

Integrating Business Ethics into An Undergraduate Curriculum

Terrence R. Bishop

ABSTRACT. The paper describes the approach by which ethics are integrated into the undergraduate curriculum at Northern Illinois University's College of Business. Literature is reviewed to identify conceptual frameworks for, and issues associated with, the teaching of business ethics. From the review, a set of guidelines for teaching ethics is developed and proposed. The objectives and strategies implemented for teaching ethics is discussed. Foundation and follow-up coursework, measurement issues and ancillary programs are also discussed.

Introduction

Recently, the subject of business ethics has seen increased debate in both popular and scholarly literature. In 1976, the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) urged business educators to incorporate ethics into their course curricula. However, in most business schools the effort to cover the topic of business ethics has been decentralized and fragmented. Schools have fallen under greater scrutiny in the wake of environmental issues, ethics in the investment community, the savings and loan crisis, and decreased trust in business executives overall. Because of their role as a primary source of business managers, business schools have been charged with inadequate attention to ethics. Consequently, the AACSB, business media and business leaders have further intensified their concerns over ethics in recent years. These concerns

have led to a more urgently felt need to integrate the coverage of business ethics into the curriculum in a more formal and systematic manner.

This paper summarizes the method by which ethics is integrated into the undergraduate curriculum of the College of Business at Northern Illinois University. The first section of this paper is a review of the business ethics literature on the teaching of business ethics intended to identify conceptual frameworks and other important issues in teaching business ethics. A set of guidelines for teaching ethics was gleaned through this review.

The second section of the report outlines the proposed objectives and strategy for integrating ethics into the curriculum at Northern that evolved from the literature review. At the core of the strategy is a "business ethics foundation" to be established soon after students' admission into the business school. Included in the recommendations is a brief discussion of measurement issues and ancillary programs that may be employed to enhance the effort to cover business ethics. This report was written as a program development project in the Northern Illinois University College of Business and was funded by a grant from the James S. Kemper Foundation.

Review of business ethics literature

Business ethics, as a distinct academic area of study, has its roots in the 1950s (Paul, 1987). Although a few classic works were published as early as the 1930s, the 1950s brought efforts by the Ford and Carnegie Foundations and the AACSB to evaluate business school curricula. Business leaders of the time recognized the importance of a shared set of values in the business community. These values were

Dr. Bishop teaches in the Management Department of Northern Illinois University's College of Business. He teaches managerial principles, human resource management and strategic management. His research interests have focused on applied human resource issues and managerial ethics, including the professional ethics of human resource managers.

viewed as necessary to the effective functioning of a free-market economy. Paul (1987) pointed out how social forces over the last three decades have further accentuated the need for business schools to include business ethics in their curriculum. These forces include the civil rights movement, antiwar sentiment, Watergate, environmentalist issues and, perhaps most importantly, a growing dissatisfaction with and distrust of those persons holding authority. More recently, investment house scandals, toxic waste issues, employee/customer safety concerns, and heightened merger and acquisition activities have served to further stimulate interest and concern over the role and importance of ethics in business practice. As a consequence, several different approaches to teaching ethics have emerged in the literature.

Conceptual frameworks

Over the last few decades three separate but related conceptual frameworks for studying and teaching business ethics have evolved. The three conceptual frameworks are “business ethics,” “corporate social responsibility,” and “corporate social responsiveness” (Epstein, 1989).

The works of the business ethics field originally focused on the role of business within greater society. The intent of these works was to delineate the moral obligations of a business operating with the intent to perpetuate the free enterprise system. Business ethics has not been viewed as an entirely distinct field, but as the application of the broader field of ethics to a specific area. Epstein (1989) describes the essence of business ethics in the following manner:

Ethical analysis does not operate as a rigid set of rules. It provides, rather, a process and a framework by which individuals and organizations, (and even whole societies) can determine and evaluate their actions from the perspective of essential moral principles and values. Business ethics is a special applied branch of ethics which focuses general ethical principles and analytical approaches upon a particular field of endeavor — business.

Epstein further separates business ethics into four distinct levels of analysis: (1) macro ethics — the focus of this level is on norms and values of the total political-economic system; (2) intermediate ethics —

which focuses on the conduct of collective business actors (e.g., industries, trade associations); (3) organizational ethics — focusing on the conduct of specific firms; and (4) individual ethics — the conduct of individual human beings. Each of these levels examines the actions taken by businesses and business people in the context of “generally recognized societal values” and the “moral significance of the institutions, policies, and behavior of business actors in the normal course of their business activities.”

