

2012

[Spring 2012 TLPDC Ethics Series Report]

Series sponsored by the Texas Tech University Ethics Center and the Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center.

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Introduction

In collaboration with the Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development Center (TLPDC), the Texas Tech Ethics Center (TTU Ethics Center) hosted three luncheons during the Spring 2012 semester. These luncheons were originally developed as part of the SACS-COC Quality Enhancement Plan and were instituted during the Fall 2009 semester.

The TLPDC/TTU Ethics Center ethics luncheons touch on different aspects of professional codes of ethics and academic integrity, as well as ethical issues in personal, professional, and civic life. The following sections will summarize the three sessions of Spring 2012 in detail.

Session I

Event Details

Title: It's All Greek to Me: Ethical Issues Facing Students Involved in the Greek Life System

Date: 2/15/2011

Time: 12:00 - 1:00 PM

Location: Room 151 - Audio/Video Instructional Lab (AVI)

Speaker: Student Panel

Summary: “‘It’s All Greek to Me: Ethical Issues Facing Students Involved in the Greek Life Community.’ Student Panel. This session is a follow-up to the Fall 2011 session ‘Top 10 Ethical Issues Facing Today’s Students’ and will include representatives from Texas Tech’s Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council, the Multicultural Greek Council, and National Pan-Hellenic Council discussing ethical issues facing students involved in the Greek Life Community at Texas Tech University. The student panelists will discuss common misconceptions about the Greek Life Community, academic issues facing those involved in the Greek Life Community at Texas Tech, hazing, alcohol and substance abuse, and involvement and leadership both on campus and off.”¹

¹ <https://www.tltc.ttu.edu/WebApps/EMSEventEnrollmentPro/View/RSS/RSS.aspx/GetEvents> (accessed, 01/23/2012)

Participants and Feedback

The 29 participants came from 14 different colleges/units. More participants were from the College of Arts and Sciences. See Table 1 for a more detailed description of participants' affiliations.

Table 1

Participants at *It's All Greek to Me* session

	Faculty	Staff	Graduate	Undergraduate	N/A	SUM
Honors College				1		1
Visual and Performing Arts	1					1
Vice Provost, Office of	1					1
Vice President Research, Office of		1				1
Planning and Assessment, Office of		1				1
Human Sciences			1			1
Library	1					1
Business				1		1
University College	1	1				2
Education		2				2
University Advising		2				2
TLPDC		2				2
Ethics Center	1	1	1			3
Student Affairs (Campus Life)	1		3	2	1	3
Arts and Sciences					3	7
TOTAL	6	10	5	4	4	29

Event Questionnaire: 20 questionnaires were collected. Attendees answered the following five questions/statements:

1. What is your affiliation with Texas Tech University?
2. This workshop met my expectations based on the workshop title and description.
3. I would recommend this workshop to my colleagues.
4. Do you have any comments or suggestions you would like to share regarding this workshop?
5. Do you have any suggestions for future ethics work shop?

The following charts summarize the answers to the first three questions.

