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Ethics at Eastern Michigan University and the College of Business: A study of academic dishonesty and professionalism

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Ethics at Eastern Michigan University and the College of Business: A study of academic dishonesty and professionalism

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Ethics at Eastern Michigan University and the College of Business: A Study of Academic

Dishonesty and Professionalism

By

Ashley Shahan

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Questioning Students Opinions on Ethics, Morality and Integrity

What do people think defines morality and ethics? How, does one actually put a definition on it? Think of the classic scenario presented to us as children: you find a wallet in the street. When you open it, there is money inside of the wallet...what will you do in this case? Do you take the money and return the empty wallet to a police station, take the wallet for yourself, or take it straight to the police without ever looking inside? In theory, you should, of course, take the wallet straight to the police for their handling. However, it is the act of whether you take what you can, or if you return it with no questions asked, which determines your character.

Let's take another approach with a more uncommon scenario. What if you were at work and you really liked a certain type of pen your employer provides for you? Would you take a pen home, or would you consider this stealing? This was a question presented in the course COB 200L my freshman year at Eastern Michigan University. Of course, at first everyone in the course thought there was no issue to taking the pen, but after some discussion, we realized the pen was not ours to take, and was therefore, morally incorrect. The theory is such that by taking the pen, we would create an unethical scenario (as it would technically be stealing), and while the employer wouldn't take action over a relatively inexpensive pen, it is this sense of entitlement, as well as carelessness that poses the current problem in society today.

While most people may not be able to necessarily put the meaning of both morality and ethics into a coherent definition, they can normally hear a situation of concern, and know whether it is right or wrong, as well as why it is wrong. Think of the

wallet scenario again. Most of us know taking the wallet is wrong, yet some people still say they would take it, or they would take the money and then turn it in to the proper authorities. Pretty much everyone here in the United States knows they should turn it into the police; yet almost no one knows or can reiterate an exact reason why it is wrong, other than a social construct that says it is wrong, and the fact it isn't ours to take in the first place. However, putting into a sentence the reason why something is unethical, is usually a hard thing to do.

It is often this sense of entitlement mentioned previously that causes an area of concern, which may end up leading to an unethical situation. In most cases of fraud, there is some form of a disconnect with the business and the person committing the fraud. Usually it is either segregation of duties being overlapped where they shouldn't be (i.e. the person who counts cash drawers shouldn't be the only one going to the bank to deposit said money), the person feels overworked and undercompensated, or something else entirely. While an outside reason may exist, and could be the cause of the fraud or ethical situation, it is more often a case of a lack of morality and ethics by those who are involved.

So how do college students define morality and ethics? Clearly there are still concerns of cheating, be it on homework or a test, as there are still rules and punishments for if a case of cheating occurs at any time during a student's academic career. However the question I have is where do these students draw the line and say this is too unethical, and I can't cheat/I can't help you cheat? Is it when an entire section of an assignment or project gets copied? Or is it when half or more of their work on a project is copied? Why is an exam or quiz so different then? If one answer is given on an exam, which

means someone copied the student's work, and this is seen as unethical, then why is it okay to help someone complete their homework so they don't lose points? While this is unethical once thought about, it seems most students appear to be okay with sharing answers to homework assignments, while remaining distinctly aware of the consequences of doing so. This then brings up my reason for even doing this research. What do college students expect integrity to mean, and what do they do to ensure they remain ethical during their entire college career? How can we be certain this trend of unethical behavior won't follow the student into their careers?

All students are at least aware of the creed at Eastern Michigan University, and the students at Eastern Michigan University's College of Business, have heard the ethos statement on more than one occasion as well. Both of these mission statements mention the integrity of one's work, and to respect one's peers, as well as being honest and trustworthy. But what does this mean to the students here? How do they uphold this idea throughout their entire four or more years at Eastern Michigan University? Does it follow them into the workforce, so as to avoid another WorldCom and Enron, as I will explain later in my research, should they be in the position one day where they could be a player in an unethical, fraudulent situation such as these companies?

In addition to this, what do students feel Eastern Michigan University does to help instill the knowledge of these morals and ethics into their student's educations? What about at the College of Business? Is there anything in particular that stands out to students as being particularly helpful in learning about ethics? Do students feel as though they have enough ethic lessons in their curriculum where they could easily reflect on a situation and do the correct moral and ethical thing, even if it's not what they may

necessarily want to do? Is there any course in particular that comes to mind when the student thinks about the ethics they have learned about thus far in their school career? If not, do the students feel they would benefit from an additional course that is required, that focuses solely on this issue? Should they not feel the need for an entire course, do they think there should at least be a section of an already existing prerequisite course dedicated to the study of ethics, morality and integrity?

The Process

While there were many venues to take with this research, my instructor and I decided we would like to see what research had already been done on this topic, in the library database. From here, we would gather the essay responses from students who entered the scholarship contest for the Mielke award in Winter 2016, and leave the responses anonymous. If necessary, based off of the general response from these essays, we would pursue an anonymous survey to distribute to the students at Eastern Michigan University. This survey would discuss the amount ethics are brought up in a course at both the College of Business, and at Eastern Michigan University as a whole. It would also ask several other questions pertaining to how students handle certain situations such as homework swapping, or cheating on exams. Reasons to do this survey distribution would be: clarification on how students view the current distribution of the information in a classroom; how they define ethics and integrity based on both before they came to college, and after they have attended; as well as to see if they have ever witnessed cheating before or done it themselves.

From these surveys, if necessary, we agreed we would contact Professor Henry Hastings, who teaches many of the law courses at the College of Business. By meeting with Professor Hastings, we hoped we would be able to get some questions answered from a faculty perspective. These questions would range from how faculty feels some difficult ethical situations should be handled, and whether he felt students could use the additional time spent on an ethical section of a course, or if it would have zero impact.

The purpose of all of this research, and the end result we were hoping for, is to hopefully inform our students of situations so much, that another large instance of an ethical dilemma and scandal, such as was seen in the early 2000s from multiple companies, can be avoided again. By getting their opinions on the way the current courses at Eastern Michigan University discuss this topic, we hoped we would be able to explain to the Dean of the College of Business, Michael Tidwell, potential changes to implement to the programs at his college. The idea behind doing this was in order to make to the program cater more to the students' needs as they enter the workforce, at least in the College of Business.

From here, he could then show the results to other sub-colleges, and consider implementing these changes in the other sub-colleges at Eastern Michigan University as well, should the trial period go over well within the College of Business first. By doing this, a sense of uniformity in what to expect in the workforce, and what is expected of these students when they enter into their careers, would begin to appear across all majors and minors at Eastern Michigan University. It is my goal to show at the end of this, whether or not our students at the university feel they are prepared to enter the workforce, with the education on ethics they have received from the university to the date of this research.

The Research

The first research paper I looked into during the beginning portion of this process was *Malaysian university students' attitudes to academic dishonesty and business ethics*, by Zauwiyah Ahmad, Maimun Simun, and Junaini Mohammad. This study focused on looking into the attitudes and behaviors of Malaysian business school students who were in all levels of their studies, and what they thought of academic dishonesty, as well as bribery in the workforce. The research was conducted due to the severe punishments for cheating, with a reminder of the punishments given out at every final exam; yet there are still several cases in which cheating still occurred. This paper's definition of academic dishonesty is as follows: "Academic dishonesty involves behaviors such as cheating on examination, plagiarism, free-riding, and copying assignments" (Ahmad, et. al., 2). This is important, because while every school defines it differently, they all follow the same concept of using someone else's work for either assignments and essays, or quizzes and exams. This can be seen through a simple search on Google, such as at Berkeley City College, where it is defined as "any type of cheating that occurs in relation to a formal academic exercise,"^[2] meanwhile, Eastern Michigan University does not strictly define it, but states it involves cheating, falsification and plagiarism^[1].

The authors of this research paper also state there have been previous studies done in which students do not think academic dishonesty as morally unethical, and that it is actually social acceptable (Ahmad, et. al., 2). The most concerning portion of this statement is the fact these students think it is potentially acceptable, despite having the definition of academic dishonesty being read to them at least once during their school career. If it isn't read to them, they at least have access to it, via it being in a course

syllabus, or via the code of conduct handbook. Even with these readily available, these students still found it to be fine morally and these students are most likely to be involved in some sort of academic dishonesty, due to their blasé attitude about it, despite the consequences of participating in it.

