questions to debate or even of imaginative perspectives to adopt. To take ethics seriously requires us not only to engage in ethical

critique and debate but to come to moral judgments, to take a stand. If cultivation of the capacity for ethical commitment is a fourth task of moral education, then we need to focus on the interplay of principles and actions, both for our students and ourselves. But what constitutes a moral commitment? The great moral teachers have generally insisted on certain truths of moral life. Socrates, for instance, professed that it is better to suffer injustice than to commit it, that virtue is knowledge, and that what you do to others you do to yourself. But justice, knowledge, and truth did not function as "shut up words" because he was also willing to acknowledge that the truths for which he was willing to die might be shown to be faulty in the next dialogic encounter; that he might have missed something in the world or the argument that would force him to modify what he had come to believe with such conviction. Socrates is a valuable exemplar because he showed what it means to combine a capacity to be self-critical with a willingness to affirm moral commitments and stand up for them. It is by navigating that tension ourselves that we can do our best as teachers of ethics.

What are the implications of these four tasks for how we should teach ethics in colleges and universities today? We applaud the pedagogical pluralism that characterizes the return to ethics

and see a valuable role for a variety of curricular and co-curricular approaches, from the interpretation of canonical texts and popular culture to case studies to service-learning to student-run honor codes. An appreciation for the role of ethical reflection, deliberation, imagination, and practice is both a key contemporary insight and a welcome revival of cultures and traditions of ethical argument such as those expressed in the Talmud.

A plurality of approaches does not, however, imply that any pedagogical technique is as good as any other in achieving each of the aims of moral education. Different pedagogies have particular strengths and characteristic weaknesses. Take, for example, the conventional “Introduction to Moral Philosophy” course. It has the great advantage of providing students with systematic frameworks for assessing moral judgments. But its focus on critique can leave students with a dizzying and potentially demoralizing sense that there are no defensible moral positions, or that ethics has to do with canonical debates but not with their own lives. Conversely, the case study method, or a conventional service-learning course, will expose students to a variety of powerful practical moral issues and dilemmas, from questions of personal motivation and virtue to issues of organizational ethics, politics,



and policy. All too often, however, such courses can leave students floundering in aimless exchanges of personal opinion without providing them with ways to organize and assess their judgments. What's needed are integrated approaches

that combine theory and practice, imagination and justification.

We also believe that moral education — whether in a philosophy classroom, a judicial affairs hearing room, or a sociology service-learning class — should

## TEACHING ETHICS: A KEY ROLE FOR EDUCATORS

be dialogical, by which we mean that there should be a degree of reciprocity between students and teachers, a sense of shared vulnerability in the pursuit of an ethical life. This does not mean that every view is entitled to an equal hearing: students have to make arguments, offer evidence, show they are listening to others and reading the texts with care. But without such reciprocity the enterprise of moral education lacks vigor and seriousness. The centrality of dialogue to moral education in democracies acknowledges the degree to which ethical life is necessarily collective and enhances moral imagination by enabling student and teacher alike to see the world from one another's point of view.

This emphasis on taking a dialogical, rather than didactic, approach to moral education does not mean that universities, or individual faculty, cannot profess moral commitments.

The vexed issue of whether teachers of ethics should reveal their own moral commitments to students or adopt a neutral stance to moral questions seems to us wrongly posed. For one thing, genuine moral neutrality is both devilishly difficult to achieve and counterproductive for moral education: what, after all, are students likely to learn about

moral stances from someone who claims that, for the purposes of the classroom, he or she has none?

At the same time, a general expectation that one will confess one's moral commitments is hardly more attractive (for one thing, it is likely to leave out those deepest convictions that cannot be easily articulated, since most of us remain to some degree mysteries to ourselves). The issue seems to us to be primarily pedagogic: what creates a classroom atmosphere in which students are encouraged to think deeply, to pose tough questions, and to vigorously disagree with the teacher and with their fellow students? We suspect that respect and humility, humor and friendship, curiosity and collaboration play key roles in creating such a classroom.

