

# Texas Tech conference to focus on ethics A New Standard

**BY CHRIS VAN WAGENEN**  
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[http://www.lubbockonline.com/stories/040206/bus\\_040206014.shtml](http://www.lubbockonline.com/stories/040206/bus_040206014.shtml)

Each day Citibus delivers a simple, but subtle message that educators hope will be picked up by Texas Tech students.

"Do The Right Thing - A Campus Conversation on Ethics" reads the bus wraparound.

It's a message that Jonathan Marks says is timely today.

Marks, interim dean at Tech's College of Visual & Performing Arts, heads a program called the Ethics Initiative.

The three-year project, which kicked off this fall, takes on a more public face Thursday when Lynn Brewer, author of "Confessions of an Enron Executive: A Whistleblowers Story," visits the campus as a guest of the Jerry S. Rawls College of Business.

Brewer will serve as one of three keynote speakers as part of a half-day ethics conference hosted by the colleges of Business, Engineering and Law at the Lubbock Municipal Auditorium. The conference is open to the public.

The bigger story is the initiative itself that has administrators, professors and students rethinking ethics and decision-making.

Marks said Tech plans to examine academic integrity, ethics in the curriculum, the ethics of diversity and the ethical institution.

"There's no prescription when it comes to ethical behavior," Marks said.

He said rarely does a day go by when someone, somewhere isn't in the news as a result of a decision that clearly falls short of what's right.

"We're (Texas Tech) not doing this because we've gotten new religion here, but as an institution we can do better," he said.



**Chris Van Wagenen / Staff**

This Citibus wraparound sends a daily message Texas Tech hopes its professors and students buy into - a three-year conversation about ethics as part of a campuswide initiative.

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He cited everything from huge discretions at fallen energy giant Enron Corp. to student cheating as a reason for examining ethics.

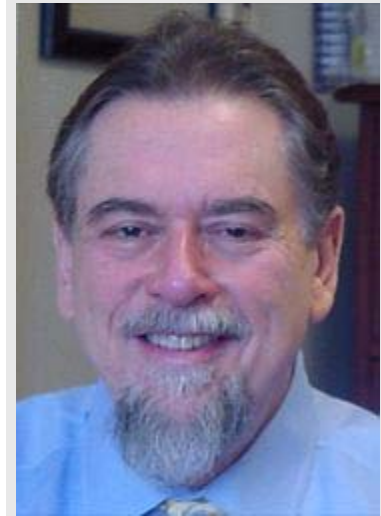
Debbie Laverie, an associate professor of marketing at Texas Tech who invited Brewer to speak, said ethics affect all disciplines at the university.

Laverie said the project took the lead of the College of Engineering's Dean Council, the Murdough Center of Engineering Professionalism and the National Institute for Engineering Ethics at Tech - where ethics has been on the table since 1988.

Laverie said most people have developed their code of ethics long before they arrive at Tech.

"But hopefully we can give them the tools they need to make right decisions," she said.

No particular course is geared toward ethics in the business college, Laverie said - at least not now.



Marks



McInnes

Dean Allen McInnes and Assistant Dean Catherine Duran said they expect that will change in the future. Whether it will be taught as a requirement or an elective is still being sorted out.

"I think the approach we've taken so far is we want everyone to at least talk about it in class," Laverie said.

She said ethics is required for those seeking an accounting degree.

Laverie said she hopes Tech's ethics project will open the eyes of students and show what occurs when unethical decisions are made.

She added that in the case of Enron's Brewer, who saw what was going on firsthand, superiors turned a blind eye.

"She is very passionate about getting her message out and talking about ethics," Laverie said.



Duran

Marks said there are task forces on the campus that are engaged in discussion of ethics.

He said he hopes those discussions encourage every professor at some point in class to talk about ethics.

"We're not about to present a 'thou shalt not' list." The thing about ethics is it's not black and white. If it were that clear cut, we wouldn't even be discussing this," Marks said.

McInnes said the business college is still struggling with how to deliver ethics into the classroom, but is committed to it.

"I tell everyone the first ethical decision you make in business is the day you fill out your first expense report," he said.

Duran agreed.

She said once someone has made an unethical choice "others become easier."

"We have to change the message that popular culture sends out there and redefine what Texas Tech and the business college stands for," she said.



Provided by Texas Tech University

"Integrity Matters" is a new theme at Texas Tech, which has launched a three-year initiative that will touch the entire campus as the university examines itself in areas ranging from academics to diversity.

Marks said, "Bad ethics is profitable. Good ethics is bad for the bottom line. There are some people who just don't see a downside to lying and cheating, but there is."

Marks recalled the movie "Wall Street," where Oliver Stone's character, Gordon Gekko, triumphantly stands before stockholders telling them, "Greed is good."

"We've lived that. We're still living it. Ethics is controversial because there's no universal buy-in. Hopefully, by talking about it we can at least raise the awareness level," he said.

To learn more about Texas Tech's Ethics Initiative, visit: [www.irim.ttu.edu/sacs/Quality.htm](http://www.irim.ttu.edu/sacs/Quality.htm)

Texas Tech Ethics Day Conference 2006  
Time: 2 p.m.-5 p.m.  
Day: Thursday.  
Where: Lubbock Municipal Auditorium.  
Open: To the public.

Pre-registration: Not required.

Cost: Free.

Speakers

- Lynn Brewer, chief executive officer of The Integrity Institute; author, "Confessions of an Enron Executive: A Whistleblowers Story."
- Don Cash, chairman emeritus and director, Questar Corp.
- Royal Furgeson, U.S. district judge, El Pason

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