The second framework, corporate social responsibility, can be characterized by the idea that business responsibilities extend beyond the sphere of economics and into the realm of social issues. Corporate social responsibility advocates that businesses should apply themselves to solving pressing social problems, even if such efforts extend beyond a business entity’s scope of operations. From this framework emerged the concept of stakeholders, which refers to a broad group of business entity constituents including communities, employees, as well as the more traditionally accepted customers and stockholders (Buchholz, 1987). The social responsibility framework requires that business actions not only be examined in the context of market transactions, but also with regard to their overall impact on society and whether they act to solve important social problems.

Many view this perspective with skepticism due to its departure from the free market mechanisms of supply and demand. Several economists have expended considerable energy in debating the tenets of social responsibility. Perhaps Milton Friedman best represents this opposition when labeling the concept of corporate social responsibility a “fundamentally subversive doctrine” (Friedman, 1970). Friedman states that “there is one and only one social responsibility of business — to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits, so long as it stays within the rules of the game.” A business follows the “rules of the game” if it “engages in open and free competition, without deception or fraud,” and obeys the laws of society. In this sense, businesses may be ethical without engaging in activities outside their normal scope of operations. Under this perspective, businesses are compelled to act ethically by basic economic forces — customers demand that certain business practices be observed or avoided — rather than left to decide unilaterally which actions should be taken in a moral context.

Consistent with Friedman's attitude toward social responsibility is the theory of Pareto Optimality. Microeconomists who advocate the theory hold that society is best served by an economic system in which the business firm and individual managers make decisions with the primary criterion of optimizing return. In this manner the greatest social goal can be reached, which is the provision of needed goods for minimum price (Hosmer, 1987). Under an equilibrium state of Pareto Optimality, firms operate at optimal efficiency and products are distributed at peak effectiveness by competitive markets.

The use of the corporate social responsibility framework in the classroom stimulates interesting debate and significant student involvement, but achieves little in terms of the application of ethics. The typical result of the social responsibility debate is condemnation of Friedman and a resolution that businesses are indeed social institutions with responsibilities that lie outside the realm of market exchange. Ironically, Friedman may have never intended to imply that business organizations are not social institutions or that businesses need not consider their actions in the context of impacts on society. The seemingly vast chasm between corporate social responsibility advocates and students of the Friedman perspective may be bridged if one views ethical behavior as a *necessity* for successful business practice.

One might consider the debate over corporate social responsibility to be moot if adequate attention and understanding of societal expectations and business ethics is attained. Friedman's notion of "the rules of the game" is consistent with the business ethics framework discussed earlier. Business ethics attempts to identify the rules to which Friedman refers. Friedman's reference to the "rules" evokes images of a sort of Ten Commandments For Good Business that may be given to students in tablet form. However, recognition that these rules are a dynamic set rather than a static one, and that the rules may vary by culture and other dimensions, causes the concept of business ethics to become a bit more difficult to grasp.

The third framework, corporate social responsiveness, focuses on the need for, and ability of, organizations to react to social pressures. While their titles may lead one to think that the difference between corporate social responsibility and social responsive-

ness may be subtle, the differences are quite substantive. Instead of proposing that organizations have some vague responsibility to seek out social ills and solve them, the social responsiveness framework evaluates the ability of firms to respond to pressures from their external environment. This framework also examines the mechanisms, procedures and behaviors within organizations that make them more or less adept at responding to environmental or social pressures (Buchholz, 1987). Unlike social responsibility, the social responsiveness framework suggests that societal expectations for business practice are clear since public policy is clearly articulated through laws and regulations (Ackerman and Bauer, 1976).

The emphasis on laws and regulations can be criticized for leading to reliance on the government in defining societal expectations, a consequence of which may be the exponential growth of laws that regulate business activities. Social responsiveness is, by description, a reactive style of social management rather than a proactive one. This seems to be a vast contradiction in the philosophy of proactive management taught in most business schools.