This brings us, finally, to the question of what makes someone a good teacher of ethics. Here, we are inclined to believe that there is an important relationship between who we are, what we teach, and how we teach it. In other words, both the character of the teacher and the performative dimensions of his or her teaching are central rather than marginal aspects of moral education. We all have colleagues who teach in a way that undermines the arguments they make, as when a teacher of democratic education teaches in

a thoroughly authoritarian way. But unlike Tolstoy's quip about happy families all being alike, we suspect there is no single model of excellence among teachers of ethics but rather a cluster of traits that good teachers of ethics exhibit to varying degrees. We are unsure, however, if these traits can be taught as a pedagogic practice, or if they are fundamentally idiosyncratic. But these questions, however difficult, must remain central to any debate about moral education.

In the end, the value of today's return to ethics will rest on whether it serves to reveal important questions and possibilities that have otherwise been ignored or have gone unrecognized. On this score, it appears to have had some success, for it has made us more aware of how moral teaching and learning occur and has revived the perennial question of what the aims of moral education, and indeed of all education, should be. •

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2010/02/01/defining-moral-education>



# Why Ethics Codes Fail

*By Laura Stark*

The American Psychological Association scandal is a useful reminder that codes of conduct come from individuals with their own biases, and scholarly associations need to accept and deal with that reality, writes Laura Stark.

**I**n July 2015, an independent investigation of the American Psychological Association found that several of its leaders aided the U.S. Department of Defense's controversial enhanced interrogation program by loosing constraints on military psychologists. It was another bombshell in the ongoing saga of the U.S. war on terror in which psychologists have long served as foot soldiers. Now, it appears, psychologists were among its instigators, too.

Leaders of the APA used the profession's ethics policy to promote unethical activity, rather than to curb it. How? Between 2000 and 2008, APA leaders changed their ethics policy to match the unethical activities that some psychologists wanted to carry out -- and thus make potential torture

appear ethical. "The evidence supports the conclusion that APA officials colluded with DoD officials to, at the least, adopt and maintain APA ethics policies that were not more restrictive than the guidelines that key DoD officials wanted," the investigation found, "and that were as closely aligned as possible with DoD policies, guidelines, practices or preferences, as articulated to APA by these DoD officials." Among the main culprits was the APA's own ethics director.

Commentators claim that the organization is unique, and in some ways it is. The APA's leaders had the uncommonly poor judgment and moral weakness to intentionally alter its ethics policy to aid their personal enlistment into the war on terror. Then they had the exceptional bad luck to get caught.

Yet the focus on a few moral monsters misses a massive, systemic quirk in how the APA -- and many other organizations -- creates its code of ethics. The elite professionals who are empowered to write and change an ethics policy have tremendous influence over its content. But ethics policies are anonymous because they have force only to the extent that they appear to represent the position of an entire organization, not a few powerful people. The process is designed to erase the mark of those heavy hands who write the rules for everyone.

The APA's current scandal may be new, but its problems on this front are decades old. The APA passed its first comprehensive code of ethics in 1973 after seven years of work by six top U.S. psychologists who had been appointed by the APA's leadership. I have examined the records of this committee's work housed at the Library of Congress and recently published my findings in *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*. The men were given an impossible task: to write a code that represented the ethical views of all psychologists and at the same time erase their own biases and interests. The effort was prompted by worries that if the organization neglected to regulate itself, the government would do it for them. "President Nixon is moving rapidly in this area," one



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psychologist at the time put it. “Behavioral scientists must stay ahead of him or we will be in big trouble.” Among the troubles they were facing within the profession was how psychologists could continue to be employed and funded by the U.S. military and not appear to break the profession’s ethics policy – precisely the contradiction that resulted in APA’s current imbroglio.

