

Co-Developer of the SMSU Center for Ethics

During the 2005-2006 school year, while I was Assistant Professor of Philosophy at SMSU in Marshall, MN I worked with the Spanish, History, English, Philosophy, and Humanities professors in the Department of English, Philosophy, Spanish and Humanities to help them develop a Center for Ethics (CfE).



At the time, Steve Kramer was Chair of the Department (now retired) and Beth Weatherby was Dean of Arts & Sciences. She ultimately became Provost of SMSU, then eventually was named Chancellor of the University of Montana Western: <http://www.umwestern.edu/news/56-news/campus-life/2270-weatherby-named-chancellor-at-montana-western.html> <https://www.umwestern.edu/academic-news/4428-kramer-addresses-waterton-glacier-international-peace-park.html>

The Professors in the Department of English, Philosophy, Spanish and Humanities at SMSU all worked very hard to develop the CfE. It was a great, collaborative experience. There were a lot of meetings, a lot of late nights, and a lot of snacks consumed! However, I had the golden opportunity to work at Florida State University with Michael Ruse in the History and Philosophy of Science Program during the 2006-2007 school year, and I never went back to SMSU. The CfE was up and running for about three years, and then fizzled out. The website is now defunct (obviously), but below you'll find a screenshot of the homepage from the WayBack Machine Internet Archive.

The work to develop the SMSU CfE included:

- Establishing a CfE website, having a home page with categories found in the figure on the this page.
- Creating, then vetting, a Mission Statement for the CfE, which in its earliest form looked like this:

The Center for Ethics exists to promote the interdisciplinary study, teaching, and application of ethics throughout the Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) community. It accomplishes this by: providing resources in ethics education; developing courses and course materials; organizing gatherings, meetings, workshops, lectures, and conferences; preparing publications and presentations; collecting real-world and hypothetical use cases and ethical dilemmas associated with various professions; and interacting with alumni and friends of SMSU, as well as people, businesses, and other organizations that surround the University.

- Sending out a CfE Questionnaire to the Heads of Divisions, Chairs of the respective Departments and Programs, and all faculty members at SMSU, the purpose of which was to get a sense of the extent to which ethical matters were being discussed/treated in SMSU classrooms, and as a “teeing up” for further discussions about Ethics Across the Curriculum (a principle focus of the CfE, to be discussed below). The CfE Questionnaire had these elements:
 - An introduction to the CfE and its Mission and personal introduction
 - A comment about how one of the leading trends in higher education is to have an ethical component or module incorporated into the professional or occupational course one teaches to supplement the typical, freestanding ethics courses that are usually taught in a philosophy department (general ethics, business ethics, bioethics, etc.), and how this is a fundamental element of an Ethics Across the Curriculum (EAC) program at a school
 - The Questions themselves were these:
 - Q: Do you provide an ethics-related topic, issue, case, or dilemma in any of the courses you teach? If so, please briefly describe it.
 - Q: Does it work? Do students seem to enjoy it? Find it interesting? Do they “get” it?
 - Q: Would you like some information about ethics-related case studies, videos, and/or other resources associated with your particular discipline?
 - Q: If you currently do not provide an ethics-related topic, issue, case, or dilemma in any of the courses you teach, but think it would be appropriate to do so, would you like to chat with others or me about how best to incorporate something ethics-related in your course(s)?
 - Q: Would you be interested in having others or me come into your class and give an ethics-related presentation directly related to your course material?
 - Q: Would you be interested in attending an Ethics Across the Curriculum workshop put on by the CfE where we can

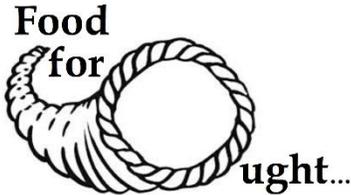
discuss ethical principles and ethical decision making as well as go through some cases related to your discipline?