1. Affiliation responses show a fairly even distribution from the TTU community (Figure 1).

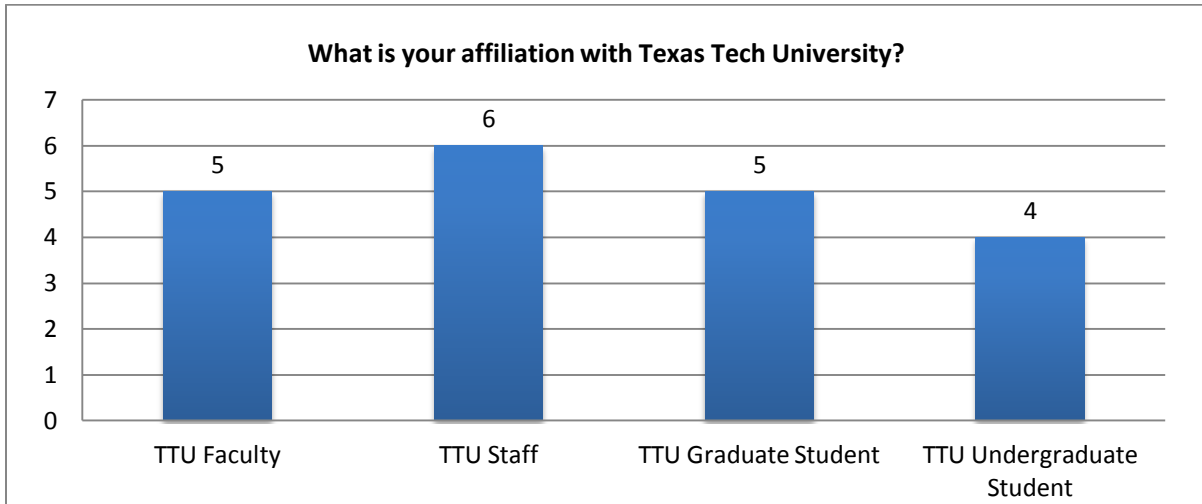


Figure 1. Number of Session 1 Respondents, by Rank

2. The majority of the respondents (85.0%) *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that this workshop met their expectations based on the workshop title and description (Figure 2).

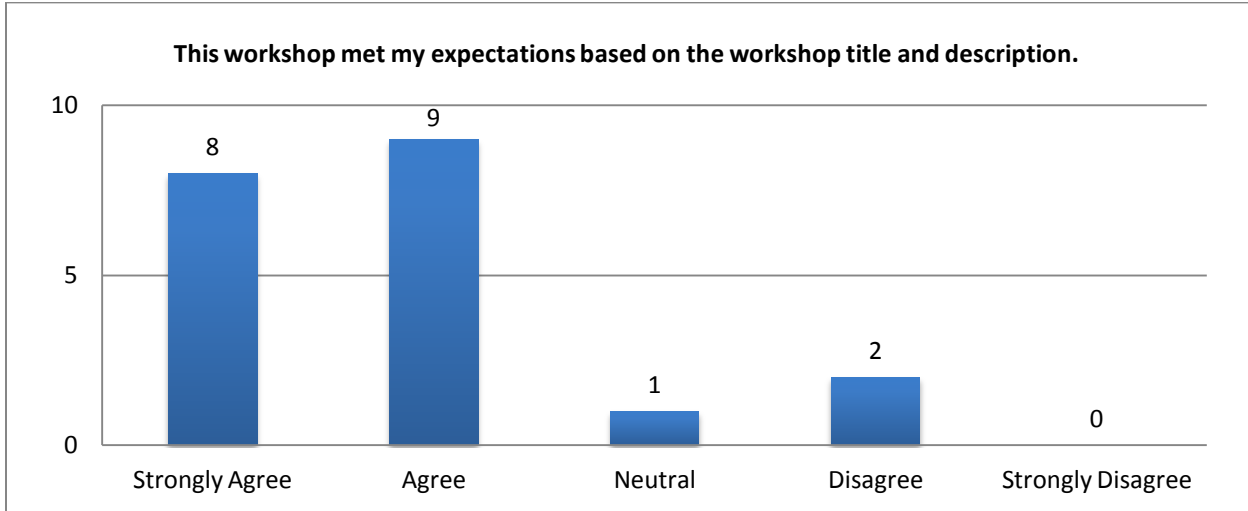


Figure 2. Session 1 Respondents' Expectations

3. A majority of respondents (75.0%) also *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that they would recommend this workshop to their colleagues (Figure 3).