In an effort to appear democratic and transparent, the members of the 1973 ethics committee collected survey responses from thousands of psychologists and interviewed key stakeholders in the profession. Psychologists reported back with descriptions of activities that ranged from callous to criminal – research with LSD, government-backed counterinsurgency efforts, neglect of informed consent. Still, the six psychologists had to boil down an ocean of responses into an ethics code that purported to

fit with all psychologists’ needs and perspectives – which included their own.

At the height of the Cold War, scores of psychologists painted a picture of a profession rife with secrecy and dodgy funding sources. They specifically told of military research that appeared to require an abdication of ethics. “These are seen as highly necessary studies,” one psychologist reported regarding research he did for the Defense Department. “Unless the research is highly realistic, it will not provoke psychological stress and hence will be useless.” In one study, the human subject was led to believe he was in an underwater chamber. “The subject sits in this chamber and performs specific tasks at an equipment console. If water rises inside the chamber one of the controls is supposed to exhaust it. At first the control operates. Later, however, it fails and the water

gradually rises higher and higher around the subject’s body.” But the human subject was not really underwater and the psychologist was in control. “It is the practice to stop the experience at various points for different subjects, depending upon the amount of excitement they appear to show at different water levels.”

Studies like this were hotly disputed among psychologists at the time. Some felt that being deceived or hurt, especially by an authority figure like a psychologist, fundamentally damaged people. Humans are fragile, the line went, and can be psychologically scarred by psychologists themselves.

Yet the six members of the 1973 ethics committee were skeptical. The committee’s leader, Stuart Cook, found the position implausible based on his own experience as a researcher and in his early training as a student. “When I was a subject I

expected to be deceived; I knew that performance under stress was an issue," he reflected. After talking with colleagues about the trade-offs of tighter ethics for psychologists, Stuart delivered the punch line: "We should cut down our obligation to fully inform."

Another member of the ethics committee, William McGuire, regarded the "fragile self" view as ludicrous in general and its main (female) proponents ridiculous in particular. McGuire had made a celebrated career studying persuasion -- largely funded by the U.S. government in light of its Cold War concerns about political indoctrination. McGuire is a good example of how the ethical views of the policy writers did not stray far from their own personal stakes in ethics policies. "My feeling is that the field must face up to the fact that there are a lot of moral costs in psychological research and that this can be done only by going through two steps," McGuire told a colleague. "The first step is to admit, well, all right, there is something morally bothersome about many aspects of the research including leaning ever so slightly on people to get them to participate, or especially misleading them about the nature of the research even in minor ways, using their behavior or behavioral traces without their explicit consent, etc. But going through this first step frankly and admitting there are unpleasant aspects of

the research does not mean that we cannot do it. On the contrary," he continued, "it is necessary to go through the second step and decide whether the reasons for doing the research outweigh these reasons for not doing it." This view fit tidily with support of military research using stress, deception, drugs and other contested methods.

In 1971, the panel published a draft of the ethics policy they had created to gauge APA members' responses. When a few of the ethics committee members considered taking seriously the complaints from that large faction of psychologists who raised concerns about the laxity of the draft ethics code, McGuire threatened to quit. "It seems to me that there has been a change in mood in the committee in a somewhat conservative direction, which surprised me a little bit and made me worry lest I might have fallen out of tune with the other committee members," he explained. "I do want to mention that the committee members had moved in a direction and distance that I had not quite anticipated so that perhaps I would be perceived as holding back progress or being an obstructionist."

Instead, William McGuire, Stuart Cook and the four other psychologists stuck together and ushered in an ethics policy that corresponded to their own research needs and interests. The final version of the 1973

ethics code, for example, eased restrictions on psychologists' use of deception that had appeared in earlier drafts. The final policy allowed researchers to lie -- for the sake of science -- despite the loudly announced disagreement from many psychologists that deception, stress and other forms of harm, however temporary, could do long-term damage to people and deserved to be controlled through the APA's code of ethics.