- Q: Would you be interested in developing an ethics course related to your discipline, but need resources and materials, as well as ideas for topics? The CfE can help you with that.
 - Q: Would you be interested in co-developing/co-teaching an ethics course related to your discipline?
 - Q: Do you have an idea for developing an ethics-related course associated with your discipline, or an ethics-related project associated with your discipline, and would like to know where you might get grant monies for the development of the course or project?
- Meeting with the President and President’s Leadership Team to talk about the CfE, the idea of an Ethics Across the Curriculum Program, ideas they may have for the CfE, for funding of the CfE, for networking, etc.

All of the above was accomplished by October 1 of that year, 2005.



- Assessing the budget for the 2005-2006 school year and established the budget for the 2006-2007 school year. We put together a CfE Master Budget Spreadsheet that included columns titled Revenues, Expenses, Resource Quantities, Assets, Liabilities, and Cash Flows. Expenses that year included:
- Monies for CfE Annual Lecture: honorarium, flight, hotel, food, for plenary speaker; refreshments, napkins, plates, etc.
 - Monies for CfE Colloquium: refreshments, coffee, snacks, sugar, sweetener, etc.; copying expenses
 - Monies for CfE Workshop: refreshments, coffee, snacks, sugar, sweetener, etc.; copying expenses
 - Monies for Movies, Morals, and Munchies: munchies like pizza and snacks, napkins, etc.; copying expenses
 - Monies for day to day running and maintenance of CfE: office supplies; copying expenses

- Establishing something I called **Movies, Morals, and Munchies**, where once a month the Department sponsored a get together to watch an ethics-related movie (or TV show, or a documentary). A small lecture was always provided surrounding the particular ethical topic before we watched the movie. Then, after the movie, we had a set of questions for folks to break into small groups and discuss. We provided munchies, too. As you can imagine, when you put these three together—Movies, Morals, and Munchies—they’re a winning combination, for anyone. I’ve been involved in something like this with various Philosophy Clubs, too.
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- Establishing something I called Food for Ought... Once a week, students and faculty got together and discussed some ethics-related topic over lunch in the school cafeteria or off campus at the local coffee house/café. When I was in grad school, we used to do something like this with faculty, but it was called Quodlibetalunches (a *quodlibet* is defined as a “topic for, or exercise in, philosophical or theological discussion”).
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- Establishing the Conundrum Colloquium where five times a year, for a one-to-two-hour session during the months of October, November, February, March, and April, there was a colloquium where an SMSU faculty member presented an ethics-related paper or project.

The activities in the previous points above were accomplished by November 1 of that year, 2005.

- Establishing the spring CfE Annual Lecture Series. I have known a lot of world-famous ethicists for many years, so I was able to secure tentative commitments from folks for future lectures.
- Creating an Ethics Bowl Team at SMSU. The Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl was started by members of Association for Practical and Professional Ethics in the early 2000s. It “gives students a chance to enter an academic competition that combines excitement and fun with an educationally valuable experience in the areas of practical and professional ethics” (<http://appe-ethics.org/ethics-bowl/>). Dr. Richard Greene is the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl Board Chair, and I’ve known him since the early 2000s.
- I made good on my commitment to upload 5 case studies for each of the following areas to the CfE website: Environmental Ethics, Bioethics, Business Ethics, Engineering Ethics, Science and Research Ethics, Computer and Cyberethics, Typical College Experiences. There were 40 uploaded, actually.

The activities in the previous three points above were accomplished by December 1 of that year, 2005.

We hit the ground running, day one, in the attempt to locate funds for the CfE and CfE-affiliated faculty. I have written numerous research grants, some of which have been successful—one for \$250,000.00, another for \$25,000.00.