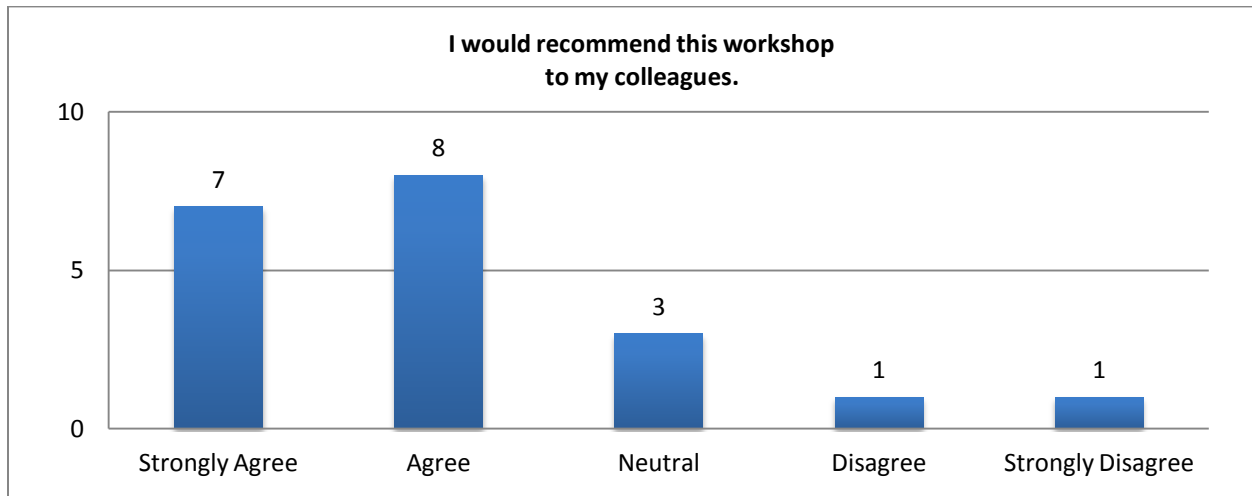


Figure 3. Session 1 Respondents' Plans to Recommend Session

Substantive Comments

4. Twelve respondents gave comments or suggestions regarding this workshop. Their answers can be categorized into 3 themes:

- a) Informative about Greek Life
- b) Very pro-Greek, but not focusing on ethical issues
- c) Miscellaneous

Selected comments or suggestions include:

- a) Informative about Greek Life:
 - Great panel - very open in sharing. They showed another side of Greek life that should be told.
 - I am glad I attended. I was not aware of the requirements of being a member of a fraternity and sorority.
 - I used to think about Greek Life negatively, but not anymore. I'm glad that they have policies that protect the students who are involved.
 - Very informative. Students explained themselves well and were very educated on their topics.
- b) Very pro-Greek, but not focusing on ethical issues:

- Pro Greek - good job. Ethical issues - not so much.
- Way to defensive and protective: a pan-Hellenic infomercial.
- The questions discussed were not very relevant to ethical issues; a little too general.
- I expected a discussion. This was essentially an advertisement and pro-Greek letter of opinion or letter to the editor, which might have been more efficiently delivered in that way. The fact that frats and Sors create opportunity beyond qualification, but through connection is well-known and fundamental to the structure of these kinds of organizations. The “ethics” content was very lean.

c) Miscellaneous:

- Good workshop.
- Perhaps a larger panel.
- There should be more input from the organizations or campus.
- More fire under the boots to answer honestly even if not diplomatically.

5. Two respondents gave suggestions for future ethics workshops.

- Avoid pro-organization information sessions. A simple commercial could have served this purpose.
- Plagiarism (encourage students to attend) - why it is important not to plagiarize and what are the consequences?

Session II

Event Details

Title: Online Ethics Instruction for International and Domestic Engineering Graduate Students

Date: 03/01/2012

Time: 12:30 - 1:30 PM

Location: Room 151 - Audio/Video Instructional Lab (AVI)

Panelists: Dr. William Lawson and Dr. Katherine Austin Beltz

Summary: “Spring Ethics Series: Online ethics instruction for international and domestic engineering graduate students with Dr. William Lawson and Dr. Katherine Austin Beltz. In this presentation and roundtable discussion, we present findings from NSF-sponsored research aimed at improving ethics

education for international and domestic graduate students in engineering. The conversation focuses on development and assessment of an educational intervention, consisting of a series of online ethics learning modules, intended for students of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds but which has been specially designed to be sensitive to the needs of the international graduate student. The ethics modules address (1) codes of ethics, (2) protecting human life and welfare, (3) competence, (4) honesty, (5) fairness, (6) conflicts of interest, (7) intellectual property and plagiarism, and (8) data integrity. The course also includes an effective learning strategies module. The session will discuss the reasoning, methodical development, design, and initial assessment of the instructional modules. Think-Aloud Protocol and Cognitive Task Analysis results were used to improve the content modules and learning experience. Results indicate that the content modules increased student knowledge of ethical principles in engineering compared to pre-test performance.”²

Participants and Feedback

The 26 participants came from 10 different colleges/units. The majority came from the Whitacre College of Engineering (Table 2).

