Introduction

On April 25, 2014, Texas Tech University hosted the annual Arbor Day Celebration at Memorial Circle. As part of the celebration, the Texas Tech University (TTU) Ethics Center hosted an activity called “Ethics . . . Speak Up!” which first took place in April 2010. Blank chart tablets are set up between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at Memorial Circle; this year, these tablets were accompanied by the prompt “Ethics is …” and the Arbor Day participants were asked to complete the sentence in their own words.

Upon conclusion of the Arbor Day Celebration, the chart tablets, filled with responses, were sent to the TTU Ethics Center for analysis. See appendix A for photographs of the tablets.

Analysis

A total of 791 Arbor Day participants responded to the question “Ethics is …” Of the 791 responses, 21 responses were removed because of illegible writing, and 20 responses included two distinct ideas. Once illegible responses were removed and responses with multiple ideas in them were split, the total number of usable responses was 790.

The 790 answers were coded into 17 distinct themes. Because photographs were taken of the tablets but not the participants, there was no information about the respondents’ age, gender, classification, major, or ethnicity available for analysis. The 17 themes are listed below:

1. Doing the right thing: differentiate right from wrong, stand up for what is right.
3. Honesty.
4. Respect: respect others, self-respect, treat others how you want to be treated.
5. Important/essential in our life/society: life is nothing with [ethics], something everyone needs to live by, essential all steps until death.
7. Integrity.
10. Pursuit of excellence/strive for success/ hard working: doing the best, never give up, professionalism in the work area.
11. Academic integrity: citing your sources, be honest with your data.
12. Trust.
13. (Strive for) Honor.
14. Being a good person.
15. Diversity.
17. Peace.
18. Miscellaneous responses: , etc.

The following table arranges the themes based on the frequency of response.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency of response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doing the right thing</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral/belief/value/truth</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important/essential in our life/society</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love/caring/helping others</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility/accountability</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness/justice/equality</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursuit of excellence/striving for success/hard working</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic integrity</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Striving for) Honor</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a good person</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green/earth</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISC.</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>790</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following chart provides the percentages of the response in each theme.
**Comparison of 2010 and 2014**

On 2010 Arbor Day, participants also completed the same sentence “Ethics is …”, and there were 786 usable responses that were coded into 18 themes. The following table presents the coded responses from both 2010 and 2014.
The dominant theme in both 2010 and 2014 was the same: “Doing the Right Thing”. Texas Tech University launched a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) on ‘ethics’ in 2005 and used the slogan “Do the Right Thing” and developed the Texas Tech University Statement of Ethical Principles. The percentage of “doing the right thing” went from 19.59% (2010) to 22.15% (2014). In addition, the percentages of the next three themes ‘moral/belief/value/truth,’ ‘honesty,’ and ‘respect’ all went up in the year 2014, ‘moral/belief/value/truth’ having the largest increase, over 6%. Conversely, the percentage of the theme “green/earth” dropped significantly from 11.45% (2010) to 0.38% (2014).

### Conclusion

The 2014 results suggest that half of the responses defined ethics as doing the right thing, moral/value/belief/truth, and honesty. Even though the small sample size may not be representative of the entire TTU student population, the high incidence of “doing the right thing” responses in 2014 could be an indication that this slogan is engrained in the student body years after the previous QEP ended in 2010.

In 2010, ‘responsibility’ and ‘accountability’ were separated into 2 themes; in 2014, they were combined on this table for the comparing purpose.
Appendix A
Selected photographs of the chart tablets
“Ethics ... Speak Up!” – Arbor Day 2014

Prepared by the Texas Tech University Ethics Center
Ethics is...

- Respect Others
- Doing the right thing
- Moral Values: Being able to look past your own beliefs in order to help somebody different than you.
- Morality: Your moral values
- Responsibility: Moral, values, and respect
- Justice: Standard
- Integrity: A word that should be heard
- Honesty: Important for everyone
- Do the right things:
  - Doing what's right
  - Not cheating
  - Integrity

*REFERENCE: BILLY MADISON

Doing the right thing even though no one is looking.
“Ethics ... Speak Up!” – Arbor Day 2014

Prepared by the Texas Tech University Ethics Center
Ethics is...

- Respect
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Morals
- Peace
- Right
- Trust
- Community
- Equality
- Freedom
- Doing
- The
- Right
- Things
“Ethics ... Speak Up!” – Arbor Day 2014

Prepared by the Texas Tech University Ethics Center
Ethics is... doing what your grandmother would do! Having strong values and sticking to them. Doing what's right, what's kind, no matter the cost. Standing up for a unpopular, but right-choice. Helping others! Helping other people. Doing what you believe in. Treating others the way you want to be treated.

Ethics is...

Being Responsible

Doing what is right

What makes us human

Honesty

What makes the world a better place

Integrity

Not stealing

Respecting others

Having Honor

Doing the right thing when no one is looking

Respect

Being honest as well as doing the right thing

Accountability

The Constitution of a society

Honor for your peers

Respecting yourself and others

Honoring knowledge

Being true to yourself and others

Striving for Success

Doing what you can to help others

Being Honest

Respecting others

Being responsible for your actions

The Constitution of a society

Learning Life!!

Striving for the Greater Good

Awesome! Great!

What you do when no one is looking

Doing right

Doing the right thing no matter what

Inspiration

Inspiring principles

Being truthful

Having courage

Awesome!

Being responsible for your actions

Thoughtful!

Essential

Being true to yourself and others

Honesty!
Ethics is...

Sobriety!

Respect

Being Christ to others!

Strength & Honor!

Diversity

Acting like your mother is watching!

Personal Integrity

Sticking to your VALUES

Ethics Is...

High Standards!

Living up to your

Life Goals!