Upon review, the latter two frameworks seem to do little to improve upon the initial framework in terms of facilitating an understanding of the scope of the business ethics discipline nor in terms of providing a structure for teaching the subject in an undergraduate curriculum. It seems that the business ethics framework is most useful in both conceptualizing and operationalizing the teaching of business ethics.

Teaching business ethics

The discipline of management has tended to be a common vehicle by which business ethics courses have evolved (Paul, 1987). Other disciplines commonly offering business ethics courses include philosophy, political science, sociology, and economics. Regardless of where taught, ethics courses tend either to be philosophy- or management-oriented. The philosophy-oriented approach tends to be more rigorous in terms of theory, logical foundations, and abstract conceptualizations of business ethics problems. The management-oriented approach has focused on the "practical aspects of managerial

decision-making and the concrete details of the firms and industries being analyzed" (Paul, 1987). Arguably, there is room for some of both approaches in the effort to integrate ethics into the business school curriculum.

Several works, mostly non-empirical, have focused on efforts to teach the subject of business ethics. Much of the work is critical of attempts to cover ethics in the business curriculum. A review of the literature revealed numerous criticisms of educational efforts and some of the responses to them.

One of the more common criticisms is that a course in ethics is merely a knee-jerk reaction to environmental issues which lacks effectiveness for at least two reasons (Levin, 1989). First, is the belief that ethics and/or morals are learned early in life. By the time a student reaches college they are immutably honest, moral beings, or they are not. Under this assumption, unethical behavior occurs either due to failure in early learning to differentiate right from wrong, or due to inadequate motivation — resulting from poor reward systems or "laziness and cowardice." Secondly, too much of ethics coursework is composed of reflection on contrived situations that may be difficult to generalize to different, on-the-job experiences.

There are cogent responses to these allegations. There are two specific responses to the belief that it is too late at the university level to have an impact on a person's value system. First, it can be argued that a person's value set is not a static or permanent collection. Instead it seems more likely that a person's value system may be subject to great modification and refinement over time, particularly if there is a lack of reinforcement at later stages in life (Henderson, 1988). Secondly, it has been argued that the primary goal of ethics courses should not be to teach the difference between wrong and right, but rather to teach students how to incorporate their values into decision-making processes, and to demonstrate to students that to do so is important (Parks, 1986). With regard to treating the lazy or cowardly, the inclusion of ethics in business education may reinforce the expectation that ethical business behavior is the preferred — or even demanded — mode of operation. This may provide impetus for the lazy and courage to the cowardly. Parks (1986) conceptualizes higher education's role in teaching ethics not as bludgeoning students with dogmatic principles, but rather as encouraging and leading students to

apply moral principles by exposing students to "conscious conflicts" in coursework.

There may be more merit in the argument that ethics courses often create contrived ethical dilemmas that are difficult to generalize and apply to other situations. Under the worst-case analysis, however, this is not cause to purge ethics from the curriculum. To the contrary, this underscores what may actually be a root of the problem. Little of our education is spent integrating our personal beliefs into application. Instead, the learning process is dominated by rote means of absorption, particularly in more technical fields. Consequently, when students are presented with only few situations — often technically unspecific — in which they are asked to evaluate alternatives from an ethical foundation, it is not surprising that whatever learning does take place is lost in the transfer to the work environment. Training transfer is a well documented problem (Baldwin and Ford, 1988), yet this problem has not led organizations to stop their training efforts. This would be "throwing the baby out with the bath water." Instead it may be necessary to completely integrate ethics into the curriculum. In place of a single course that students simply get out of the way, a cross-curricular effort may be required.

The very nature of ethics requires that they be tested and examined under various situations (Henderson, 1988). It may be alleged that students are not exposed to *enough* situations where they are to explicitly integrate their value sets in their decision-making. Students should be faced with ethical issues through multiple courses and be exposed to diverse ethical dilemmas; only then may students be equipped to transfer this learning to their lives and careers through application of their value systems in analysis and decision-making.

Another interesting criticism of ethics is that as long as we have laws that dictate what is permissible, we do not need courses in ethics. Henning Jensen, an Arizona State philosophy teacher, points out that acting within the letter of the law should not be equated with acting within the intent of the law (Grigsby and Loeffelholz, 1989). Since many laws have loopholes large enough to drive the proverbial truck through, this is an important point. Through ethics one may be compelled to act within the intent of the law rather than merely meeting the letter of the law.