Table 2

Participants at “Online Ethics Instruction for International and Domestic Engineering Graduate Students” session.

	Faculty	Staff	Graduate	Undergraduate	SUM
TLPDC		1			1
Psychology	1				1
Library	1				1
Philosophy	1				1
Information Systems		2			2
Planning and Assessment, Office		2			2
Architecture	1		1		2
Ethics Center		2			2
Business		1		1	2
Engineering	4	1	6	1	12
TOTAL	8	9	7	2	26

Event Questionnaire: 16 questionnaires were collected. The session questionnaire included the following five questions/statements:

² <https://www.tlrc.ttu.edu/WebApps/EMSEventEnrollmentPro/View/RSS/RSS.aspx/GetEvents> (accessed, 01/19/2012)

1. What is your affiliation with Texas Tech University?
2. This workshop met my expectations based on the workshop title and description.
3. I would recommend this workshop to my colleagues.
4. Do you have any comments or suggestions you would like to share regarding this workshop?
5. Do you have any suggestions for future ethics workshops?

The following charts summarize responses to the first three questions.

1. Most respondents were TTU graduate students (Figure 4).

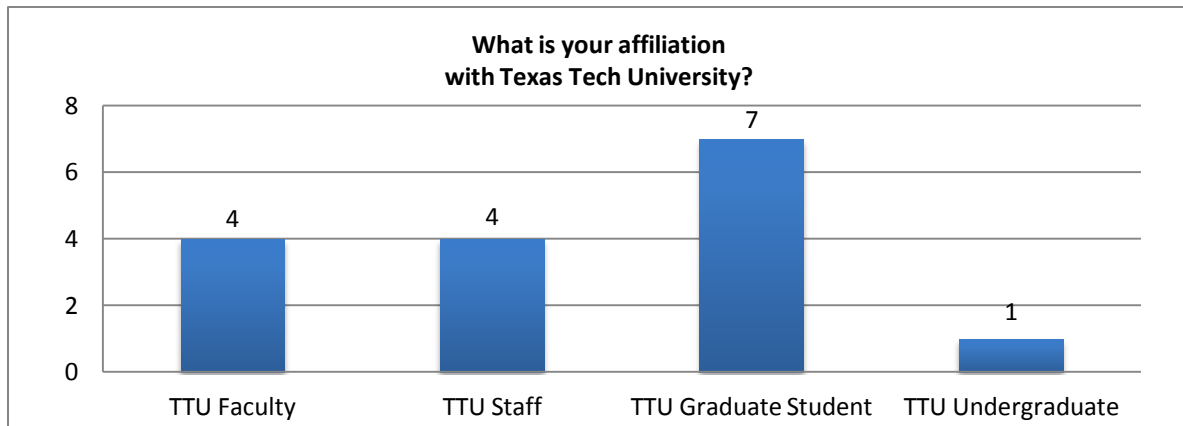


Figure 4. Number of Session 2 Respondents, By Rank

2. The majority of the respondents (93.8%) *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that this workshop met their expectations based on the workshop title and description (Figure 5).

