

TTU Ethics Center Meeting

Re: Ethics Requirement in Mission Statement

7/26/2011 at 12 noon

Attending

Justin Louder, Provost Smith, Peggy Miller, Rob Stewart, Jennifer Hughes, Andrea McCourt, Amy Murphy, Gary Elbow, Ambassador Nagy, Keisha McKenzie, Taylor Eighmy, Valerie Paton (chair).

Purpose

Dr. Paton called a meeting to discuss how to operationalize the ethics component of the mission statement for external audiences, staff, and students. The key statement in the mission statement is “The university is dedicated to student success by preparing learners to be ethical leaders for a diverse and globally competitive workforce.”

Discussion

Dr. Paton had used “Strive for Honor” in the Student Orientation with the desire for it to permeate students’ minds. Dr. Paton recommended that dialogue around “Strive for Honor” be pursued in several different forums this year with Justin leading that movement.

Drilling a concept across the curriculum should start at undergraduate and graduate students’ entrance, and continue through mid-program and exit. An intervention should include learning experiences as well as opportunities to apply the skills and synthesize learning and application. The group discussed the question: If the university were to drill ethics and integrate it with a global context, how might this be done from students’ entrance through their exit, at both graduate and undergraduate levels?

Attendees discussed implementation for undergraduates and graduates level, and also considered staff and faculty training on ethical culture. Attendees also agreed that any interventions begin early in students’ college life so as to shift their overall experience.

Dr. Paton introduced the AAC&U’s Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) program. The State of Texas will soon adopt this program; TTU will integrate LEAP materials about ethical reasoning into initiatives and assessments. Dr. Paton asked how the university might make ethics structural so that when students choose Texas Tech, they choose us because of our “Strive for Honor” culture. Attendees agreed that structural changes would sustain the QEP and guarantee the permanence of cultural change.

Six ideas were presented and discussed.

Specific Ideas for Operationalizing the Ethics Requirement

	Idea	Source	Consensus/Comments
1.	Brand “Strive for Honor” by embedding it in the TTU graphic identity as a motto beneath Texas Tech University or the Double-T	P. Miller	Attendees agree that this branding would add to campus ethics exposure. Chris Cook is responsible for TTU brand management.
2.	Require a 1-credit-hour RCR course for all graduate students	P. Miller	Taylor Eighmy recommends linking any required course with current RCR course materials so all options are equal in quality.
3.	Develop talking points for student organizations’ faculty sponsors	T. Nagy	Justin is willing to address student organizations and their sponsors.
4.	Develop a university-wide ethics requirement for undergraduates, analogous to the multicultural requirement, and outside of Core Curriculum	V. Paton	Valerie Paton suggests development of several routes to fulfilling this requirement. Gary Elbow suggests allowing for disciplines to adapt the content.
5.	Develop a “Strive for Honor” course designation based on agreed criteria, comparable to WAC, Research, and Lab designations	A. McCourt	Valerie Paton notes that a group would be needed to develop these criteria. The undergraduate credit hour burden should not be increased.
6.	Organize topical ethics focus groups around campus led by certified student senators or other student leaders	A. Murphy, B. Smith	Peggy Miller and others caution against certifying students “ethical”; it could inspire apathy post-certification. Attendees support the idea of student-led discussion on topical ethical issues.