The main cause for concern with this research is shown within the very first sentence of the paper, in which the authors state: “Academic dishonesty is believed to have predictive ability for subsequent behavior in the workplace” (Ahmad, et. al., 2). It is this quote that creates the thought process in which we have to consider the scandals of companies in the early 2000s, such as WorldCom and Enron. Is it possible those involved in these large scandals, which have paved laws and regulations in the United States since their occurrence, could have been avoided? This question of course is based on how those people who were involved would have viewed academic dishonesty, and if they had ever committed any type of it while they were in school. Is it possible that those involved had prior issues of academic dishonesty, even if it was something as minor as signing attendance for a friend who was not present? If the previous event occurred, what would stop them from clocking in or out a fellow co-worker? If this had actually occurred, this would have been a form of payroll fraud, and thus, a form of financial fraud.

Based on this research paper, other researchers in the past have studied which students are most likely to partake in some form of academic dishonesty, with business students from Hong Kong, America and Britain. From these studies it was concluded that it is, in fact, the American students who are most likely, out of all three countries, to be involved in some form of academic dishonesty, particularly with cheating (Ahmad, et.

al., 2). The study also found, through a different study, that students who were involved in academic dishonesty at some point in high school were most likely to cheat in their higher education studies as well (Ahmad, et. al., 3). With these two findings, we have to wonder if this was only based on cheating on assignments, exams and quizzes, or both.

The authors also point out that even though there appears to be a correlation between a student's view on ethics as a whole, and any cheating behaviors they may have. However, despite this fact, there have been fairly little studies on the correlation between this and business ethics (Ahmad, et. al., 3). It is because of this that I wanted to conduct my own research, as being an accounting student, focusing on the ethical and morality of employees and a company is important when analyzing their financial procedures and statements. For example, the scandal at Enron was possible due to a lack of internal controls, as well as a network of tight-knit relationships, where the auditing team ended up shredding many of the incriminating documents upon hearing there was to be an investigation into suspected fraud.

Similarly, the other largest scandal of the early 2000s was at WorldCom and it was made possible, because of the sheer simplicity of how their expenses were being incorrectly accounted for as capital expenditures. This had gone undetected for so long, most likely due to a lack of segregation of duties and an incorrect sense of trust and confidence they felt with Scott Sullivan. This incorrect classification and reporting of these expenses is something both accounting and finance students are taught over, and over again, as it is completely fraudulent, and should be avoided at all costs. However, this was somehow able to occur and not be caught for at least a year, because Scott

Sullivan was charismatic, and for all intents and purposes, seemed to be a financial genius.

In yet another scandal that is notably less talked about than its counterparts, Xerox also incorrectly stated their books. This time, it was done based on a lagging revenue system in which they “stored” revenues off of the balance sheet, and released the funds at differing times, based on when it was needed. Usually this type of fraud results in an improper face value and worth of stock in which, when a decrease in the stock price is estimated to occur, the funds are released. The second thing that occurred with Xerox was that they took the rental of equipment and wrongly classified it as a long-term lease. This then resulted in the temporary acceleration of revenue, which then resulted in inflated books. This is because while long-term leases can be accounted for during their first year of use, rentals must be accounted for throughout their lifespan of the said rental. However, unlike the previous two scandals at Enron and WorldCom, this company was able to move forward from their scandal, and still manage to thrive because the Securities and Exchange Commission actually did not accuse them of creating unearned income.

While it sounds like Xerox did create unearned income, because of their way of accounting for their revenues, they still had that money to begin with and had not factiously created it. Instead, Xerox had taken their income and spread it out in a manner that is not dictated in the United States’ Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (also known as GAAP) as appropriate. Due to this, while they were still charged with fraud, Xerox did not end up dissolving as a result of the investigation by the Securities and Exchanges Commission.

The paper *Malaysian university students' attitudes to academic dishonesty and business ethics* mentions that business students are more likely to cheat than their non-business major peers (Ahmad, et. al. 3). The authors also mention that another study found those students who had a more blasé attitude to cheating, also didn't tend to question their managers' unethical behaviors when situations with unethical proceedings occurred. They also found business students were far more tolerant to academic dishonesty than their non-business peers, which only further supports the theories, thesis statements and findings to this point. The authors state the point of, "attitudes to cheating have also been found to mediate the relationship between perceived opportunity and academic dishonesty and between self-control and academic dishonesty," which these authors gathered from one of their own research sources (Ahmad, et. al. 3). The study done by Ahmad, Simun and Mohammad was done by passing out a survey to students from several different classes, and the results of it can be seen on page seven of the paper.

One of the results from this had fifteen point four percent of respondents as thinking cheating on examinations is anywhere between mildly unacceptable to acceptable, with one point three percent of those respondents answer the survey as thinking it is acceptable. From this, eighteen point eight percent believe it is mildly unacceptable to strongly acceptable to "share" answers on an examination, while twenty-five point one percent believe it is mildly unacceptable to strongly acceptable to peek at friends' answers during an exam. Unfortunately, the percentages only go up from there once we move into quizzes, copying homework and the standard definition of plagiarism ("cut and paste"). The authors believe these results are these percentages because as a

student progresses into more demanding courses, the pressures of success and fears of failure also increase.

Another area of concern for the authors was whether students thought bribery would be an acceptable way of conducting business in the future (Ahmad, et. al., 8). The respondents were seen as thinking this was somewhat untrue to unarguably true, by seventy-eight point one percent. Even if we take out the answers that think bribery is somewhat unacceptable, the results still ends up being sixty-two point two percent of respondents thinking this is acceptable behavior. When this survey consists of one hundred and seventy students, this means at least one hundred and thirty-three students at this college think this is either acceptable in some situations, or is completely acceptable behavior to accept a bribe, at all times. If this is true to their character, it means at least one hundred and six of these students would most likely commit fraud to some degree, if they were bribed to do so.

As these students are the future managers and potential upper management personnel, where they will most likely have access to sensitive data at some point, these results are disturbing to say the least. If our future lays in these students hands, where over fifty percent of the students seem to think it is acceptable to some degree to commit this type of fraud, where will their companies they work for or lead end up? Where will the world's economy, and the morals we all once held, be once the time comes that these students are in charge of it all?

The second research paper I found was featured in the Journal of Asian Business Strategy, and because of this, the paper was very loosely translated to English for my

purposes. Because of this, the grammar makes it difficult to read, but the findings and theories made it worth including in this research. This article is named *The Relationship Between Personal Traits and Accounting Students Perception on Ethics and Love of Money: Case Of Malaysian Government-Linked University* and the authors are from the College of Business Management and Accounting, from National Energy University in Malaysia. The two authors are Elinda Esa, and Abdul Rahman Zahari. This article starts by giving a definition of ethics, as follows: “the principles and standards of moral behavior that is accepted by society, ‘right’ as opposed to ‘wrong.’” They also define it as “a moral obligation, responsibility and social justice of all parties involved in the decision process,” (Esa and Zahari, pg. 1) and accounting ethics as “the need to apply moral standards by accounting professions,” (Esa and Zahari, pg. 1). This definition is important, because as the authors point out, the decisions that managers make, are made because of the information provided by the financial team, and namely the accountants on that team (Esa and Zahari, pg. 1)

In this paper, the authors wanted to study how students of this Malaysian University viewed money, and their attitudes behind it. This was most likely due to the high number of students who believe it is acceptable to take a bribe, based on the study done from my first research paper, *Malaysian university students' attitudes to academic dishonesty and business ethics*. While it is never cited in the authors' resource page, I believe it was the cause of the research, based on how specific it is to studying the love of money in this research. The authors also briefly mention a study done previously at a Malaysian University, but never reference the actual article/study. The paper also mentions that there are other studies that have been done currently about the psychology

behind the love of money and individual's unethical behavior (Esa and Zahari, pg. 2). Thus, those individuals who viewed money as either being important, or the individuals valued it more than most other things, were most susceptible to cheating and being unethical (Esa and Zahari, pg. 2).