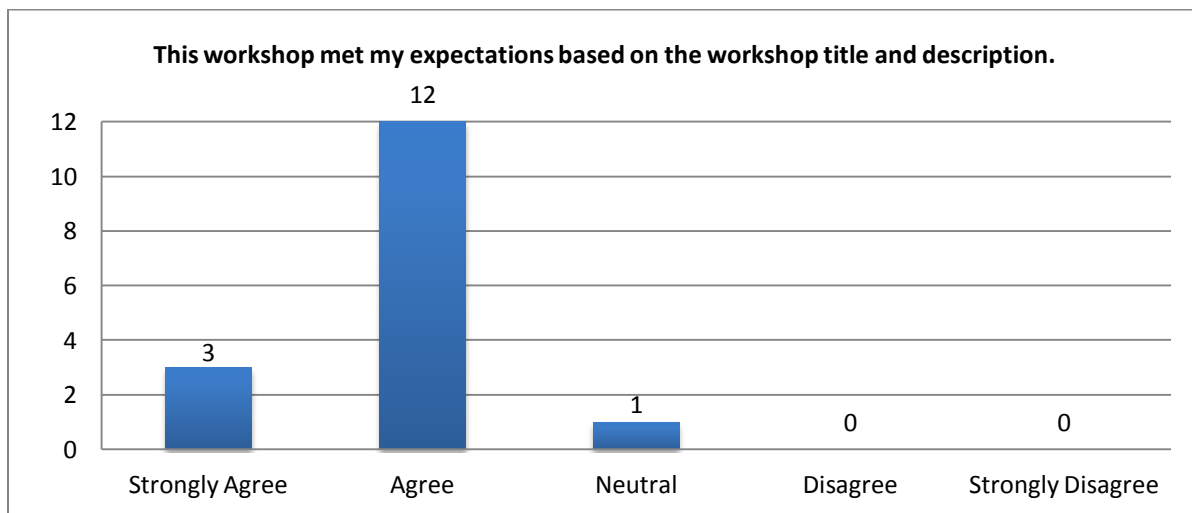


Figure 5. Session 2 Respondents' Expectations

3. Most respondents (81.3%) *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that they would recommend this workshop to their colleagues (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Session 2 Respondents' Plans to Recommend Session

Substantive Comments

4. Four respondents gave comments or suggestions regarding this workshop.
- Advertise more. Make it compulsory for research assistants.
 - Examples of lexical change would have strengthened points about ways to improve understanding.
 - Difficult to try to blend a discussion type of presentation with the presentation of the development and evaluation of an on-line ethics course.
 - Overall nice!
5. Two respondents also gave suggestions for future ethics workshops. Bigger room . . . Time for discussion.
- Less breadth, more depth for any specific workshop.
 - Focus on tangible methods to correcting issues found through research, i.e. cultural stress remedies, solutions, etc.

Session III

Event Details

Title: FERPA & Student Data: The Ethics of Information Sharing in Higher Education

Date: 04/04/2012

Time: 12:00 - 1:00 PM

Location: Room 151 - Audio/Video Instructional Lab (AVI)

Speaker: Dr. Jorge Iber (College of Arts & Sciences), Ms. Brenda Martinez (Office of the Registrar), & Sofia Rodriguez (Student Judicial Programs)

Summary: “FERPA & Student Data: The Ethics of Information Sharing in Higher Education. Presenters: Dr. Jorge Iber (College of Arts & Sciences), Ms. Brenda Martinez (Office of the Registrar), & Sofia Rodriguez (Student Judicial Programs). How do you handle a phone call from a parent inquiring about a student’s grade? In this session, panelists will discuss the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and ethical considerations of protecting information/data as we deal with today’s helicopter parents. Panelists will also discuss the specific, protected rights regarding the release of student education records and institutional compliance with FERPA guidelines. Faculty members and graduate students need a working knowledge of FERPA guidelines and this discussion will provide you with the necessary information about FERPA.”³

Participants and Feedback

The 68 participants came from 27 different colleges/units. See Table 3 for a more detailed description of participants’ affiliations.

Table 3.

Participants at *FERPA & Student Data: The Ethics of Information Sharing in Higher Education* session.

	Faculty	Staff	Graduate	N/A	SUM
Academic Testing Service		1			1
Advising Center		1			1
Architecture	1				1
CIO, Office of		1			1
Mass Com		1			1
Office of Parent Relations			1		1
OVP		1			1
Physical Plant		1			1

³ <https://www.tlct.ttu.edu/WebApps/EMSEventEnrollmentPro/View/RSS/RSS.aspx/GetEvents> (accessed, 01/19/2012)

	Faculty	Staff	Graduate	N/A	SUM
Provost, Office of	1				1
Student Judicial Program	1				1
Tech Transfer Acceleration Program		1			1
TLPDC		1			1
Business			1	1	2
Education			2		2
IT		2			2
Planning and Assessment, Office of		2			2
Parking Services		2			2
University College	1	1			2
Engineering	1		2		3
Ethics Center		2	1		3
CASNR	1	1	2		4
Human Sciences	3	1			4
Visual and Performing Arts	3			1	4
Student Business Services		5			5
University Housing		5			5
Library	3	4			7
Arts and Sciences	2	3	3	1	9
TOTAL	17	36	12	3	68

Event Questionnaire: 53 questionnaires were collected. The following five questions/statements were asked on the questionnaire:

1. What is your affiliation with Texas Tech University?
2. This workshop met my expectations based on the workshop title and description.
3. I would recommend this workshop to my colleagues.
4. What comments or suggestions do you have regarding this workshop?
5. What suggestions do you have for future ethics workshops?