In 1973, as in events leading to the APA's current crisis, the organization's ethics policy bore the marks of the handful of psychologists who were empowered to write the rules. Like anyone, they had their own political and scientific interests in the content of the ethics policy. But unlike others, and to a varying degree, they managed their own interests by changing the policy to suit their interests.

In recent weeks, critics have rightly and roundly condemned the current APA leaders who are at fault in the recent scandal. But it is misguided to think that the APA's problem of professional ethics can be solved by throwing out a few exceptionally bad apples.

In August 2015, thousands of psychologists are meeting for the APA's annual convention. They will have plenty to discuss. It is clear that some leaders behaved condemnably -- perhaps criminally -- and three have already been forced out. Yet continuing to

castigate individuals alone misses the larger problem.

The APA's current ethics mess is a problem inherent to its method of setting professional ethics policy and a problem that faces professional organizations more broadly. Professions' codes of ethics are made to seem anonymous, dropped into the world by some higher moral authority. But ethics codes have authors. In the long term, the APA's problems

will not be solved by repeating the same process that empowers a select elite to write ethics policy, then removes their connection to it.

All ethics codes have authors who work to erase the appearance of their influence. Personal interests are inevitable, if not unmanageable, and it may be best for the APA -- and other professional groups -- to keep the link between an ethics policy and

its authors. Take a new lesson from the Hippocratic oath by observing its name. The APA should make its ethics policies like most other papers that scientists write: give the code of ethics a byline. •

*Laura Stark is assistant professor in the Center for Medicine, Health and Society at Vanderbilt University. She is the author of Behind Closed Doors: IRBs and the Making of Ethical Research (University of Chicago Press).*

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/07/21/essay-why-scholarly-ethics-codes-may-be-likely-fail>

## Data Are Always the Smoking Gun

*By Felicia B. LeClere*

The LaCour scandal is the latest example of the inadequacy of research training and the peer-review process, writes Felicia LeClere.

**F**ive years ago, I took a long walk in Ireland with my husband, and when we got back, there were reports of several research scandals in which academic reputations

were ruined by what appeared to be data falsification or at least substantial sloppiness. I wrote about it -- claiming, as I often do, that enforced data sharing would at least ensure that researchers

tidied up their documentation.

A few weeks ago, I took another long walk in Ireland with my husband, and this time the news was filled with Ireland's public referendum legalizing same-sex marriage and another research scandal, this one involving research about the possibility that face-to-face voter canvassing by persons identified as gay can change opinions about the rights of the LGBT community. I guess I need to be more careful about my travel plans, at least when they involve Ireland.

This time I am less sanguine about the idea that simply enforcing data sharing can improve the research process enough that sloppiness and outright fraud will be well policed. The most recent story involves a

young Ph.D. student, Michael J. LaCour, who made up facts about the research process – such as who funded it, how incentives were paid out, whether the embedded experiments were registered with a centralized registry and perhaps even which survey firm conducted the study.

The scandal began, as they often do, when someone wanted to replicate the research, and the researcher did not share all of the data. The student, in fact, despite the very sound advice of his senior co-author, had not deposited all the data with my former employer the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) so that the full data file could both be found and shared. Once thwarted and confused, of course, the research team that wanted to replicate his research started pulling at the loose thread and unraveled a whole skein of lies and exaggerations.

I bet Michael LaCour now profoundly wishes he had paid closer and more careful heed to the advice of his mentor – because ICPSR, in fact, could have coaxed him into the truth simply by the act of scrutiny and documentation; instead he chose a self-archiving method that allowed him to upload what he wished.

The story of LaCour should bolster my cherished premise that full data sharing will reduce the amount of malfeasance, right? Is it possible to still be naïve in your early



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50s? I am afraid so. After another five years of being head down and hip deep in data collection and file preparation, I am willing to admit that either encouraging or forcing data sharing among researchers just is not enough. These scandals result from deeper problems with our training and review of the research process.