The authors go on to state there is a "significant relationship between love of money and job satisfaction, job turnover, and the quality of life in general" (Esa and Zahari, pg. 2). This could then explain why there are so many cases of fraud, especially in Malaysia, which is also pointed out on page two of this research as well, in the sentence "causes related to the ethical behavior in the organization especially in accounting profession is quite abundant" (Esa and Zahari, pg. 2). However, what is different from this research paper from the first one is that these authors based their research centered around their believes of it being important to study what perspective accounting students had about ethics, especially cheating. The authors also note that business students had a more laidback attitude about cheating and ethics, much like the first research paper had found (Esa and Zahari, pg. 2).

The paper continues on to later state that those who valued money, tended to work harder, as well as thrive in their achievements with any task they were given. As most organizational behavior studies have shown, when there is a dissatisfaction in the payment for achievements (be it unattainable goals in order to get a bonus, or a very low payment for an achievement), there is usually a higher turnover of jobs, a higher risk of theft, and a low sense of job ethic, which means the work will be done slower than normal, if it is done at all. All of these things are noted by this research by Esa and Zahari, on page two, under their subtopic titled, "Love of Money, Ethics, and

Personality.” However, I did notice the pair said dissatisfaction in payment results in low turnover, and I believe the pair was mistaken on what it means to have a low turnover rate, as dissatisfaction with pay would mean people leave their jobs quicker, while low job turnover would happen with high satisfaction of rewards for achievements. Esa and Zahari also state on page three, that in the United States is measured by money and income, as those who have high income tend to have a higher job satisfaction due to the pay they receive (thus, again reaffirming the higher job turnover for those jobs with low pay satisfaction and error from the researchers of this paper) (Esa and Zahari, pg. 3).

The authors Esa and Zahari did their research for their hypothesis statements, which can be found on page three and four of their paper, via questionnaire, much like the first research paper by Zauwiyah Ahmad, Maimun Simun, and Junaini Mohammad. Out of the questionnaires they gave out to the student body, one hundred and twenty-seven were given back, forty-two of which were male respondents, and eighty-five of which were female respondents. Of those results, one hundred and nineteen respondents were in their first or second year of college, and the remaining eight participants were in their third or fourth year at the university. From these one hundred and twenty-seven responses, sixty-seven respondents were intended on public accounting, and twenty-seven were intended on internal auditing for their careers.

The only rejected hypothesis out of the seven they proposed was as follows: “There is a significant influence between personality traits and the money is evil” (Esa and Zahari, pg. 4). Based on the results the authors received, there is a significant relationship between personality traits and ethics, and the achievement of money, the money is good, as well as there being a relationship between personality traits and the

respect, budget and the freedom of money. Thus, Esa and Zahari concluded on page seven that, “the study of ethics during education may enhance the awareness among what is ethical and what is not” (Esa and Zahari, pg. 7). This then supports my hypothesis of the need for more ethical awareness and perhaps a course at Eastern, where fraud cases are studied, and ethics is more rigorously defined than “an area of study that deals with ideas about what is good and bad behavior; a branch of philosophy dealing with what is morally right or wrong,” as defined by Merriam-Webster.

Mielke Student Business Ethics Essay Award

The next portion of my research involved the responses to the Mielke Business Ethics Scholarship Essay from Fall semester of 2015. The essays must answer a prompt, and must be five hundred to seven hundred and fifty words, and must be submitted by the date indicated on the webpage (<http://www.emich.edu/cob/students/mielke.php>). The reward and incentive for entering the scholarship contest is a \$500 minimum scholarship awarded to a maximum of two students for the Winter semester.

My supervising instructor, Professor Jens Stephan, recommended me to also participate in this by writing an essay of my own and then submitting it, so that I could compare my thoughts to everyone else's who submitted an essay. He also wanted to potentially have me on the board that read the essays and gave an opinion, or to at least be involved in the discussion of the essays as they were being chosen. However, it was believed if I participated in the essay writing, it would be a conflict of interest to also be involved in the discussion of the essays chosen to win the awards, and therefore, we ended up foregoing that option.

In Fall of 2015, as the prompts change each time, the prompt for these scholarship essays was as follows:

“‘Integrity isn't really a value in itself; it is simply the value that guarantees all the other values.’ Integrity, honesty, and trust are essential ethical issues businesses must face routinely. Here in the College of Business, our Ethos and Professional Statements emphasize these important core values.

What are important practices – within the COB, among our college's leaders, and within our classrooms performed by faculty and students -- that contribute to the recognition that our graduates are professional men and women who embrace these core values?"

There were eleven submissions in total for the Fall 2015 semester, including my own which I have not included in my research, in order to avoid any bias on the topic. I have included eight of the ten applicable essays, and while the remaining two were read and were good entries, I have not included them in my quotations and references due to them reiterating the same points the previous eight essays had already concluded. To ensure anonymity of the responses, Professor Stephan made sure to mark out any names and ID numbers on the physical copies before giving them to me to read.

Those who are not in the College of Business at some point to either take a class or teach one may not have heard the Ethos or the Professional statement before, and it is as follows:

“The College of Business students, faculty and staff comprise a professional, interdependent community committed to perfecting responsible, ethical business professionals to serve business and the wider world. Through a positive learning experience mirroring the business world's best aspects, the community respects the group's mission and the individuals comprising it. Community members foster the COB ethos through behavior growing from six interrelated values:

1. Integrity: Integrity is practicing in all areas of life what we profess to believe. It is commitment to professional standards in the whole person.

2. **Honesty:** Honesty requires respect for the truth; it means being truthful, sincere, and straightforward.
3. **Trustworthiness:** Growing out of integrity and honesty, trustworthiness is the confidence others have that we mean what we say; we can be counted on.
4. **Respect:** Respect is deference or esteem for what we value. We recognize others' worth as ends, not means. Respect is key to our other values.
5. **Learning:** We value learning as an end in itself and as a practical tool for success in lifelong professional growth. We gain up-to-date, practical and theoretical knowledge through effective, often participative learning and research.
6. **The Work Ethic:** We practice self-reliance and responsibility to our business profession and community. We are industrious and often self-supporting," ("Ethos Statement").

Student A

The first of these essays, the student, who I will call Student A to keep anonymity, starts by saying, "These behaviors are individual traits and choices; not conducted by our entire society, but publicized to be embraced by those who are different," (Student A, pg. 1). Another quote by the student states, "Integrity, honesty and trust are learned behaviors. Often instilled as a child, but developed as you mature and grasp a greater understanding of who you are and how you intend to treat others," (Student A, pg. 1).

Everything Student A points out in their first paragraph is true, and I agree with. I have a sense of ethics and morality based on what my father taught me growing up, and it evolved as I went from a child, to a teenager, and finally to an adult. The morals and ethics I held until I started to attend college were loose, and still held the ability to be molded. This is exactly what happened within my first year at Eastern Michigan University, where my professors pushed us to explore what we found to be right and wrong, and to explain why. My professor in my first year challenged me to analyze situations and decide why my opinions were what they were at that time, especially during my courses at the College of Business where Enron and WorldCom were touched on at least once in all of my introductory Accounting, Finance and Management courses.

This student also mentions a specific professor who told them to trust their instincts, and to learn from their mistakes (Student A, pg. 1). They then mentioned another specific professor, who taught the student to be fearless of what they believe in, while remaining articulate and educated in how they present their arguments (Student A, pg. 1). This professor also taught them to remain honest and to always keep the Ethos statement in mind while they did their schoolwork in all classes, not just the class with this professor (Student A, pg. 1). And finally, there is one more professor the student mentions, where the professor taught their students to set goals, achieve them, while keeping integrity in mind and upholding the ideals of it (Student A, pg. 1).

All of these points Student A brings up about their courses at Eastern Michigan University hold true to my own experience at the university at least in my first year. However, we must also bear in mind the teachings of one professor are not transferable and translatable to another professor. Each professor's teaching style is different from

another professor's teaching style, and their perspectives of ethics and morals will vary, based on their own upbringing and schooling. With this in mind, this is exactly why I am adamant on a more structured course section on ethics. Because while one professor may talk tirelessly about the classic fraud cases and ask for opinions from the students, others will only briefly mention them, and only if it is necessary to the coursework. In even other instances, some students may feel they know everything they need to know about ethics and won't listen, since they will not keep an open mind and mold their own ethics as they grow into their careers.