The following charts summarize responses to the first three questions.

1. Most respondents were staff members (Figure 7).

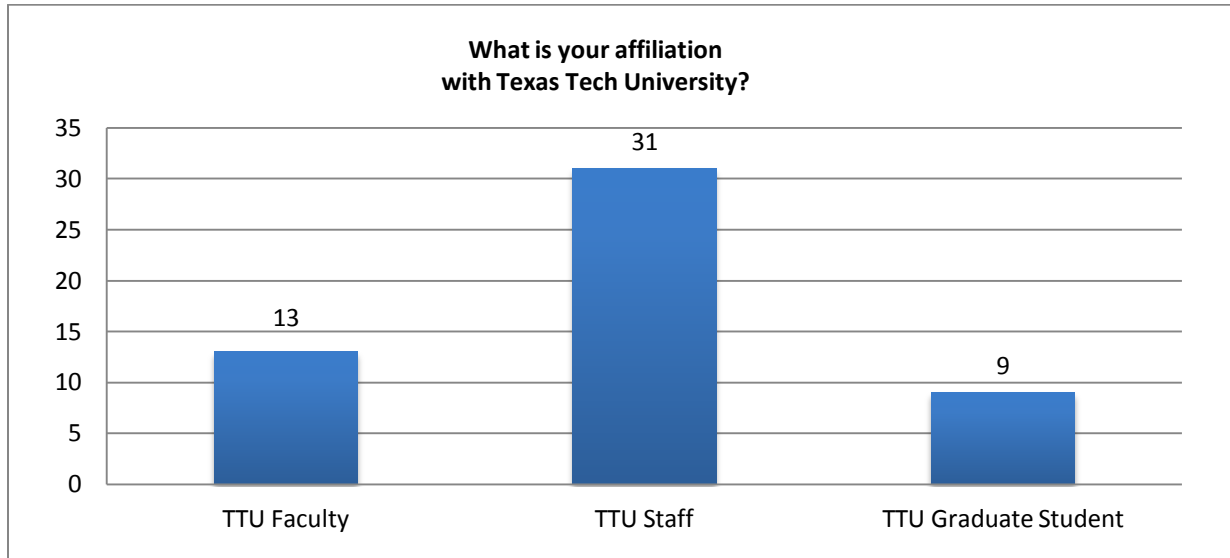


Figure 7. Session 3 Respondents, By Rank or Class

2. All respondents (100.0 %) *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that this workshop met their expectations based on the workshop title and description (Figure 8).