There is also major concern that efforts to install

ethics into the curriculum will lack substance due to overemphasis on simply *showing* that ethics is a part of the curriculum. Setting ethics aside as a single separate class and expecting that it will address the ethics void is likely to fail as an honest attempt to integrate ethics into the curriculum. This point was made in a sarcastic commentary by Moskowitz (1988) on the creation of an abbreviated ethics course at Harvard University. Moskowitz asserted that solutions to all the world's ills would now be found due to the creation of the three-week course.

Pamental (1989) argues that for business ethics curricula to be effective it should be delivered in the latter stages of an undergraduate education. If the attempt takes place too early, or early coursework is not built upon in upper level coursework, it is likely that students will have insufficient insight into functional areas to develop requisite sensitivity to ethical issues within those areas. Pamental found that most business courses in ethics were upper-level course, while the majority of philosophy-oriented ethics courses were lower-level courses.

Pamental also reviewed five goals — identified by Callahan in the 1980 Hastings Center study “Ethics Teaching in Higher Education” — that should be identified for courses in ethics. The goals are: (1) stimulate the moral imagination; (2) recognize ethical issues; (3) elicit a sense of moral obligation; (4) develop analytical skills; and (5) tolerate disagreement and ambiguity. A sixth goal identified by Powers and Vogel in another portion of the Hastings Center study that deserves consideration is that *ethical* management must be identified as an ingredient of *competent* management. Halfond (1990) concurs that this view is prevalent in concluding that “two-thirds of corporate executives, deans, and congressmen believe that high ethical standards significantly enhance competitive advantage.”

There is often great concern that the teaching of business ethics will cross the line between guided learning and indoctrination. Teachers are often uncomfortable prescribing morality to students. In the attempt to prevent this from occurring, faculty may either shy away entirely from broaching ethical issues or try to sanitize their own values from the treatment of these issues. In reality, the threat of prescribing ethics or morality is present when teaching *any* subject. Etzioni (1989) states that:

There is no ethically neutral teaching. Everything in the

classroom communicates an ethical position. The only difference between business ethics courses and all others is truth in advertising: Ethics courses state explicitly when value positions are communicated; the regular curriculum embodies hidden assumptions of which even the professor may be unaware.

While this perspective may provide assurance to the ethics instructor, it is still critical to avoid discouraging inquiry and independent thought in the study of ethics. Heavy-handed or dogmatic approaches are not likely to result in the desired ends. Discussion leaders must guide the study and discussion of ethics issues and be “a teacher, not a preacher” (Henderson, 1988).

Joint ventures in educational efforts between business and university educators are on the rise. An example of these efforts is found in Arthur Andersen’s PACE (Partnership for Applied Curriculum on Ethics) program. Resulting from a five-year commitment, the PACE program has resulted in the composition of functional area cases developed by teams of practitioners and academicians that are designed to facilitate insight and sensitivity to practical business ethics issues that may be encountered in the early stages of one’s career (Kullberg, 1988). As of early 1990 the program had reached 400 professors at 90 universities (Marks, 1990).

Derek Bok, Harvard University president, in an article entitled “Can Higher Education Foster Higher Morals” (Bok, 1988), identified three major problems in teaching ethics: (1) students aren’t encouraged to discuss or extend their study of ethics outside the classroom; (2) it is difficult to overcome faculty skepticism over whether ethics can indeed be taught; and (3) there seems to be less rigor in ethics courses. Bok suggests several steps to teaching ethics more successfully, particularly in professional schools: (1) start early with a solid liberal arts foundation; (2) expose students to profession-specific moral dilemmas; (3) articulate reasonable institutional rules; (4) fairly and consistently enforce the institutional rules, with sufficient penalties so that the rules are credible; (5) provide vehicles for students to develop true concern for others — in professional schools this might entail encouraging collaborative efforts (e.g., study groups, group study projects) and strongly supporting extra-curricular group activities.

