Utah Valley University

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Ethics in Higher Education

Susan R. Madsen, Utah Valley University

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Ethics in Higher Education

The myth that institutions of higher education are sheltered from the struggles and conflicts of the “real world” is widely accepted even by people who ought to know better—those of us in academic settings who confront, struggle with, lament, or try to ignore the serious ethical issues that arise. People outside academia may tease us about the ivory tower world and our innocence and naiveté. With a twinge of guilt, we in academia accept their teasing because the myth tells us that we are a privileged lot, protected as others are not. Naïve? Perhaps, we think, but isn’t it nice that we don’t have to get our ethical feet dirty in the moral slime outside our refuge. There is great comfort in the myth.”

Robinson & Moulton’s “Ethical Problems in Higher Education”

Ethical Responsibilities

Academic Principles of Responsibility
1. Personal Principles
2. Professional Principles
3. Systemic Principles
4. Public Principles
5. Political Principles

Inherent Moral Conflicts

- Some moral dilemmas arise from the varied goals and functions of academic institutions.
- Examples of moral conflicts:
  - between fund raising and maintaining educational quality
  - between benefiting the public at large and benefiting the people who work in the institution
  - between the goals of quality sought by the evaluation process and the well-being and happiness of those who are evaluated.
- Because of the different goals, perspectives, and backgrounds of stakeholders, moral conflicts can arise between administrators, faculty, students, and staff.
- Moral conflicts are exacerbated when an institution faces economic difficulties.

Those Who Face Ethical Conflicts

- Students
- Parents
- Staff members
- Faculty members
- Administrators
- Trustees
- Legislators
- Officials of granting agencies
- Endowers

Everyone in an academic community has responsibilities to
- Demonstrate a respect for each person as an individual
- Communicate honestly and truthfully with all persons
- Enhance the self-esteem of other persons
- Help build fair and compassionate social and cultural systems that promote the common good of all persons

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Academic Principles of Responsibility

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- Demonstrate a respect for each person as an individual
- Communicate honestly and truthfully with all persons
- Enhance the self-esteem of other persons
- Help build fair and compassionate social and cultural systems that promote the common good of all persons
2. **Professional Principles**

Professionals associated with a college or university have responsibilities to:
- Assist their institution to fulfill its educational mission
- Strive to enhance the personal and intellectual development of other persons
- Be compassionate, thorough, and fair in assessing the performance of students and professional associates
- Exercise the authority of their office in ways that respect persons and avoid the abuse of power
- Conduct their professional activities in ways that uphold or surpass the ideals of virtue and competence

William W. May’s “Ethics and Higher Education”

3. **Systemic Principles**

Colleges and universities have systemic responsibilities to:
- Be fair, keep agreements and promises, operate within the framework of the law, and extend due process to all persons
- Strive for an efficient and effective management that enables the institution to adapt to new opportunities
- Be compassionate and humane in all relationships while protecting the safety of person and property
- Articulate their missions in ways that reflect their actual strengths and aspirations
- Foster policies that build a community of racial and socioeconomic diversity
- Assist members in their professional development while requiring competent performance from everyone
- Support an internal policy that fosters and protects academic freedom

William W. May’s “Ethics and Higher Education”

4. **Public Principles**

Colleges and universities have public responsibilities to:
- Serve as examples in our public life of open institutions where truthful communications are required
- Preserve human wisdom while conducting research to create new forms of knowledge
- Serve the public interest in ways compatible with being an academic institution
- Enhance the development of international understanding, and support the world community of scholars
- Promote a critical appreciation of the creative activity of the human imagination
- Interpret academic values to their constituencies

William W. May’s “Ethics and Higher Education”

The Multidimensional Ethic at Work in an Educational Setting

1. **The Ethic of Justice (participation):**
   - [equal access, due process, policy formation and implementation, assessment rights, responsibilities in resource allocation]

2. **The Ethic of Caring (quality of life):**
   - [Cultural enrichment, individuality, loyalty, human potential, human dignity, empowerment, environment]

3. **The Ethic of Critique (Definitions of Value):**
   - [Hierarchy, privilege, class distinctions and distortions, power definitions, culture of silence and domination]

Starratt (1994, p. 96)

The Multidimensional Ethic at Work in an Educational Setting

1. **The Ethic of Justice**
   - How shall we govern ourselves?

2. **The Ethic of Caring**
   - What do our relationships ask of us?

3. **The Ethic of Critique**
   - Who controls? What legitimizes? Who defines?

Starratt (1994, p. 96)

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General Ethical Principles

1. The Principle of Fairness
2. The Principle of Maximizing Benefits
3. The Principle of Universalization
4. The Principle of Treating Others as Ends in Themselves, Not Merely as Means

Faculty: Teaching

7. Inflated or retaliation letters of recommendation
8. Racial discrimination: inadvertent neglect, overt hostility, excessive attention
9. Self-promotion; taking advantage of students
10. Sexual harassment
11. Negativism and tyrannical conduct toward students

Student Ethics

- Tests and exams (e.g., learning what is on a test from someone who took it already; using false excuses; copying; helping someone else cheat; using unauthorized cheat notes or electronic/digital devices)
- Written assignments (e.g., working with others when asked for individual work; plagiarism, receiving unpermitted help; fabrication/falsification; turning in work copied from another; turning in work from another)
- Other assignments (e.g., fabricating or falsifying lab data; copying someone else’s program in a computer course; fabrication or falsifying research data)