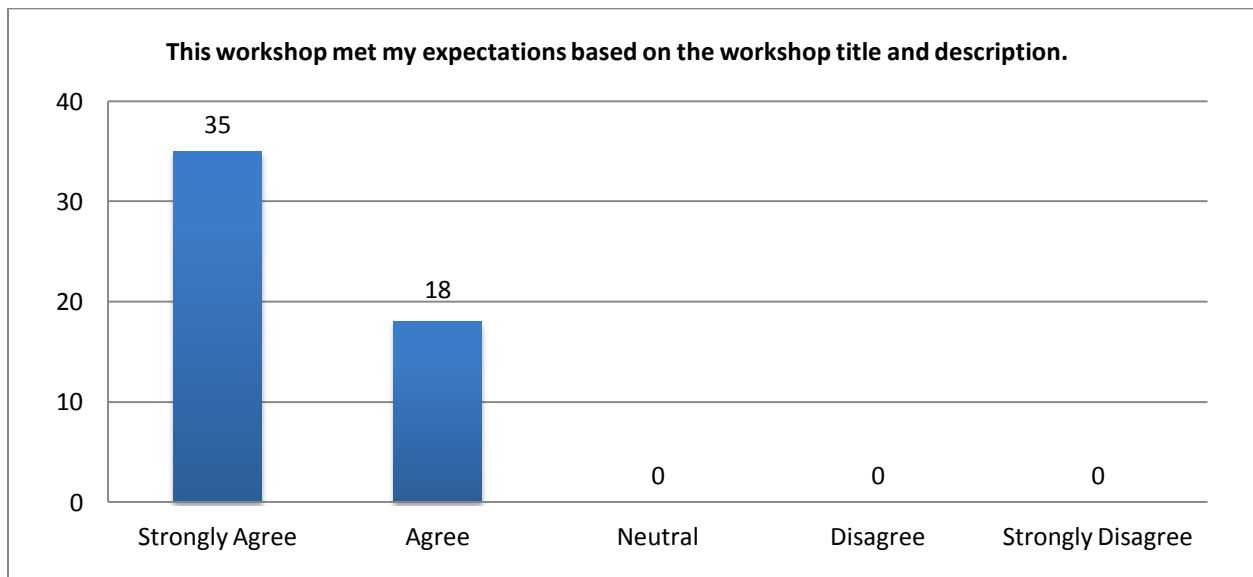


Figure 8. Session 3 Respondents' Expectations

3. The majority of respondents (96.2%) strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend this workshop to their colleagues (Figure 9).

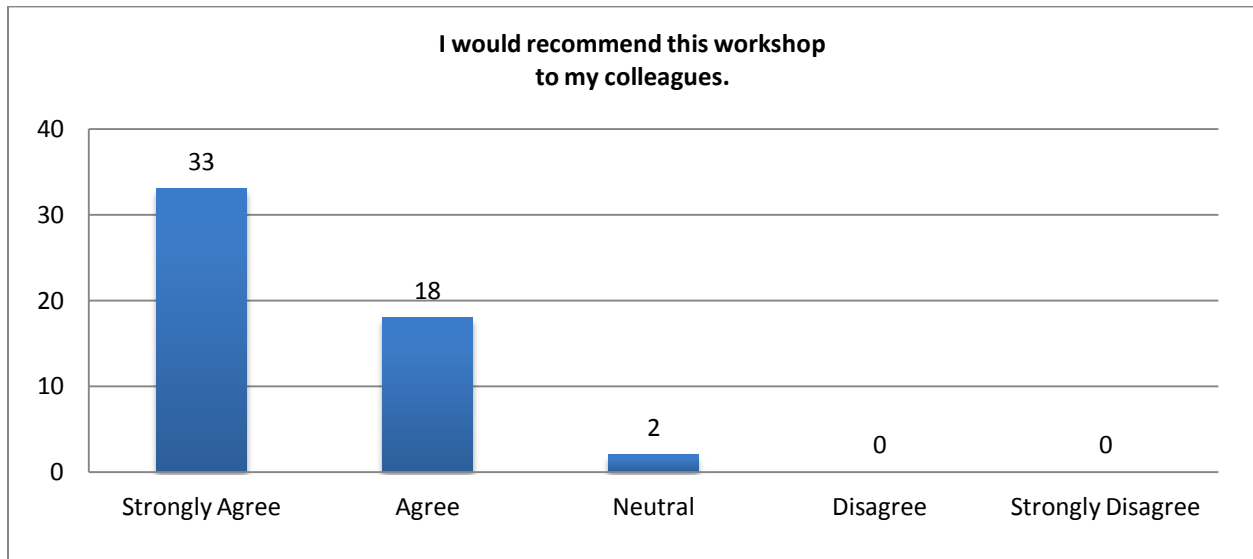


Figure 9. Session 3 Respondents' Plan to Recommend Workshop

Substantive Comments

4. Thirty respondents gave comments or suggestions regarding this workshop. Their answers can be categorized into 3 themes:
- Informative workshop & great panel
 - Longer time & more examples
 - MISC/technical issues

Selected comments or suggestions include:⁴

- Informative workshop & great panel:
 - The three [panelists] covered it very well. Got a different perspective that way.
 - I appreciated the perspective from the three panelists. It enriched the comprehensive of the information.
 - Very informative; it should be mandatory for faculty/staff. I'm glad that there is a safe guard.

⁴ See appendix A for comprehensive comments or suggestions regarding this workshop.