- I put all of the below on the CfE website, with the correct links, as well as announcements for awards. And, I sent out regular University-wide announcements and targeted announcements to relevant faculty related to upcoming funding opportunities and deadlines associated with them.
 - Grant Databases
 - Research Professional
 - The Grant Advisor Plus
 - Grants.gov
 - General Sources
 - The Center for Ethics & Education Research Grants
 - The Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
 - Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation
 - Henry Luce Foundation – Higher Education Grants
 - The Spencer Foundation

- Ford Foundation – Educational initiatives
 - Lumina Foundation
 - The Teagle Foundation
 - John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- Funding for Humanities and Social Science Education
 - National Endowment for the Humanities – Division of Education Programs
 - National Endowment for the Humanities – Office of Digital Humanities – List of grant opportunities
 - Social Science Research Council
 - American Council of Learned Societies
 - Sociological Initiatives Foundation
 - Society for Professional Journalists (SPJ)
 - National Institute of Justice
 - Funding for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) Education
 - National Institutes for Health (NIH) – R25 Education Projects
 - National Science Foundation (NSF) – Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR)
 - Alfred P. Sloan Foundation – Science Education
 - Pfizer Grant Program
 - Monsanto Grant Program
- I placed numerous links to professional codes of ethics as well as organizations’ codes of ethics, such as:
 - Association for Practical and Professional Ethics
 - APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct
 - The American Sociological Association Code of Ethics
 - The American Philosophical Association Code of Ethics
 - The NEA Code of Ethics | WHO
 - Association of Clinical Research Professionals
 - Biomedical Engineering Society
 - NIH | Steneck’s “Introduction to Responsible Conduct of Research”
 - National Academy of Engineering
 - National Society for Professional Engineers
 - US Department of Labor
 - OSHA’s Clinicians Web Page
 - International Labour Organization, Ethics Office
 - Codes of Ethics of the Biggest Companies on the Planet at the Time:
 - Amazon’s Code of Conduct or Ethics
 - Dell’s Code of Conduct or Ethics
 - Intel’s Code of Conduct or Ethics
 - Microsoft’s Code of Conduct or Ethics
- I maintained the repository of ethics-related materials composed of videos, case studies, exercises, and other resources. The videos themselves were mostly VHS tapes, if you can believe it! The videos were in the realms of General Ethics, as well as Environmental Ethics, Bioethics, Business Ethics, Engineering Ethics, Science and Research Ethics, Computer and Cyber Ethics, and Typical College Experiences.
- I also placed links to other Centers and Institutes on the CfE site, such as:
 - Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions, Illinois Institute of Technology
 - W. Michael Hoffman Center for Business Ethics, Bentley University
 - Ethics Institute, Dartmouth
 - Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs
 - Cary M. Maguire Center for Ethics and Public Responsibility, Southern Methodist University
 - Center for Ethics and Business, Loyola Marymount
 - Center for Ethics and Public Service, University of Miami Law School
 - Centre On Values and Ethics, Carleton University
 - Association for Practical and Professional Ethics
 - The Hastings Center
 - Many others...

The activities in the previous four points above were accomplished by April 1 of that year, 2006.

- And I served on the SMSU IRB regularly reviewing proposals for questionnaires that psychology and anthropology professors wanted to administer to students.

Aristotle Was Right: Money Does Help...

Also, the Department of English, Philosophy, Spanish and Humanities raised over \$10,000.00 for the CfE, which is actually quite an accomplishment given the size of the University at the time (some 13,000 students) and the fact that Marshall, MN is a three-mile-by-three-mile square with a population of around 13,000 people (at the time) located some 3 hours west of the Twin Cities and almost 2 hours north of Sioux Falls, SD.