The scandals almost always erupt when someone starts to question the data used to answer a substantive question – and then the answer to the substantive question is viewed with suspicion. The inability to replicate, or even get close, opens the door to all types of scrutiny. Mishandling data or data collection is like Al Capone not paying his taxes – it provides an entrée for our academic Eliot Ness to bring home the investigation.

My claims about the inadequacy of research training and the peer-review process will likely raise howls of protest – what about all of the graduate-level methods courses, the institutional review board (IRB) and the peer-review process required for grants and publications? Yes, all of these checks and balances, in principle, ensure ethical, high-quality research. But they do not, in fact, in any of the disciplines I am familiar with. Graduate-level methods classes in the social sciences – and I have taught more than a few – carry a heavy burden requiring both an omnibus survey of data collection methods, research ethics and often a smattering of statistical methods. The section on research ethics usually only focuses on how to deal with human

subjects, not on how to handle the data we collect from them. Even a two-course sequence will never get you much beyond what I always think of as the research equivalent of “happily ever after” data collection. No one tells you how to stay married to your Prince Charming nor how to adequately and ethically prepare data files for sharing.

What of the IRB and peer review – don’t they represent the bulwark against sloppiness and malfeasance? Not really – as both do not have the explicit purpose of policing the research process generally. The purpose of the IRB is, in fact, the protection of human subjects – that is, ensuring that all data collection is ethical. This may or may not ensure that the data collection is well documented, accurate and scrupulously transparent, as the protection of human subjects requires looking carefully at informed consent, for instance, but not necessarily data documentation.

Unfortunately, peer review is even more narrowly focused, except when a reviewer pulls hard at a methodological thread. Journal articles and grant applications never allow for the careful description of the methods and procedures because of substantial

space constraints. In the past, co-authors and fellow review panel members have rightly scolded me for my overweening and tedious attention to the details of the research process. Peer review focuses primarily on substance and research quality because it must – we are meant to trust that our colleagues are well trained, careful, transparent and accurate, without a lot of detail about how they execute these traits. I am not entirely sure that trust is warranted – thus, peer review also fails to ensure that the research process is as it should be.

On our walk in Ireland, my husband and I climbed Croagh Patrick, the mountain on top of which St. Patrick spent 40 days fasting in 441 AD. It is a religious pilgrimage for many Irish Catholics – for us, it was the challenge of going straight uphill on loose slate for two hours. Croagh Patrick is famous for its miserable weather, and our walk was no exception – 50-mile-an-hour winds, driving rain and dense fog. As my husband is fond of saying, St. Patrick’s religious visions on the top of the mountain can likely be attributed to hypothermia and the fact that he could not find his way down.

As I crawled my way up the mountain of loose, wet stone, in

addition to cursing my husband, who is descended from a long line of spirited Irish men and women, I thought about the value of careful and thorough preparation. My husband, ever the Eagle Scout, always ensures that we are thoroughly prepared and carefully equipped for every eventuality – thus, I only got soaked to the skin in the last 20 minutes instead of the first two hours, and we made it both up and down the mountain despite being the far side of 50 years old.

It strikes me that the research process is indeed like climbing Croagh Patrick – preparation and careful attention to detail are an absolute must. The research community must find better ways to nurture and encourage these skills rather than spend time picking over the bones of those who have fallen off the trail. •

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/06/25/essay-how-lacour-scandal-exposes-weaknesses-research-training-and-peer-review>

## Fight Global Poverty

*By Nannerl O. Keohane*

Current and former college presidents have a duty, writes Nannerl O. Keohane.

The fate of the middle class in the United States is a topic frequently discussed by our political leaders, including President Obama. Given the growing wealth inequality, there is good reason for this emphasis. However, this should not distract us from also paying attention to the fate of people who are living in extreme poverty. Most of these individuals live in far-off countries. Others are our fellow citizens.

A number of corporate leaders, including Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, have highlighted this global phenomenon of dire poverty and its deleterious effects. They have urged their colleagues to join them in giving generously to help relieve it. Although few college and university presidents can give on the scale of corporate magnates,

we can do our part. An organization called The Presidents' Pledge Against Global Poverty works to bring us together to accomplish this goal.