This student also mentions, "Eastern Michigan University has given us a platform to perform at our best, develop team oriented relationships and prepared us for future career challenges while giving us the tools needed in order to succeed," (Student A, pg. 1). While I can appreciate what Student A is trying to do with this sentence, it brought just one question to mind: how? How is Eastern Michigan University providing a "platform to perform our best" and teaching us to be team oriented? If anything, throughout my four years at Eastern Michigan University, when I'm stuck in a group project, there are often people who won't do their work, and I often am the one to pick up their slack. There have been too many times where I am the one who does the most work, or I am designated the groups "brain." This of course means I am the leader of the group, and I am the one picking up where others end up being lax on their parts, designating when things are due, and I often end up going to the professor about those not doing their parts, thus also deeming me the "bad guy."

If anything, being in group projects has taught me to be more individualistically driven and to loathe when I have to do team oriented projects. While it prepared me for

my career where I will end up doing group oriented projects and will just have to suffer through it, it still begs the question of how does Eastern Michigan University teach us to be team oriented? I ask this because when the only safety net for a group project is at the end, when you can rate your groupmates, and let the teacher know what grade they get, how does this set up a platform to perform our best, when my groupmates aren't doing their best and what is expected of them? What is the point, if at the end of the project with my group I still ended up being the one to write twenty pages for a twenty-five page report? Shouldn't there be a failsafe during the lifetime of the project where we don't get deducted for the parts someone didn't do, or someone else is put onto the project? Yet many professors haven't adapted this ideology yet. While it is still a relief when we get to grade our peers based on the work they contributed, and we have the opportunity to give them a zero and explain why, how does this prepare us for "future career challenges?" In a real scenario, your supervisor would first talk to the person, and if it continued to be an issue, they would either take disciplinary action, or they would simply replace the person on the project with someone better fitted and hard-working. Yet we often don't have this in our courses, and thus, I fail to see how we have received a platform to perform our best, as Student A has mentioned.

What platform does Eastern Michigan University provide for doing our best work? While all of these are qualities I can see Eastern Michigan University attempting and striving for, as well as the College of Business, Student A does not discuss why they feel this way, and instead simply pops in rosy words that make someone reading it feel positively towards Eastern Michigan University, all while not giving the reader much insight as to why they feel this way. In fact, the second page states, "There is no

coincidence that an eagle is our mascot; as eagles were created to soar! The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the word soar as: to rise quickly upward to a great height,” (Student A, pg. 2). When I first read this, the first thought in mind was that this has absolutely nothing to do with the topic, and it also came out of nowhere, almost as though it were filler to meet the minimum word count. Putting this with the previous quote about a “platform” to excel, it almost feels that the student did not truly understand the prompt and did not have an exact answer for what ethics is. This further solidifies the need for a standard definition and expectation of ethics to be taught during a required course.

Student B

The second submission for the Mielke Ethics Essay was from a student, who I will call Student B, and states how students behave in a classroom setting, directly correlates with how a student will behave in a professional environment (Student B, pg. 1). Ergo, if these students cheat in a classroom, they will find a way to cheat in their professional life as well. While I agree with this, and it is the basis of my research, how does the student believe this translates into the career of one who cheats? What does cheating equate to in the professional world according to the student?

The student continues by saying, “Eastern can stop cheating by having a zero tolerance policy on cheating as well as by having professors who emphasize the importance of academic integrity,” (Student B, pg. 1). However, Eastern Michigan University already has a zero tolerance policy from my understanding, and if the University doesn’t already have it, how would this policy actually be implemented and

adhered to? Without students reporting cheating, all forms of academic dishonesty, especially cheating and assignment copying would still continue to happen. This is why we need to teach ethics and morals a little more rigorously. The reports of cheating would go up, if students felt they should always report cheating when they see it, regardless of whether it directly affects them or not, would be the key point to focus on with this policy. In the same paragraph, Student B also says if students are accustomed to strict punishments for academic dishonesty, they will be used to the risks and the consequences in the real world may not be as alarming (Student B, pg. 1). However, doesn't this idea go directly against the zero tolerance policy this person just mentioned literally just a sentence before?

The next portion the student states is, "Students can be taught that integrity can help professionals enjoy successful business careers, and that social responsibility from corporations can be advantageous to them," (Student B, pg. 2). If this is true, this only further reaffirms the need for a more defined course or at least coursework for ethics, morality and acceptable behavior in a student's upcoming professional life. Perhaps if these students knew what to expect in their professional lives should they get involved in an unethical and immoral situation while in their career, they would be less likely to be involved in it. By establishing a set conversation and guidelines about how to demonstrate your morals, in a particularly difficult situation, and to stick to your morals regardless of the scenario you're stuck in.

Student B continues on page two with stating their idea for the school to make ethics easier to understand and recognize is to establish clear policies about cheating, plagiarism, and free-riding, and to give real world scenarios of immoral actions and

difficult situations. They also mention having staff clearly set a distinct example for the students at the University, and to initiate that role as a role model to them based on how integrity looks, as well as how those with a genuine, deep intuitive sense of morals and integrity, behave and carry themselves. While I think these ideas tie into the general theme every person has had throughout each piece of this research and in these essays, I think Eastern Michigan University already has these in action and has for years.

In the four years I have attended Eastern Michigan University and the College of Business, I have never experienced a teacher who does not stand out as the absolute epitome of integrity, respect, morals and dignity. In every class I have taken during these four years, the repercussions of participating in any type of academic dishonesty is read out on the first day as class, as well as the professor's own personal consequences and punishments for it, as every professor handles it differently. While I do believe there should be a more straight forward, black and white expectation of ethics and that meaning, I think what Student B proposes is already in place at Eastern Michigan University, and the College of Business, at this point in time.

Student C

The next student's essay, Student C as I will refer to them, immediately earned a reaction of pure confusion after completing reading over their essay. The main cause for confusion was I was unsure exactly how their points tied into the ethos statement, per the prompt given for the essay in the first place. The only part that really seemed to tie into the prompt given was on the student's second page, when they state, "The professors in the College of Business truly want their students to succeed, and will go above and

beyond to ensure their success. This demonstrates the integrity our professors possess,” (Student C, pg. 2). While this does sound accurate to the teachers I’ve had in my four years here, which seems to be the consensus with a plethora of other students at the College of Business, the student doesn’t explain how the professors ensuring the success of their students ties into their integrity they embody.

Due to being the president of Beta Alpha Psi at Eastern Michigan University, I have talked to over one hundred students, who I can have a fluid conversation about what professors they feel are the best, and whether they feel they have learned enough about their career from the professors. During these conversations, I always ask the students why they liked that professor, and whether or not they felt their professors had been ethical and moral in their own careers before coming to the university to teach, as most professors worked at firms early in their careers. I also take this moment to reiterate their points back or to mention other professors worthy of attention for their honesty, integrity and the way they conduct their class. I have yet to talk to a student who feels the professors have ever done anything that would be frowned upon or viewed as unacceptable and immoral, both before their careers at Eastern Michigan University, or during their current careers at the university.

However, I do not see how integrity can be made readily apparent based on the professors eating in the Eagle Café with the students, or by leaving their office doors open when they are in there, as Student C points out on their second page (Student C, pg. 2). While these are all extremely attractive qualities the professors exhibit at the College of Business, I don’t see how it actually ties into the idea of integrity, other than having the integrity of being forward and honest with students, while not hiding who they really

are from their students. Just because someone does not act authoritative or as part of the administration, does not mean they have integrity, it just means they are polite, and easily approachable, as they should be as a professor, and nothing more than this.

Student D

The next essay I received from the Mielke Ethics Award essay submissions, came from Student D, who has been through a potentially difficult situation in which they had to make a decision for themselves, as to whether they would listen to what their boss told them to do, or to stand firm in their beliefs and possibly threaten their success in their career. Due to this, the student states in their third paragraph:

“The COB Ethos Statement is not just a section of the syllabus that students see at the beginning of every course; the set of values is a guide that shows students how to be responsible, ethical business professionals. These values – integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, respect, learning and work ethic – are interconnected, and none of them are enough on their own. You can’t be trusted unless you’re always honest; you won’t be respected unless you exhibit a strong work ethic,”
(Student D, pg. 1).