To summarize the points made in the literature discussed above, a list of suggestions for teaching

ethics was developed. There are twelve specific points that were gleaned from these materials. They are:

- (1) Build from a solid liberal arts foundation through which students develop a broad sense of humanity and a generalizable critical thought process.
- (2) Blend both philosophy and practice into the teaching of ethics.
- (3) One objective of the ethics curricula should be to reinforce students' existing value system.
- (4) Create "conscious conflicts" in applied settings that cause students to examine decisions in light of their own beliefs.
- (5) Present students with the opportunity to consider multiple ethical issues and applications.
- (6) Integrate the ethics effort throughout the curriculum so that its importance is reinforced and build upon foundations established in prior coursework.
- (7) Present students with ethical issues that they are likely to face in the early stages of their career.
- (8) Focus much of the effort on getting students to recognize ethical issues rather than to make the "right" decisions. Encourage students to develop perceptiveness and analytical skills.
- (9) Differentiate between acting legally and acting ethically.
- (10) Utilize group methodologies in teaching and support extra-curricular group activities to foster social learning and a concern by students for others.
- (11) Reinforce the belief that being an ethical manager is a prerequisite to being a competent manager.
- (12) Teach ethics, rather than preach ethics.

These recommendations provided a set of guidelines for planning and implementing the ethics component of the curriculum in the College of Business at NIU. These guidelines seem generalizable to application in non-business curricula. By following these criteria, the effort to address ethics in the curriculum may be carried out in a more balanced and effective manner.

Recommendations for integrating ethics into the curriculum

This section of the paper details the recommendations made with specific regard to the ethics curriculum of NIU's College of Business. The content of the recommendations are presented as a model which other business schools — or even non-business schools — may consider in attempting to address this issue. Clearly, each school will have unique issues to address in their attempt to integrate ethics into their curriculum, yet the basic content of the recommendation is likely generalizable to most schools. It may be helpful to briefly describe the structure of Northern's College of Business. There are five departments within the College: Accounting, Finance, Management, Marketing, and Operations Management and Information System. The College employs a selective admissions policy. Students desiring to enroll in a business program are considered "pre-business" majors until they meet admission criteria in their fourth semester and are formally accepted into the College to begin their junior year. At that time they also formally select a specific disciplinary major, offered and managed by each of the departments. The specific majors may have entrance requirements beyond those of the overall College. The core of students' business studies, therefore, begins with the onset of their third year of study.

There are four parts to this set of recommendations. The first part specifies the objectives of the ethics curriculum. The second part provides an overview of the foundation course (Management Principles) and the issues to be covered in that course. The third part is a brief discussion of follow-up efforts in post-foundation coursework. The fourth and concluding segment of the recommendations addresses the issues of measuring the impact of ethics programs and discusses potential ancillary programs that may support and augment the ethics curriculum.

Ethics curriculum objectives

Four main objectives were initially identified for ethics coverage in the College of Business. These objectives are listed below.

- (1) The College of Business seeks to provide students with knowledge of the basic concepts regarding business ethics. This basic knowledge includes understanding the concepts of ethics, values, and morality, and the relationship of ethics to the practice in the business world.
- (2) The College of Business seeks to develop students' abilities to recognize ways in which ethics relate to performance of general and specific business functions, and to develop students' abilities to anticipate the ethical implications of their actions and decisions.
- (3) The College of Business seeks to encourage students to integrate their ethics into their problem-solving and decision-making approaches.
- (4) The College of Business seeks to develop students' abilities to recognize role or profession based ethics, and to recognize and resolve conflicts between multiple role responsibilities and diverse value sets.

These initial objectives are subject to review and modification as the program is implemented. Additional objectives may also be articulated in the future.

Ethics foundation

The Principles of Management course was selected as the vehicle to establish the ethics foundation in the curriculum. This course is one of four principle courses that students are required to take upon acceptance for major study in the College. The other principles are marketing, finance and production/operations. Topics emphasized in the course include planning, decision-making, organizing and organizational control as carried out across business functions and levels. These factors support the choice of the course as an appropriate medium through which to establish the foundation. This is consistent with the approach taken at other schools, with ethics often being taught within the management discipline. The class is taught through lecture and workshops in which case discussions, experiential exercises and other teaching methods may be employed.

The management principles course is composed of three learning units: (1) the technical skills of management; (2) the management of people and behavior; and (3) the ethics of business and management. Each learning unit is covered over one-third of the semester. In addition to specific coverage in

the third unit, ethics and social issues are integrated to some degree in the first two learning units, particularly with regard to analysis of business environments and building effective relationships with people.