Understanding the Reasons Why People Give Money

In order to raise money, one needs to understand the various motivations people have for donating. I agree with this. Here are some of the top reasons why donors give, according to the website *Network for Good*:

- Someone I know asked me to give, and I wanted to help them
- I felt emotionally moved by someone's story
- I want to feel I'm not powerless in the face of need and can help (this is especially true during disasters)
- I want to feel I'm changing someone's life
- I feel a sense of closeness to a community or group
- I want to memorialize someone (who is struggling or died of a disease, for example)
- I was raised to give to charity—it's tradition in my family
- I want to be "hip," and supporting this charity (i.e., wearing a yellow wrist band) is in style
- It makes me feel connected to other people and builds my social network
- I want to have a good image for myself/my company
- I want to leave a legacy that perpetuates me, my ideals or my cause
- I feel fortunate and want to give something back to others
- I give for religious reasons—my faith teaches me to help others
- I want to be seen as a leader/role model

From "The Secret to Getting People to Give: 14 Reasons Why People Donate" by Network for Good (October 6, 2015):
<https://www.networkforgood.com/nonprofitblog/how-to-get-non-profit-donations/>

So, when we raised money for the SMSU CfE (and when I have raised money for any other organization in my life), we always looked for opportunities to tap into those motivations. For example, the lady who lives next door to me recently set up a fund in her father's name to assist students with tuition at Rockhurst University in Kansas City. She'll be giving \$1,500.00 a year to this fund. She told me straight out that she wants to "memorialize my dad, who went to Rockhurst."

Building Relationships

I agree with this from Joe Garecht on *The Fundraising Authority* website:

The most important thing you can do, as someone who is fundraising, is to build deeper relationships between your prospect and the organization you are fundraising on behalf of. Sure, bringing in a \$100 check is nice, but building a strong relationship that results in 100 volunteer hours, \$1,000 in donations, and several new contacts, all over three or four years, would be much more valuable... Because relationships matter, don't rush your fundraising asks...A better strategy is to, as often as possible, make your first a non-monetary ask. Build relationships with your prospects – ask them to come to a free event, read your case for support, sign-up for your newsletter, volunteer at your office. Get them involved (or at least have one introductory conversation about your charity that is not based on seeking a donation), then ask them to give. Build relationships that last, whenever possible.

From "How to Ask for Anything" by Joe Garecht on *The Fundraising Authority* website: <http://www.thefundraisingauthority.com/fundraising-basics/how-to-ask/>

Thus, whenever possible, when we were trying to raise money, we were networking and hobnobbing with local folks and friends of the University, and I was always inviting folks to CfE events.

Annual CfE Donor Dinner

As an expression of gratitude to CfE donors, the CfE was on track to establish an annual CfE Donor Dinner. This special evening would have allowed donors to meet and interact with CfE faculty and students, members of the Ethics Bowl Team, and other friends of the CfE. The evening's program would have included a compelling student or alumni speaker, a musical performance, and a keynote speaker who has been instrumental in providing financial support.

Ethics Across the Curriculum and EAC Committee Work

A fundamental goal of any CfE is an Ethics Across the Curriculum (EAC) program or initiative. I have served on numerous academic committees where I have written policy, developed curricula, and performed learning outcomes assessments and program improvements based on data and information that I have gathered. I served on two Ethics Across the Curriculum (EAC) committees—one I started along with Fr. John Kavanaugh (1941-2012) and others at Saint Louis University during grad school, and the other was at Florida State University when I worked with Michael Ruse as Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy.

EAC describes a trend in higher education that calls for the infusion of the study of ethics into all aspects of the academic program in ways that promote ethical inquiry and encourage students, faculty, administration, and staff to take ethics seriously as a developed personal motivation.

An EAC Program usually entails establishing an overall plan that coordinates the following:

- Freestanding ethics courses (required or electives): Introduction to Ethics, Business Ethics, Bioethics, Environmental Ethics, Engineering Ethics, Science and Research Ethics, Cyberethics, etc.
- Ethics integration projects for mainstream courses where an ethical component or module is incorporated into the actual professional or occupational course
- Special activities such as an annual lecture, workshops, colloquia—the kind of things I mentioned above with the SMSU CfE
- Ethics Bowl Team, if possible
- Repository for case studies, videos, codes of ethics—again, the kind of things I mentioned above with the SMSU CfE
- Repository of research: papers, presentations, course modules
- Funding opportunities, or at least information directing one toward funding

An EAC program benefits students by:

- Providing them with multiple opportunities to study, discuss, think about ethical issues they will encounter in their personal and professional lives
- Equipping them with the tools to think through ethical issues in a critical and responsible way
- Creating an environment in which they practice “civil” discourse in the presence of differing views and thereby learn to speak civilly to each other, work through disagreements, and treat each other with respect
- Instilling sensitivity to the suffering of others and an inclination to help those in need

Professors can incorporate an ethics component in their courses in a variety of ways:

I. Approach

The incorporation might include case studies that explore some practical ethical issue in your area. Discuss current events in your discipline with an eye to the ethical questions they raise.