What this student relays here is a large part of the Ethos Statement at the College of Business. The purpose of our Ethos Statement is to ensure everyone always remains honest, open and respectful, all while staying true to their values. It is because of these three things that a strong work ethic can occur and be worked towards, and a large part of this is the rigorous course structure implemented. It encourages students to work hard for their grades, and shows a reflection on who they really are and they work they do –

therefore, an A is not just “given out” and is instead strived for, and those who achieve it, do so because they worked very hard to get it. Because of the professors at the College of Business, and their teachings are considered to be encouraging, rigorous and helpful all at the same time, the student who wrote this essay felt they were able to make the correct choice in their difficult situation. In fact, Student D states they feel the College of Business is able to embody the Ethos Statement because they set forth an example, via their staff, for current students, all while keeping open arms for their prospective students (Student D, pg. 1).

Student D then goes on to state how both the faculty and students influence others to enforce the ethos statement and always adhere to it. In their opinion, this process is done by creating an accepting, judgement-free environment where everyone can learn instead of being constantly concerned about judged for a differing opinion or one that has not been well rounded yet from other’s opinions (Student D, pg. 2). The student also says the embodiment of integrity and respect comes from the willingness faculty and students have in working together for a common goal (Student D, pg. 2). While the professors at the College of Business provide both College of Business’ and their own expectations, they also give the feedback students need to hear in order to both improve themselves and to grow as an individual. Also, the professors provide the chance to receive completely open and honest advice about their students’ future careers, and to let them know what to expect in the upcoming years until they retire one day. By offering this valuable information, the students at the College of Business can decide for themselves what routes they want to pursue, such as public, private, or industry, and more, based on what they feel is best for them. This is easily done due to the vast variety

of faculty we have at the College of Business, where we can get opinions from those who have worked at a Big Four firm, as well as from those who have worked at a small local firm where there were only twenty employees at a time.

By having the ability to talk to someone from each side of the industry the student is entering for their career, they are able to get a sense for what best fits their lifestyle and desires for their futures. For example, with myself, I knew public accounting wasn't going to be the industry for me to work in for the remainder of my life when I heard that sixty hour work weeks were the minimum that could be worked during busy season, and that it was more likely to hit seventy or eighty hours each week. As someone who wanted a family and time with said family, I knew that getting roughly twenty to thirty hours less with them each week for three months for the next forty years was not a feasible plan, for an extra twenty thousand dollars, on average, a year. However, most professors in the Accounting and Finance department, have gone into public accounting at some point, as well as sat for the Certified Public Accountant examination. Due to the way both the bachelors and master's programs at Eastern Michigan University's College of Business are designed for Accounting, it is constantly assumed everyone will sit for the Certified Public Accountant examination. However, when I found out there were other options, such as working for a university as something other than a professor or lecturer, I knew it was the route I wanted to take, and I felt comfortable talking to my professors about it to hear the pros and cons for it.

After these discussions, it was decided it was the best route for my interests with accounting, and for my outlook on my future goals, to go into a part of the field where I would not have the requirements like busy season at a public accounting firm, and to go a

university instead. If I did not feel comfortable with my professors and knew that in the end, they really had my best interests in mind, so I could grow as a person and become my own person, I never would have talked to them about how I felt. If I sensed they were working towards an opposing goal for me, I never would have sat down with my professors and had the tough conversations of my future, with them to begin with. It is because my expectations and goals were made clear, much like my professors' expectations and goals I have heard and seen since my first year at Eastern Michigan University, that I could make this decision and talk so openly about it, all while feeling confident about the answers I received from my professors with advice for my career.

Student D concludes their paper with the following paragraph: "While I know I don't always make the right choices, I understand that true integrity comes from admitting your mistakes and working to rectify them. I am honored to attend a college with leaders, faculty and students who know the value of integrity and strive to make ethical choices in both their professional and personal lives," (Student D, pg. 3). It is my experience that it is the hope of the professors and the administration at the College of Business, for every student to reach this conclusion while in their college career. It is always their hope for each of their students to reflect on the decisions they made in their career and feel completely confident in the path they took, as long as they remained respectful of others, and true to themselves, rather than bowing to the whims of upper management, when they may be in a complete ethical dilemma. It is this thought process of what is expected of a student, and how the professors push their students to do their best, that has led students to choose to do the right thing, even in a difficult situation like Student D has already experienced at work.

Student E

Student E opens by saying, “Any student or student organization who encourages, witnesses, condones, or participates in academic dishonesty concerning exams, assignments, research, grades or records will meet the proper consequences,” which comes directly from the code of conduct (Student E, pg. 1). This would mean that everyone is held equally accountable across the board, and will face the same consequences, no matter what role those involved is. This sentence clearly states that if it was a single student or an entire collection of students, they will all be apprehended at the same level across the board, and they will all have the same punishments based on the severity of the charges they face, regardless of who they are or what role they play at the college. By having this in our code of conduct at Eastern Michigan University, students can feel confident and comfortable in the fact that when they choose to report someone for any form of academic dishonesty, it will not matter if they are a president of a fairly reputable student organization at both the College of Business, and at the University as a whole, because they will still receive the same punishments as those who are just an average student.

Student E continues on the second page with the following sentence: “Faculty and staff are undeniably committed to ensuring success among EMU business students and mold them into ethical, responsible business professionals to serve business,” (Student E, pg. 2). This is derived from the Ethos Statement, which I provided on page twenty of the thesis, but it is important to ask how is this successfully completed and attained from every person involved? Is there any process we don’t see on the forefront, but is occurring in the background, that ensures this goal is actually accomplished?

Student F

The next essay I read was Student F's essay, in which the student states in every class they have taken, the professors have all stressed the importance of being professional at every step of their careers (Student F, pg. 1). Because of this, students know how they should be conducting themselves both academically and professionally, and how to carry themselves throughout the rest of their lives. This is helpful for those who have never had a job before or have only worked in places such as retail or fast food, where the environment is completely different than that of the student's future career. While prior jobs may have a code of conduct, the prior jobs are more likely to be lenient and if they get written up at those jobs, it is less likely to impact their future jobs, unlike their career, where the firms will consistently talk to each other about candidates and employees. Knowing how to be, and act, professional is half of the battle for starting one's career upon graduation or for an internship, and can be the difference between keeping a job for just a few weeks or months, and from having a career where you have been at the job for years.

Student F continues on the second page by saying the professors at the College of Business all read out their syllabus the first day of class, each semester, and that this shows both honesty and integrity (Student F, pg. 2). They argue that this is because of two reasons: "1. The entire teaching staff includes the values in their syllabus which shows it being united and undivided" and, "2. The values express being honest and moral which groups integrity as a whole," (Student F, pg. 2). What this means is that each and every professor believes in their syllabus so much, and believes it is crucial for the

students to both know what is expected of them, and to have them realize how fair and just their grading system is, as well as their policy for cheating and plagiarism.

The student continues to list a few courses where they had to work in a team, and how this taught them the skills they will need to acquire before they start their careers, and for the future courses at the College of Business. However, while the student says these courses helped them with this, they don't state how the courses helped these skill sets develop, other than the experience they talk about with a group project where the student, much like I mentioned earlier, had to pick up the sack for another student in their group. However, unlike me, this student believes that "instead of getting upset, one has to do whatever you can to motivate the others around you and if that does not work, do your part in order to make sure your work greatly reflects yourself," (Student F, pg. 3). While this is true, as I mentioned earlier, this isn't necessarily how career jobs work. Instead, it is expected for those involved in groups in work environments, to report back to their superiors when there is a conflict in the work, such as when one person does not do their portion of work, as I have explained earlier. So while the group projects are a learning experience for everyone, it is not necessarily accurate to the real world and the expectations of group participation in team projects.