The Presidents' Pledge was launched in 2011, and now has more than 30 members from colleges and universities around the country. Both active and emeriti leaders are part of this initiative. Ann Svennungsen, former president of Texas Lutheran University and now bishop of the Lutheran St. Paul Area Synod in Minnesota, was the founder of the organization.

Her colleague in this initiative was Peter Singer, professor of ethics at Princeton University. Through his lectures, courses and books, Singer has inspired many people to give more generously to

relieve global poverty.

Our motivation for joining the pledge is to do our part to help relieve a grievous situation. More than 1.2 billion people are living under the World Bank global poverty line of \$1.25 a day. These individuals are likely to be hungry for at least part of each year and even if they have food, they will probably be malnourished. They must scrape together some kind of shelter and have little or no money left to send their children to school, find transportation to jobs or access even minimal health services.

Pondering the lives of these individuals and families moves many of us to want to help. However, a number of diverting thoughts often intervene. Sometimes we just want to close our eyes and forget such misery, concentrating on the ups and downs of the lives we and those around us live. We may think that the problem is so huge that it must be insoluble, and in any case, my own small gift won't make a dent in it. Or we believe that any money we may give will be wasted because of corrupt government intermediaries or the difficulty of reaching those who are truly in need.

One of the goals of the Presidents' Pledge is to provide informed responses to each of these concerns, so that more of us follow our initial instinct of compassion.

## TEACHING ETHICS: A KEY ROLE FOR EDUCATORS

We hope to make relieving global poverty a moral priority for each of us, regardless of what else we may do with our money and what other philanthropic causes we may support.

For those who believe the problem is intractable, we point to the data reported succinctly by *The Life You Can Save*, an organization with a name taken from one of Peter Singer's best-known books. If you look on the website of this organization, you will learn that the percentage of people around the world living under \$1.25 a day fell by half between 1990 and 2010.

Seven hundred million fewer people lived in extreme poverty at the end of these two decades, and the number of deaths of children under 5 years of age fell from 12.6 million in 1990 to 6.6 million in 2012.

These gains depended in part on gifts from people like us, gifts that strengthen relief organizations and supplement the aid provided by governments. For those who believe that it is impossible to channel aid where it is most needed, this same website lists organizations with a well-documented record of improving the lives of the poorest people around the world. Participants in

the Presidents' Pledge would add other names to this list, which would include Oxfam and Partners in Health, among many others. The argument that giving will not make a difference simply cannot stand up to the evidence.

The mission of the Presidents' Pledge Against Global Poverty is "to make the greatest possible impact toward ending global poverty through the public leadership and financial commitment of university and college presidents." We are convinced that our personal commitment will make a difference, along with the research, teaching and service provided by faculty, staff members and students on our campuses.

Many of us feel a special sense of obligation to the areas closest to our campuses -- whether Durham, East Palo Alto, West Philadelphia, Hartford, Buffalo or other neighborhoods.

For this reason, we decided that up to half of the gift each of us makes can be designated for causes in the U.S.; the other half is to be contributed to international projects. Each donor can choose the causes he or she regards as most worthy of support, and the specific dollar amount of our giving remains private.

We had originally emphasized the importance of the public impact of our leadership, the example that joining the pledge would provide for our colleagues, both on and off campus. We still believe that this impact can be significant. However, to accommodate those who prefer not to be publicly identified, commitment to the pledge can be anonymous if a donor wishes.

Our initial goal was to ask each member to pledge 5 percent or more of their personal income for gifts to organizations of their choice that address global poverty. This is still our ideal, but we also welcome those who do not feel comfortable making this percentage pledge. We ask those who join us to commit to making the relief of global poverty a priority in their own portfolio of charitable giving.