The ethics learning unit is organized into two conceptual levels; (1) societal-organizational ethics, which encompasses Epstein's macro, intermediate and organizational levels of analysis, and (2) individual ethics. The first level attempts to analyze the role of business in the American economic system and the symbiotic relationship between business organizations and society. Emphasis in this segment is placed on the free-enterprise system and society's regulatory mechanisms — including mechanisms that fall outside the more obvious governmental/legislative regulatory perspective (such as the media or interest group activism).

Individual ethics embodies the responsibilities that emerge from the performance of individual roles. Emphasis here is placed on moral and ethical development, ethics specific to professions or occupations, and conflict over multiple role expectations. Also included is discussion of methods for resolving ethical conflicts. Lectures covering ethics define and explore ethical concepts as outlined above, while small group recitations provide the opportunity for students to explore ethics in applied settings through cases, exercises and discussion.

Foundation follow-up

Accepting the belief that ethics can not be effectively integrated into the curriculum through a single course requires follow-up through additional coursework. Such follow-up facilitates reinforcement of the ethics concepts and provides opportunity to cover ethical issues unique to various majors or to frame ethical issues in ways that are relevant to those distinct majors. Consequently, each department in the College of Business is asked to identify several major-specific courses through which discipline-related ethical issues might be addressed. Unlike the foundation course, it is not necessary for one-third of the curricula of these course to be dedicated to ethics. However, the objective for each department is the identification and application of the discipline's specific ethical issues

throughout the normal teaching of the course. Cases, class discussions, experiential exercises and other interactive teaching methodologies are particularly useful in carrying out this component of the curriculum. The interactive methods provide a medium through which students might candidly discuss their own values in the context of business problems, an activity that is sorely lacking in most business programs.

For further follow-up, all professors and instructors of the College of Business have been encouraged to integrate examples and applications of ethics into all of their courses where appropriate. This follow-up results in a comprehensive approach which covers theoretical/conceptual foundations and discipline-related practical application.

Measurement and ancillary programs

The measurement of learning in the area of ethics is particularly problematic. The dynamic nature of value sets preclude the existence of a standard response set or answer key that enables the educator to assess the appropriateness of student responses in tests or applied settings. There are strategies, however, that may be followed to attempt to measure the learning of ethics and the efficacy of the ethics curriculum.

Learning in the foundation course over ethics concepts, economic systems, and societal forces may be examined through traditional tests. However, examinations are clearly limited to measuring comprehension of factual material and conceptual models for analysis and are not appropriate for assessing whether students have the "right" ethics. Written materials (essays, case reports) allow further evaluation of students' abilities to articulate ethical issues, or to state positions on various issues.

Similar methods and criteria can be applied to the measurement of the application of ethics in follow-up efforts. This may be accomplished through evaluation of performance on case studies and in exercises. At any time, the focus of measurement of the learning of ethics should be on the ability of students to recognize ethical issues and to logically incorporate those issues into their analytical processes and decisions. At no point should measurement of ethics learning take the form of assessing whether students chose the "right" solution.

Ancillary programs may be employed outside the classroom to further effectuate the teaching of ethics in the College. All ancillary programs have a common purpose: to reinforce the ethics curriculum and emphasize the College's commitment to teaching ethics. Some of the options that may be considered are discussed below.

An informal faculty ethics discussion group may be formed. Participation in this group should be voluntary, and would ideally include at least one faculty representative from each academic unit. The group's purpose would be to discuss both general and discipline-specific ethical issues, such as professional codes of ethics. The group would be useful as a forum for discussion of classroom efforts in teaching ethics. This group could also provide stimulus and coordination for research in the area of ethics. Faculty could also be encouraged individually through grants, sabbaticals, etc., to develop programs and research in the area of ethics.

Speakers from industry, government, and other sectors of society may be invited to speak before students on ethical issues. Speakers may be brought into specific classes, as well as for seminars, special lectures, or to address student organizations. University of college speaker programs, specially dedicated resources or outside funding may be alternative ways to finance keynote speakers that require honorarium.

Finally, colleges might affirm their commitment to business ethics through printed materials. Materials that are made available to students, the media, the corporate sector and other constituents should include statements underlining the institution's dedication to teaching and reinforcing ethics. The purpose of these efforts go beyond being mere propaganda to being reinforcement of the importance of ethics for the benefit of students, faculty, administration, future employers of the college's graduates, and society overall. For similar reasons, descriptions of departmental programs should also reinforce the importance and inclusion of ethics in the curriculum.