Student G

The next student is Student G, and this student states, "Academic dishonesty contradicts the very message of the degree itself, sending out a false message to peers and employers about who that graduate is as a person and what their capabilities are," (Student G, pg. 1). This is important to note, because if that is how it is perceived, and I

do believe it is perceived in this way, then why are there still occurrences of it, to this day, even if there are severe consequences such as failing the course or expulsion? This idea then ties back into the studies done at the Malaysian University, done by Zauwiyah Ahmad, Maimun Simun, and Junaini Mohammad, where the students were well aware of the punishments for academic dishonesty. Yet, a jarring eighteen percent of respondents thought it was okay to share answers, to some degree, and even more thought bribery is acceptable in both the business world, and in their academic careers (see page thirteen). So if students know the potential penalties for participating in academic dishonesty, why does it still occur?

Student G continues with a paragraph about the Ethos and Professional statements. They state:

“These statements not only serve as a reminder to students of what they strive to be, but as a promise to peers and employers of what kind of professionals they can expect from Eastern Michigan University. These statements assert that the College of Business is ‘committed to perfecting responsible, ethical business professionals to serve business and the wider world,’ particularly through the values of integrity, honesty trustworthiness, respect, learning and work ethic. The College of Business also has seminars to educate faculty on how to prevent and detect academic dishonesty,” (Student G, pg. 1).

This statement reflects on why the Ethos and Professional Statements are even a concept at the College of Business, and why all of the courses reflect on it, as well as adhere to the common goal the statements try to accomplish. By these being followed in

the College of Business, the businesses and firms that come to recruit here can rest assured that the candidates they have chosen for their recruiting process are their best options, and that the candidates are honest, trustworthy and moral. This would mean those they pick for positions will not need to be monitored as closely as others, as these students from the College of Business have already been held to a high standard of work and expectations.

Student H

The next student I will refer to as Student H, and they said when they first read the Ethos Statement, it was fairly intimidating as it showed how serious they should take their academic career at the College of Business, as well as Eastern Michigan University as a whole (Student H, pg. 1). The student then continues by saying that now it is more of a reminder to be the type of person they would want to hire, by being the best student and person they can possibly be (Student H, pg. 1). The student then goes on to say that all of the professors are honest, and this is shown through the professors telling their stories of how they went through their academic career, as well as their professional career, and how they ended up at Eastern Michigan University to finish out their careers (Student H, pg. 1). It is also noted that at the alumni conferences every year, the alumni explains how they went from students at the College of Business, to the professionals they are today (Student H, pg. 1). The constant feedback the students receive from their professors, alumni, and recruiters, only further solidifies the usefulness of the Ethos and Professional Statements which are heavily instilled into every course and classroom, and causes all students and faculty to work towards a common goal. This further instills the values and skills attained from working hard to strive towards the common goal set forth

by these statements. In my own opinion, the common goal with these statements is to create ethical, moral, hard-working and honest individuals who are also open to teamwork and group projects.

This is also attained by the process mentioned on the second page of Student H's essay, where students are now a part of the interview process for potential professors (Student H, pg. 2). This is a new process in the Finance Department and allows students to voice their concerns about a candidate, as well as offering the opportunity to see if the candidate is actually a good fit for the tight knit community at the College of Business. This is especially helpful if there is a concern for a potential disconnect between the professor and their teachings, and the students who would be taking their classes. This allows the administrators in the Finance Department to decide how they would like to proceed, and it also allows the candidates for lecturing the unique opportunity to adapt their lesson plans before they even begin to lecture at the College of Business: something that would essentially be unattainable or at least unlikely before this new process. This also provides the opportunity to get opinions on what is important to the students, on what their professors possess and teach. Instead of it being based solely on the evaluations done at the end of the semester, students are able to give their opinions of a candidate before said candidate is even offered a position at the university. This can then alter whether or not a professor should receive tenure or not, instead of them receiving it, and all students in later classes resenting the decision, especially as the lecturer continues to lecture exactly the same and never change. Most students I have spoken with in the past come to resent the tenured professors, as they don't change the way they lecture, and it has remained consistent as though they are still teaching students in a class from the

early nineties. Many students often come away from the courses with tenured professors saying the University needs to politely ask the professor to respectfully retire, or to talk to them about changing their methods of lecturing and how to treat their students.

Conclusions

The conclusions I can determine, based on my research, as well as the essays from my peers, are as follows: a more rigorous course or coursework on ethics should be adapted; reporting of a peer should gain a reward system potentially; and that the Ethos and Professional Statements have a positive impact on the students at the College of Business. I believe a more rigorous course or coursework should be considered where the coursework should include, but is not limited to: the definition of ethics; several different scenarios of difficult ethical scenarios; ethic case studies such as Xerox, Enron and smaller fraud scandals that are not currently talked about as much in other courses at the College of Business; steps to sticking to your beliefs even in situations where you may be in trouble with your work or boss, and more. The reason I can conclude this is due to the fact pointed out by Zauwiyah Ahmad, Maimun Simun, and Junaini Mohammad, where currently students in the United States are most likely to cheat between Britain, Hong Kong and the United States. They also report the statistics from the study done by these same individuals, a significant amount of students being okay to some degree with plagiarism, cheating and more. Based on this fact, Eastern Michigan University and its sub-colleges (i.e. the College of Business) should take a few extra precautions by having a portion of at least one of their required courses detailing ethics, morality, honesty, professionalism and integrity.

The university and its sub-colleges should also consider adding a small rewards system for reporting students who are cheating, should they be found guilty of doing it. The rewards could be something as small as a candy bag to something like one free meal to the Commons or the Eateries. An incentive could help with reports of academic

dishonesty, and it would be made very clear the university has a no tolerance policy for academic dishonesty. While it is not required to implement the system, based on a survey I collected and did not include here due to a lack of response, three out of the four people who turned in the survey would either potentially report it if it was their own work, or they would never report it. Therefore, if at least half the student body will leave reports of academic dishonesty alone at this time, we have to wonder why it is happening and why students feel this way, and the university should try to change the way students feel about reporting someone.

Finally, it can also be concluded that the College of Business having the Ethos and Professional Statements has positively impacted its students, based on the responses from the students from the Mielke Business Ethics essay submissions. All of them responded to the prompt positively and explained why the statements had a positive impact on their academic careers and hopefully for their professional careers as well. All of the essays described a plethora of well-liked professors, who all uphold a high standard of professionalism, integrity, honesty and trustworthiness, as well as having and expecting a high level of work ethic. They also describe professors who take pride in their work from the very first day of class, where they walk through their syllabi and address any concerns the students may have.

All in all, the students at Eastern Michigan University and at the College of Business seem to understand the idea of ethics and morality, yet academic dishonesty will go unreported. While it is a fantastic thing to know the student body at Eastern Michigan University and its sub-colleges are at least aware of how they should be behaving and what is considered unacceptable, most students who have committed academic

dishonesty before will do it again, and this cycle must be broken. This would be done through a required course having a section dedicated just to ethics, as well as making the reporting of someone committing academic dishonesty more rewarding, to avoid the students feeling as though they are a “tattle-tale” or a whistle-blower. Also, it has been made clear that by having statements such as the Ethos and Professional Statements at the College of Business, students know what is expected of themselves, and their professors. These statements stay with the students throughout their academic careers, and also follow them into their professional careers as well, based on what alumni say.

In conclusion, Eastern Michigan University should re-evaluate their current system for reporting academic dishonesty, and also encourage all sub-colleges to have an Ethos and Professional Statement. The College of Business should also consider adding at least a two day section of a course to be dedicated to ethics, so students can not only understand the definition of ethics, but to also understand why they are so important, based on previous fraud cases where ethics hit a low point at some point which allowed the fraud to happen.

Appendix

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Student A

We live in a day and time to which fraudulent business deals are the norm, individuals cheat to win, and racism resides within some of the hearts and minds of people all around the globe. All of these behaviors are individual traits and choices; not conducted by our entire society, but publicized to be embraced by those who are different. Integrity, honesty and trust are learned behaviors. Often instilled as a child, but developed as you mature and grasp a greater understanding of who you are and how you intend to treat others. These attributes are affirmative influences in the workplace, in relationships within our schools and communities. So it is important to ask yourself, are my values making a positive contribution?