College and university presidents should, we are convinced, be in the forefront of those who are tackling this crucial problem. •

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VIEW THE ORIGINAL ARTICLE

<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/05/11/essay-urges-college-presidents-personally-become-involved-fight-against-poverty>



## Honor and Values

*By James Ostrow*

Whenever there is a cheating scandal, pundits and educators debate students' flaws, but James Ostrow writes that many of these incidents also point to flawed educational models.

**S**tudents have lost their honor! The revelation that 64 Dartmouth College students were charged with cheating in the fall of 2014 was followed by the predictable comments on a larger social malaise. We learned that some students allegedly ditched classes, providing their handheld electronic “clickers” to other students who attended and then answered questions on their behalf. There were also students who reportedly passed clickers to their classroom neighbors to answer questions for them.

To make matters worse, this happened in an ethics class. The students have been decried for their self-centeredness and lack of scruples; some wonder how they could be allowed to remain at Dartmouth. What better evidence

of the decline of honor in a society where, in the instructor’s words, “it’s not surprising that students would want to trade the nebulous notion of honor with what they perceive as some sort of advantage in professional advancement.”

The instructor may be right, but the decline in honor in this instance cannot be separated from another problem: How we define student learning, and how learning is relevant to the advancement of democracy.

Were those cheating Dartmouth students wanting in honor? Yes, and they should be held accountable for their poor judgment. But their lack of honesty lies at the surface of a larger issue: How do they find value in the subject matter presented to them?

If the subject matter of ethics or

any field of study is presented as a body of fixed truths that students get or don’t get (clicking correctly or incorrectly), then how does it have meaning in their experience? The answer, of course, is obvious – subject matter matters as students’ ability to prove that they know what those in authority know, avoiding the painful consequences of failing to do so. When subject matter is ready-made information to just “learn,” then the fields they study have been depleted of their creative oxygen.

The issue of “honor” is then reduced to whether or not students honestly reproduce what has been transmitted to them. The American philosopher John Dewey saw that there is no a better prescription for developing a misguided sense of the world as closed, with the meanings of things already settled, as opposed to in flux, open to interpretation, change.

What should society desire from higher education in the long term? The value of higher education is under intense scrutiny today. Should colleges be rated against set criteria, will this or that type of degree yield employment; how does the so-called value proposition drive the public’s view of higher education? The question I am posing here concerns how higher education can contribute to democratic citizenship.

We need higher education to

"Do we want our students to have honor? Let's help them to see and experience their own potential to make a real difference through their learning, and not just by getting a grade or earning a degree."

excite students with the prospect of their participation in the advancement of knowledge and solutions to social problems. This is how education can serve the development of an imagination, as well as of the capacity for and motivation toward making sense of and improving the world with others.

Do we want our students to have honor? Let's help them to see and experience their own potential to make a real difference through their learning, and not just by getting a grade or earning a degree.

Learning can mean cramming in information as "subject matter" and being done with it. It can also mean embracing the power of academic fields to open mysteries, to anchor present and future living in intellectual and creative pursuit and discovery. In order for education to reach its transformative potential, what the educational theorist



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Maxine Greene called the "lure of incompleteness" should frame our conception of subject matter and the activities it incites.

Education can be an opening for the building of sensitivity to an environment in flux, where

meanings are not settled, fixed, and where anticipation of and solutions to problems are possible.

*James Ostrow is vice president for academic affairs at Lasell College.*

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/01/19/essay-meaning-broader-concerns-raised-cheating-scandals>

# How to Teach Business Ethics

*By Terry L. Price*

Current models are doomed to fail, but approaches that are willing to challenge corporate values and students' moral blinders might work, writes Terry L. Price.

**T**he dreaded question: “So, what are you teaching this semester?” When I reply that I teach a business ethics course, more often than not my questioner laughs and asks whether that isn’t an oxymoron. And then laughs some more.