Faculty: Scholarship

1. Plagiarism; authorship attribution
2. Preparing lectures using the work of students and colleagues without attribution; using student input without attribution to write conference papers
3. Errors in scholarship; lack of productivity in scholarship; manipulation of data
4. Conflicting evidence; conflict of interest
5. Falsifying credentials
6. Conflicts with outside consulting work; use of university resources
7. Correction of previously reported results
8. Response to fraud of a colleague
9. Conflict of interest with a corporate funding source

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1. False allegations of misconduct against colleagues
2. Poor department service
3. Hiring decisions and contradicting schools of thought in a discipline
4. Confidentiality
5. Condescending and tyrannical conduct toward colleagues

Faculty: Internal Governance

Neil W. Hamilton’s (2002) "Academic Ethics"

1. Criminal conduct
2. Testimony inside and outside the discipline
3. Failure to perform disciplinary commitments
4. Careless scholarship; plagiarism; inflation of credentials

Faculty: Extramural Utterance and Conduct

Neil W. Hamilton’s (2002) "Academic Ethics"

1. Idea Generation and Ownership
   - Appropriate citations
   - Authorship attribution
   - Duplicative articles
   - False claims of new work
   - Order of authorship
   - Over-publishing
   - Plagiarism
   - Self-Plagiarism
   - Serial publications
   - Slicing/salami science/L.P.U.

2. Research Process
   - Access to business organizations
   - Boundaries in professional relationships
   - Confidentially
   - Conflicts of interest with funding
   - Data tampering and falsification
   - Failing to report study results that do not support hypotheses
   - False accounting of observation
   - Fraud
   - IRB/Human Subjects
   - Splitting up data to publish more
   - Writing mechanics and publication

3. IPRP Model

   Davis & Madsen (2009)

   Model for Faculty Ethics of Scholarship

   - Idea (idea generation and ownership)
   - Process (research process)
   - Relationship (research and scholarship relationships)
   - Professional (professional behavior in scholarships)

4. Relationships

   Research and Scholarship Relationships
   - Collaboration authorships
   - Contribution requirements
   - Exaggerating collaboration of prestigious partner
   - Exploitative relationships
   - Honorary authorship
   - Multi-author publications
   - Student-faculty authorship
Professional Behavior in Scholarship

- Blurring borderlines
- Contractual obligations
- Editor ethics
- False allegations
- Falsifying credentials
- Reviewer ethics
- Tenure and academic freedom limits
- Whistleblowing

Vignette #1

A professor and his student stretch the truth in a conference manuscript by describing their most complete data set as “a typical data set.”

Artino & Brown (2009)

Vignette #2

A graduate student decides that if she finds any outliers in her survey data, she will simply delete them from her data set.

Artino & Brown (2009)

Vignette #3

When informed that his star student will be taking a job outside of academia, an unhappy adviser tells the student that he cannot write him a very strong recommendation.

Artino & Brown (2009)

Vignette #4

Two professors decide to survey their class without IRB approval, with the idea that if they find something interesting and want to publish it, they can always get IRB after the fact.

Artino & Brown (2009)

Vignette #5

An accomplished professor ensures that all of her students are included in lab publications; even those whose only contribution to a given project amounts to data collection or data entry.

Artino & Brown (2009)
A graduate research assistant strongly encourages a study participant to stay in an experiment by informing her that the professor gets very annoyed when students drop from his studies.

(Vignette #6)

Possible Reasons for Misconduct
- Increased cost of research
- Cost makes any unsatisfactory result a threat to the researcher's ability
- Grants can attract researchers with "wrong motives" who want to make money
- Non-tenure faculty and increase pressures
- Increased expense of certain kinds of research makes replication less likely
- Increased tendency of researchers to deny others access to notes and raw data
- Increased tendency to list authors who should not be listed

(Vignette #6)

An advisor suggests to her student that she be added to the byline of his abridged dissertation manuscript since she knows the journal editor very well and is confident this will improve his changes of publication.

(Vignette #7)

Scenarios (Small Groups)
1. The Data Sleuth
2. Too Much of a Good Thing? Multiplying Your Productivity
3. It's Good to be King: Authorship Dilemmas
4. Creative Problem Solving in Scholarship Research: Desperately Seeking Significance

(Vignette #7)

A young assistant professor and his graduate student—both single and looking for companionship—begin an intimate relationship. What is the ethical nature of the student's behavior? The professor's behavior?

(Vignette #8)

Shaping Students
- "Education alters the way people understand the world, shapes character and therefore has an imprint on the self."
- "When we really teach, we affect character."
- "Responsibility for the training of students carries moral responsibilities for shaping character."
- "The activity of the university requires the development of a morality that includes honesty, candor, justice, even love or compassion within the community."

(Vignette #8)
Integrity Within the University

- "Integrity relates to wholeness. It requires the integration of one’s personal life with his or her public life, and it is sustained through the ethical relationships within both in ways that are mutually beneficial."
- "We argue that personal, institutional, and program integrity is at the heart of the ethical relationship that the professor and university have toward the community and each other. Without personal integrity, trust is absent. Without institutional integrity, we cannot rely on the organization. Without program integrity, the university cannot deliver what it promises. In essence, integrity makes ethics authentic by establishing a climate of trust."

Questions

Susan R. Madsen
Associate Professor of Management
Utah Valley University
madsensu@uvu.edu