Throughout my tenure as a student at Eastern Michigan University's College of Business, I have witnessed first-hand a cohesive, caring and fruitful learning environment that has challenged me to not only become a better student, but an overall better person. Professor Vielhaber, introduced me to a courage to **trust** in what I know, and to own my mistakes, learn from them and expect improvement. Dr. Day instilled fearlessness to speak in front of others with shoulders straight, and an articulate tone. She ensured that her students were **honest** and aware of the EMU ETHOS statement, to which we should model our schoolwork by. Dr. Fraya Wagner-Marsh, a Human Resources icon who aims to develop students and keep them focused. Admonishing them to pursue goals, whatever they may be, while walking in **integrity**. These examples, coupled with my own personal values have given me a true illustration of morality and have set a standard, that I intend to mimic in all areas of my life.

My experience with my peers have been nothing short of amazing. The student body at Eastern Michigan University's College of Business are respectful, motivated and career driven. Eastern Michigan University has given us a platform to perform at our best, develop team oriented relationships and prepared us for future career challenges while giving us the tools needed in order to succeed. It is appreciated that the College of Business carefully admits students that are like minded, but more importantly, individuals that embody and model values that have been developed prior to attending a college campus.

Being equipped with professors that truly care, coursework that will cultivate my skills and all the resources needed in order to flourish; I delight in the desire to become a future College of Business Graduate School alumni from one of the best higher educational institutions in Michigan. There is no coincidence that an eagle is our mascot; as eagles were created to soar! The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the word soar as: to rise quickly upward to a great height. That doesn't just come from being academically astute, or graduating from a great university. But it is cultivated by professors that are exhibiting ethical behavior by what they teach and how they treat students and other faculty. Students that respect themselves and others by maintaining a diverse, united learning environment where people are free to be who they are, share opinions, and learn together. And a personal commitment to exemplify the principles acquired throughout ones journey. To soar is to be well rounded in all areas; not wavering in kindness, honesty, integrity and meekness.

Education is the key to unlock so many doors. Not only has my educational road been a testament of my true values, it is proof that when others display

these same beliefs, how powerful an institution can be. I am grateful for the education that I have been able to attain thus far, and because of the exemplars of faculty, staff and fellow peers who have upheld their morals I have been able to obtain an education in a place to which my values did not have to be compromised. What I have earned as student is exactly what education is designed to do; to teach, challenge, change and prepare. I am fully prepared for Corporate America, with a positive attitude and a strong desire to be successful. I am thankful for the opportunity to apply my values at such prestigious university, and obtained a greater understanding of who I am by being a part of the College of Business. I am proud to be an EAGLE, but even more proud that my positive contribution was just a fraction of the contributions I received in return.

Student B

Three weeks ago, I met at a coffee shop with some older gentlemen who were friends of my family. As I talked to them, I told them about a class that I am taking at EMU on Management Ethics and Responsibility. When I told them about this particular class, they responded by saying that, “there are no ethics and responsibility in today’s business world.” Clearly, these men, most likely from personal experience, believe that integrity is not common to business. My goal is that Eastern students would help prove to these men that integrity still does exist. As an Eastern student, I believe that EMU grads can display professionalism and integrity in a way that represents the school’s program and culture. Ways that EMU can stand apart in training ethical graduates include clear policies on academic dishonesty in the classroom, classes that demonstrate the importance of ethical behavior in the business world, and a university staff that represents the same integrity that EMU graduates are expected to display.

I hold the opinion that how a student works in the classroom translates to how that student will work in a professional environment. For example, if cheating is allowed to persist across Eastern classrooms, then graduates will head to professional jobs with the idea that cheating is acceptable. Eastern can stop cheating by having a zero tolerance policy on cheating as well as by having professors who emphasize the importance of academic integrity. In the real world, dishonesty leads to punishments and consequences that are often severe. If students are used to major punishments for academic dishonesty, heading to the business world with the threat of punishments for dishonesty may not be as alarming. In all of my classes, my professors have mentioned the policies on cheating and plagiarism, which has helped students to start the class with an understanding of why

cheating is unacceptable at Eastern. Another important resource that Eastern has on this topic is in the student code of conduct. My class syllabi have had directions to the Student code of conduct for students to study an extensive definition of cheating. Reading this code of conduct has given me a better idea of how to conduct myself as a student in the classroom, and I believe that this is vital for emphasizing integrity at Eastern Michigan University.

The College of business can play a part in helping graduating students to maintain integrity in the professional world by offering courses that show students the importance of integrity. For example, the accounting program teaches students about the Enron and Worldcom scandals. Learning about these scandals helps students to see the consequences of unethical behavior. Students can see that the management at these companies not only lost their jobs and caused their companies to collapse, but they harmed countless stakeholders through their actions. Lessons like these throughout all majors of the College of Business can help students learn about the importance of integrity in the workplace. Students can be taught that integrity can help professionals enjoy successful business careers, and that social responsibility from corporations is advantageous to them. I believe that professionals who are committed to integrity in the business world have an advantage over those who are not, and EMU can teach its students how having integrity can benefit their professional careers.

The way that Eastern's staff conducts themselves is a major reflection on the university, and sends a certain message to graduating students. The staff plays a role in developing ethical graduates through setting the example of integrity. Students look up to Eastern staff as role models and see many staff members in the College of Business as

examples of success in the business world. The way that Eastern operates as a university helps set the example for students, starting with the actions of top executives and moving down to every staff member in the school.

Eastern is a university that can establish itself as a paragon of teaching ethical behaviors to its graduating students. The school can do this through establishing clear policies on academic dishonesty, clearly showing students through real world examples the benefits of integrity and having staff that set the example for students of what integrity looks like. When I graduate, I believe that myself, and other Alumni can show people that ethics and responsibility does exist in the business world. Eastern graduates can erase all doubt on the subject and be crucial to bringing ethical behavior and responsibility to the business world.

Student C

When one walks into the Eastern Michigan University College of Business, they immediately feel at home. Whether it is a warm welcome from the custodian, a friendly smile from a student, a handshake with a professor, or quick chat with the Dean, the College of Business possesses a more-than welcoming atmosphere. The environment is professional, and mirror's the business world's greatest aspects. The flags from all across the globe make international students and guests feel welcome, and are an important representation of the diversity of our elite school. Within such a diverse community, everyone feels welcome knowing that they are working toward a common goal: to graduate from one of the best business schools in the Midwest, Eastern Michigan University.

Eastern Michigan University College of Business students are all bound together by a set of ethos that are easily recognized among regulars and guests of the College of Business. Through the interrelated values of integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, respect, learning, and the work ethic, Eastern students learn far beyond the classroom, what it takes to be successful in the business world. Employers know that Eastern Michigan graduates are going to be professional, productive men and women in the workplace. This is evident through our business school's AACSB Accreditation, and our core business classes that sample each field of business, creating a well-rounded graduate with any business degree. However, our graduates go far beyond excelling in the classroom.

Our students are involved, taking part in the 16 student organizations available at the College of Business, the career fairs, the alumni conference, the business of the year

awards, and more. Our students are given the opportunity to work alongside professors in the field of research, and get to know them on an individual basis. Eastern students excel in their fields because they practice in their fields, gaining experience through the various internships available to our students in southeast Michigan and beyond.

One thing that separates Eastern Michigan University from other schools is the availability of our professors to our students. The faculty at EMU truly makes themselves accessible to students through office hours, emails, and appointments. Oftentimes professors eat in the cafeteria with students, or leave their office doors open for students to come in and interrupt their lunches. The professors in the College of Business Truly want their students to succeed, and will go above and beyond to ensure this success. This demonstrates the integrity that our professors possess. Years down the road, professors won't remember if you passed or failed their class, but they know that they did their best to teach our students the material to the best of their ability.

Our college's leaders possess the values instilled in our ethos statement every day. If a student wants to meet with the Dean of the College of Business, he will gladly meet with you. Not only will he talk with you, he will remember your name, major, and the things that are going on in your life. By setting this example, the Dean demonstrates his role as "the boss" of the workplace, and sets an incredible example for the students enrolled. Other administration members always make an appearance at College of Business too. From the president of the university, to the vice-president of marketing, these figures do not act like they are anyone in the administration, but make themselves available to students to serve as a resource and set an example for students to follow.

Eastern students know about hard work. Eastern students know that everything in life, does not come easy. This is why Eastern students excel. Eastern students recognize six interrelated core values that are instilled in our minds, which we can carry on from the College of Business and into the workplace. Just like any company has a mission, goals, and core-values, the Eastern Michigan University College of Business gives their students an ethos statement as a guide, to carry themselves with integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, respect, continue to learn, and a quality work ethic, to carry with them during their time and EMU, and the years to follow.