Examples

In computer science, the website www.computingcases.org gives three case studies along with detailed instructions for their classroom use and supporting material. One case deals with Richard Machado who, at age 19, was the first person in the US to be convicted of an e-mail hate crime. Case studies in chemistry and biology are an excellent way to explore questions of ethical research (What are the limitations of research on human subjects?) as well as the use of research (What are the limitations of genetic engineering or cloning?).

Where the Approach Might Work Well

This approach works well for courses in almost any discipline, but they are commonly used in business, nursing, computer science, environmental studies, biology, chemistry, and the social sciences.

II. Approach

The incorporation might include a discussion of professional ethics as it coincides with your discipline. This could apply to many of the disciplines we teach. It would be great to expose our students to some of the problems that professionals face in careers they may be contemplating.

Examples

In business, the Enron case leaps to mind, of course. In accounting, what is the professional code of ethics? What are ethical problems an accountant is likely to face? In outdoor education, how does an educator who is dedicated to wilderness balance the invasive potential of taking a class into a pristine environment with the damage done to that environment in the process of educating students about it? In biology and chemistry, what are a researcher's ethical responsibilities in the possible uses of research, if any? In anthropology, students could explore and discuss fieldwork ethics.

Where the Approach Might Work Well

Again, this approach works well for courses in almost any discipline, but they are commonly used in business, nursing, computer science, environmental studies, biology, chemistry, and the social sciences. Another possible, related, approach: if you are interested in exploring professional ethics in disciplines such as business, mathematics, or the sciences, have your students research and discuss codes of conduct in some of the organizations in which they might find themselves working after graduation.

III. Approach

The incorporation might do double duty—so to speak. Use a reading, statistical problem, work of art, speech, or film that relates to your discipline and also raises ethical issues. Lead a class discussion on those issues or include the ethical dimensions in the work in a writing or speech assignment.

Examples

In an art appreciation or art history course, exploration of the works of controversial artists like Robert Mapplethorpe or Andres Serrano (of "Piss Christ" fame) raise ethical questions as well as artistic ones. Are there ethical limitations on artistic freedom? Does taxpayer support of the arts involve a right or duty to censor "offensive" art in the public interest? Who decides? Can a play exploring the position of women in Islamic societies be considered "hate speech" and censored on the grounds that it will incite religious violence?

Where the Approach Might Work Well

This approach might work for courses in the arts, history, literature, speech, composition, language, or statistics.

IV. Approach

It might explore various theories of moral development and have students reflect on their own moral development.

Example

A psychology class could explore Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development and Carol Gilligan's feminist critique of his model. Which do students most identify with? How would students chart their own moral development on these scales?

Where the Approach Might Work Well

This approach might work for courses in psychology, sociology, religion, or nursing.

V. Approach

It might follow a thread of ethical theories and/or issues throughout the course.

Example

In a world religions course, one can include a specific discussion of the ethical framework of each of the religious traditions that are studied as well as a relating of those frameworks to other aspects of the religions. Another example: A political science course would be a natural arena to discuss the way in which ethical theories like natural law and utilitarianism have influenced political theory and public policy. Discussion of historical events like Hiroshima or the Holocaust naturally raise ethical issues, as do debates on most public policy issues like welfare, just war, environmental regulation, education policy, immigration and many others.

Where the Approach Might Work Well

This approach might work for courses in sociology, religion, government, political science, or history.