

Ethics take hold in well-cultivated soil

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Strive for honor.

Do the right thing.

A campus conversation on ethics.

Integrity matters.

Ethics Takes Hold In Cultivated Soil.

These are the mottos of the Ethics Initiative, an effort involving dozens of faculty, staff, students and administrators, which has been working for the past four years to raise the consciousness of the campus about ethical considerations, and to promote education about ethics.

Protect Texas Tech's SACS accreditation.

That's another watchword we've kept in view, especially over the past year or so. Tech created the Ethics Initiative to fulfill its obligation to carry out a Quality Enhancement Plan, known as QEP. This is a relatively new requirement of the accrediting agency (now officially re-initialed SACS-COC), and next year we will be required to file a report demonstrating that we have done so, and that our QEP has had a positive effect on student learning about ethics.

This is Ethics Week on our campus. In the past few years, we have had several ethics days and ethics weeks, but this is the first year it has been planned to encompass Earth Day and to culminate in Arbor Day: a time to break out of our normal routines and contemplate what we're doing on and for this earth.

This week various colleges and departments have devised programming related to the topic of ethics, putting in the extra effort required to carry on the campus conversation on ethics. There is also a booth in the Student Union Building, and we'll move into the open air with a booth right at the heart of the Arbor Day activities area.

There you'll be able to pick up a number of intriguing and useful handouts as well as see exhibits regarding your university's efforts to foster ethical understanding and behavior, both in academic life and in other spheres of human transaction.

We urge you to find a way to participate in Ethics Week. Attend the lectures, join in the discussions, visit the booths, get free stuff, strike up a conversation with your friends and teachers, and most of all learn whatever you can about this topic that is so fundamental to giving

meaning to how we conduct our lives and our academic careers.

Two of the major focal points of the final years of our QEP have been the university's Statement of Ethical Principles and its Statement of Academic Integrity, both of which emerged from our work during the first years of the QEP. We are actively promoting learning about these two statements as forms of learning about ethics centered on the doings of a university, and particularly of Tech.

At various points you may be required to participate in tests and surveys, all or in part dealing with ethics; and at times you will be invited but not required. Please do; our accreditation depends on a robust sample of our student body participating in these activities and learning as much as possible about ethics.

SACS-COC requires that we conduct a QEP, but the choice of the topic - the focus on ethics - was entirely our own. We selected this focus freely and enthusiastically because we believe that it is singularly important for us - as Red Raiders, as Americans, and as denizens of this planet - at this time.

In every field of endeavor, we hear more and more often stories of people who fail to overcome ethical challenges, resulting in the degradation of the environment for all of us: in business and finance, in sports, law, medicine, engineering and construction, politics - all around us. Even - most importantly, for us - in academics. In the face of extraordinary challenges and banal, everyday challenges, people choose to do the wrong thing.

Sometimes they suffer the consequences of their dishonorable and unethical acts, their lack of integrity, their cutting corners, their cheating; but whether they get caught or not, most of the time other people - sometimes all of us - suffer the consequences.

So go out there this week and participate in Ethics Week. Do the right thing for Tech, for the world, and for yourself. Seek out opportunities to learn about and practice ethics during Ethics Week ... and every other week.