Conclusion

The effort to integrate ethics coverage into business school curricula will continue to impact most schools in the next decade. However, continued

criticism of education's role in solving the ethics dilemma can be expected — and should even be encouraged — regardless of what actions are taken by schools and their accrediting bodies. Schools must take a critical look at their role in the ethical development of future business leaders and to assume a leadership role in addressing society's concerns for conscientious business decision making and actions. Business schools should practice what they preach with regard to being responsive to environmental forces, as the environmental demand for schools to contribute to ethical practice is being heard in an increasingly loud and resolute voice.

Clearly, educational institutions can not accomplish the mission alone. Experiences of students prior to enrollment are strong determinants of the value systems they will hold and apply over their lifetimes. It is unlikely that any educational intervention will result in complete overhaul of a student's ethics. It has been the position throughout this paper that education (particularly post-secondary) serves to reinforce existing values and encourage their application. Early education experiences and family influences are going to have the most critical impacts on the integrity of future business leaders and their willingness and ability to be value driven.

Businesses must also assume their collective responsibility in encouraging ethical practice. Without reinforcement of employee value systems, assumptions about the "way business operates" will undoubtedly supplant those value systems and remain the prevalent operational mode for business. Consideration of business alternatives in the context of ethics needs to be a practice that is woven into the cultural fabric of the companies that have been quick to point out shortcomings in the teaching of ethics to our future generations.

References

- Ackerman, R. and Bauer, R.: 1976, *Corporate Social Responsibility* (Reston Publishing, Reston, VA).
- Baldwin T. T., and Ford, J. K.: 1988, 'Transfer of Training: A Review and Directions for Future Research', *Personnel Psychology* **41**, pp. 63–105.
- Bok, D.: 1988, 'Can Higher Education Foster Higher Morals?', *Business and Society Review* **66**, pp. 4–12.
- Buchholz, R. A.: 1987, 'The Business/Government/Society Relationship in Management Thought', in K. Paul, ed., *Business Environment and Business Ethics: The Social, Moral, and Political Dimensions of Management* (Ballinger Publishing Company, Cambridge, MA).
- Epstein, E. M.: 1989, 'Business Ethics, Corporate Good Citizenship and the Corporate Social Policy Process: A View from the United States', *Journal of Business Ethics* **8**, pp. 583–595.
- Etzioni, A.: 1989, 'Are Business Schools Brainwashing their MBA's?', *Business and Society Review* **70**, pp. 18–19.
- Friedman, M.: 1970, 'The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits', *The New York Times Magazine*, September 30, 1970.
- Grigsby, J. and Loeffelholz, S.: 1989, 'What \$20 Million Won't Buy', *Financial World* **158**, pp. 88–90.
- Halfond, J.: 1990, 'Should Business Schools Be Sunday Schools?', *Business and Society Review* **72**, pp. 54–55.
- Henderson, V. E.: 1988, 'Can Business Ethics Be Taught?', *Management Review* **77**, pp. 52–54.
- Hosmer, L. T.: 1987, *The Ethics of Management* (Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Homewood, IL).
- Kullberg, D.: 1988, 'Business Ethics: PACE Provides Lessons from Real Life', *Management Review* **77**, pp. 54–55.
- Levin, M.: 1989, 'Ethics Courses: Useless', *The New York Times*, November 20 (or so), OP-ED section, pp. A-21.
- Marks, P.: 1990, 'Ethics and the Bottom Line', *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, May 1990, pp. 26–32.
- Moskowitz, M.: 1988, 'The Curse of the Crimson', *Business and Society Review* **66**, pp. 57.
- Pamental, G. L.: 1989, 'The Course in Business Ethics: Can It Work?', *Journal of Business Ethics* **8**, pp. 547–551.
- Parks, S.: 1986, *The Critical Years: The Young Adult Search for a Faith to Live By* (Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., New York).
- Paul, K.: 1987, 'Business Environment and Business Ethics in Management Thought', in K. Paul, ed., *Business Environment and Business Ethics: The Social, Moral, and Political Dimensions of Management* (Ballinger Publishing Company, Cambridge, MA).

Northern Illinois University,
Department of Management,
DeKalb, Illinois, 60115,
U.S.A.