So it is hardly surprising that the recent cheating scandal at Duke University’s business school has fueled cynicism about the teaching of business ethics. Business schools across the country responded to corporate wrongdoing over the last decade by emphasizing ethics within their curriculums. In the daytime M.B.A. at Duke, students are required to take “Leadership, Ethics and Organizations” as part of an initial three-week summer term. Yet close to 10 percent of first-year students

in Duke’s M.B.A. program were suspected of cheating on a take-home examination. The collective laughter would have been greater only if the accused students were in one of Duke’s ethics courses.

Still we should be careful not to infer too much from the Duke cheating scandal. A successful ethics component within a business program does not guarantee that its participants will never behave immorally. Not even churches or prisons boast that kind of effectiveness. So why should we expect it of an ethics class? What we expect is that when students complete the ethics component, they will approach moral problems with greater thoughtfulness and intellectual sophistication, as well as be more likely to resolve these problems in the right way. The goal

is improvement, not perfection.

The behavior of the Duke M.B.A. students nevertheless gives us reason to pause. How much thoughtfulness and intellectual sophistication are necessary to know that cheating is wrong? Surely these young professionals did not need an ethics class to garner this important piece of moral knowledge. But if the students were aware of the wrongness of cheating all along, what kind of knowledge were they missing? What, exactly, could they have been taught in business ethics?

There is something more for business students to learn in ethics classes, and throughout their business programs. Ethics is not just about the what of morality; it is also about the whom of morality.

In ethics, the general requirements -- the what of morality -- are often quite straightforward. Indeed we would be hard pressed to find anyone in our society, let alone a university-level student, who was unaware of the general prohibition on cheating. However, the application of these requirements to individuals -- the whom of morality -- can be significantly murkier. I dare say it would not be difficult at all to find students who genuinely believe that their circumstances justify them in violating the prohibition on cheating.

## TEACHING ETHICS: A KEY ROLE FOR EDUCATORS

Doing the right thing in the Duke case therefore required two things. First, the M.B.A. students needed to know that cheating is generally morally wrong. Second, they needed to know that it was wrong for them to cheat in their particular circumstances.

Why do people sometimes believe that moral requirements do not apply to them in the situations they face? The most compelling answer appeals to consequences. People predict that breaking the rules will have high payoffs. And where are the opposing costs? After all, rule-breaking really doesn't seem to hurt anyone else, especially in environments in which others similarly break the rules. Of course the rules of morality generally ought to be followed. But only as long as the costs aren't too high.

The consequentialist logic of business education may encourage this kind of thinking. There is no mistaking the fact that profit maximization is the chief value within many business curriculums. As a result, brief surveys of business law, discussions of company codes of conduct, or even

introductions to ethical theory -- the what of morality -- are very likely to buckle under the comparative weight given to considerations of profit, goal achievement, cost-benefit analysis, and shareholder satisfaction.

Does this mean that business ethics really is an oxymoron? Not if business schools are willing to take the whom of morality seriously and educate students throughout the curriculum about the application of ethical requirements to all business actors. Among other things, this kind of education would draw on traditional academic disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, and politics to help students understand their place in the world and the role of business in society.

Ultimately, business ethics requires that we rethink the business curriculum. Business is not a closed system with its own set of values, motivations, and rules. The curriculum should reflect this fact. First, students must be able to think deeply and critically about conflicts between wealth and other values. Second, students should know more about ordinary human psychology, especially the

tendency to overestimate our own importance and the importance our goals. Third, students need a greater awareness of the interdependence of business and the rest of civil society. Unfortunately, students cannot get this kind of education from a curriculum that focuses only on the business "fundamentals."

So it is not enough for business students to hear yet again that certain behaviors are generally prohibited by morality. They must also come to see that these prohibitions apply to them even when morality conflicts with self-interest, the bottom line, and the interests of investors.

When business schools start taking ethics seriously, maybe people will stop laughing. •

*Terry L. Price is visiting associate professor of philosophy and a fellow at the Parr Center for Ethics at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is associate professor at the University of Richmond's Jepson School of Leadership Studies and author of Understanding Ethical Failures of Leadership (Cambridge University Press).*

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