Student D**Developing Ethical Business Professionals in the College of Business**

When the CEO of my company asked me to organize a fundraising event to raise money for a cause I didn't support, I had a decision to make: obediently do what I was told and abandon my principles, or speak up and put the advancement of my career at risk.

Business professionals continually face ethical dilemmas like this, and without adequate guidance, it can be difficult to know which choices to make. That's why the Eastern Michigan University (EMU) College of Business (COB) works so hard to teach its students about integrity, honesty and trust. By emphasizing professionalism and ethical decision making, COB leaders can send its graduates into the business world confident that they're worthy of representing the EMU name.

COB Ethos Statement

The COB Ethos Statement is not just a section of the syllabus that students see at the beginning of every course; the set of values is a guide that shows students how to be responsible, ethical business professionals. These values – integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, respect, learning and work ethic – are interconnected, and none of them are enough on their own. You can't be trusted unless you're always honest; you won't be respected unless you exhibit a strong work ethic.

Just as Dean Mielke recognized the importance of fostering these values in the past, today's COB leaders – as well as faculty and students – understand how essential it is to develop a character with integrity.

COB Leadership Practices

The COB's leadership emphasizes honor and integrity by (1) welcoming prospective students and (2) setting an example for current ones. Even before students apply to attend EMU, advisors go out of their way to explain courses and help prospective students understand the work ethic that's required to excel in the program. For example, Michelle Henry, director of graduate academic services, answered many calls and emails to help me make the transition into online education at EMU. Her welcoming attitude and honesty exemplified the characteristics the COB is trying to instill in its students. When advisors and college leaders model these values, students are much more likely to embody them too. Dean Tidwell

COB Faculty and Student Practices

In the classroom, faculty and students also demonstrate integrity and trust by (1) creating accepting environments and (2) working together. COB faculty members provide clear expectations, give honest feedback and offer genuine career advice to students. They create an open, friendly environment in which students can freely share their experiences and work together as teams. This is particularly important in online programs because online discussion boards can quickly degenerate if professors fail to set an encouraging, open tone. When professors remind students to accept different viewpoints and draw on each other's strengths, students get to know one another better. They form groups and

help each other succeed, rather than each student solely focusing on his or her own achievements.

Exemplifying Integrity

There is no one way for business professionals to exemplify integrity. It means doing the right thing, no matter how big or small. Whether you admit to a mistake that cost your company thousands of dollars or you simply make a fresh pot of coffee when you take the last cup, every decision you make is an opportunity to show your integrity.

I'm proud that when the CEO asked me to go against my beliefs, I proved my character and stood up for myself. I explained to my boss why I was uncomfortable and offered suggestions for other ways the event could be planned without involving me. I showed that I wasn't trying to get out of work; instead, I was putting my personal character above my desire to please management. In the end, my boss respected me more for being assertive, the CEO learned that I am an honest employee and I gained confidence in myself.

While I know I don't always make the right choices, I understand that true integrity comes from admitting your mistakes and working to rectify them. I am honored to attend a college with leaders, faculty and students who know the value of integrity and strive to make ethical choices in both their professional and personal lives.

Student E

Eastern Michigan University provides students with a conduct code in order to promote ethical and responsible behavior while maintaining its education and community goals on campus. An important issue that is addressed under section V of the Board Policy Manual is Academic Dishonesty. Any student or student organization who encourages, witnesses, condones, or participates in academic dishonesty concerning exams, assignments, research, grades or records will meet the proper consequences. (“Code of conduct”, 2009) Plagiarism, falsification and cheating are three forms of academic dishonesty. Eastern Michigan University has enforced many disciplinary measures in order to maintain ethical conduct on campus. Section VI A. of the Board Policy Manual lists all of the sanctions for misconduct. These Sanctions under this policy include verbal warning, formal reprimand, probation, suspension, dismissal, and the delay, denial or revocation of the student’s degree. Other secondary sanctions include restitution, fines, community service, restrictions, and educational activities such as workshops and trainings. These codes and consequences at a university level undeniably impact the different colleges that EMU is comprised of by promoting professional and personal development through proper behavior and implementing an effective means of consequence to ensure that our students understand the importance of ethical conduct.

This university-wide objective has also generated a desire for ethical and professional behavior here at our College of Business. EMU’s College of Business ethos statement incorporates 6 key values: integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, respect, learning, and work ethic. The importance of developing this statement is to encourage students to become ethical business professionals by applying these values in their educational and

everyday lives. Eastern Michigan University students will eventually embody all of these values that the College of Business promotes. Our mission is to prepare graduates to perform effectively in the global business community and develop outstanding business professionals through a rigorous, applied educational experience (Mission statement).

The educational experience offered at Eastern Michigan University's AACSB accredited College of Business produces this domino effect of successful students who consistently have the will to be honest, trustworthy and reliable members of our community and build a confidence and sincerity among colleagues. These future business professionals exhibit respectful behavior and compliance toward business teammates, competitors, and regulations. Faculty and staff are undeniably committed to ensuring success among EMU business students and mold them into ethical, responsible business professionals to serve business (Ethos statement). Our students are thriving in internships, affluent job offerings, and full time positions after graduation. Dean Tidwell attests that "these internships are a positive reflection on the College of Business and show how our students are taking advantage of a strong and rigorous curriculum." (COB Newsletter, 2015)

I believe that by implementing our ethos values into everyday learning and emphasizing its importance in the classroom, our students have and will continue to develop professionally and personally and represent EMU with pride.

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Student F

Throughout my education at the College of Business I have seen the utmost amount of professionalism, honesty, integrity, and team work countless times that has been an influence to the person that I want to become upon graduation.

In all of my classes each teacher, in some way, has stressed professionalism to their students. Each and every teacher dresses business casual daily; some even dress business professional each and every day. Dressing your part, whatever that part may be, is vital to communicating the impression of who you are and who you want to become. Core introduction business courses also teach you how to professionally send an email, build a resume, and even interview skills in which professionalism is a determining factor for success or failure.

Integrity is the most important attribute that the college of business gives its students in preparation for graduation as it is the umbrella that every other core value falls under. At the start of every semester, each and every teacher goes over their own syllabus which includes all of the core values at the college of business. Each teacher sincerely stands by every value that is listed. This shows honesty in that if any of the core values are broken, they will do what's best for the student and the school by informing the Dean of any violations. This also shows integrity in two different ways:

1. The entire teaching staff includes the values in their syllabus which shows it being united and undivided.
2. The values express being honest and moral which groups integrity as a whole.

Finally, team work has helped mold my business professional career thus far and will continue to influence my work throughout my career. Introduction to Business was the first class I had to work on a team in which it taught me fundamental skills for my future business courses at the college of business. Next was Business Communication, which had the biggest impact on my career. Even though I was able to decide who my team members were, this occurred in the beginning of the school year, so I barely knew who each person was. This group project (that was worth a third of my grade) taught me how to professionally communicate with others, keep a strict time schedule, how to adjust when that schedule isn't met, and how to adjust in order to complete tasks even when someone is not contributing as much as others on the team. This did occur when working on one project. After making the teacher aware of it, I personally decided to pick up the slack. Even though this wasn't ideal, this does happen in life. Instead of getting upset, one has to do whatever you can to motivate the others around you and if that does not work, do your part in order to make sure your work greatly reflects yourself. Team work is the most important attribute that The College of Business has taught me. In some way shape or form you will always have to work with people professionally. Because of this, these core fundamentals are key in- order to being successful in any business field. Any Eastern Michigan graduate student or alumni I've spoken to would agree.

In conclusion, these core values will help to grow as a student at the College of Business and ultimately equip me with what I need to make a contribution to the world. Professionalism, honesty, integrity, and team work are all qualities that were given to me at the College of Business and I believe they are essential to have success in life.

Ethics at Eastern Michigan University and the College of Business: A Study of Academic

Dishonesty and Professionalism

By

Ashley Shahan

A Senior Thesis Submitted to the

Eastern Michigan University

Honors College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Graduation

with Honors in Accounting and Finance

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