- This is something that should be attended by all faculty. I hope you will find a way to make the information available or to repeat the session.
- b) Longer time & more examples:
- More time for discussion and questions.
 - Maybe more real life examples.
 - Need at least another hour. Seemed a bit rushed but very informative.
 - I think it should be a little longer to allow for additional questions. There is really good information out there that needs to be shared
- c) Miscellaneous and technical issues:
- I think a microphone is needed; unable to hear everything real well.
 - I'm a visual learner and listening for one hour is difficult for me. PowerPoint presentation or handout in addition to the lecture would be greatly appreciated.
 - Summary handout of what's protected information. Maybe a what/when can you share information with parents handout.
 - Really needed handouts, at very least a list of presenters' names and contact information, even a distribution of their business cards. . . . why not handout the FERPA form?
5. Fourteen (14) respondents also gave suggestions regarding future ethics workshops. Selected suggestions include:⁵
- More FERPA and advising topics.
 - How to handle the flexible wording leading up to an SJP report for OP 34.12.
 - What can be said to parents after student is admitted but before classes begin?
 - More panels as it's great to get multiple perspectives.
 - Consider how to apply science to other fields, like arts, engineering.
 - Have more on common topics that are tricky, such as student counseling, student judicial, legal services.
 - Dealing with plagiarism: how to prevent it? How to respond when it happens first then second time.
 - Student rights in the classroom: excused absences; how does the instructor address issues and what are the instructor's rights?

⁵ See appendix B for comprehensive suggestions for future ethics workshops.

Conclusion

The evaluations from the Spring 2012 TLPDC Ethics Series showed that these workshops were informative. The majority of respondents (92.9%) *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that these workshops met their expectations based on the workshop title and description. Many participants indicated that the workshops were helpful, and a strong majority (84.2%) *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that they would recommend these workshops to their colleagues. The FERPA session was particularly well-received.

Attendees suggested scheduling more time to allow for cases, examples, and questions because the one-hour session seemed too rushed and prevented in-depth discussions. For future workshops, the respondents suggested a larger space, more panelists, more advertisement, more related workshops, and sessions for advising issues.

On the other hand, a few participants voiced confusion because some information, as described in the workshop title, was not presented (enough) in the workshop. Some people suggested visual aids for the presentation, as well as the distributions of handouts and [FERPA] forms. There were also a couple of technical issues, such as speakers' low volume.

Overall, the Spring 2012 TLPDC/Ethics series had very positive outcomes. Many participants suggested continuation of such workshops and more panelists from different perspectives. Particularly, several respondents strongly believed the FERPA session should be repeated for all faculty and advisors and recommended some follow-up sessions to address issues such as, "What can be said to parents after student is admitted but before classes begin?" and "How to handle the flexible wording leading up to an SJP report for OP 34.12 [the university grading procedures policy]" In addition, proposed topics for future ethics workshops included arts, science research, plagiarism and its consequences, and student counseling and legal services.

Appendix A

Comments or suggestions regarding the workshop “FERPA & Student Data: The Ethics of Information Sharing in Higher Education”

1. Very helpful!
2. More time for discussion and questions.
3. Very informative. I learned a lot.
4. Really interesting!
5. Well done!
6. Great information. Great Job!
7. Great information.
8. Maybe more real life examples.
9. Great information.
10. Very helpful and thorough!
11. Student rights in classroom.
12. Thanks to the panel. Great job of explaining.
13. Need at least another hour. Seemed a bit rushed but very informative.
14. PowerPoint of actual [FERPA] rules would be much better than sitting and reading them.
15. I think a microphone is needed; unable to hear everything real well.
16. The three [panelists] covered it very well. Got a different perspective that way.
17. Parents were open, honest, easy to understand. Appreciate information.
18. Great workshop - this is one of those subjects that all faculty should be aware.
19. Maybe talk a bit about parents in league with students regarding a student's poor grades.
20. Appreciate the very basic information that included examples of actual cases.
21. Difficult to hear the first speaker; spoke too fast. Good information for how to handle scenarios.
22. Very informative; it should be mandatory for faculty/staff. I'm glad that there is a safe guard.
23. I think it should be a little longer to allow for additional questions. There is really good information out there that needs to be shared.
24. "When in doubt, don't give it out." My new mantra, though it corresponds to my preconception. The nugget came at the end, but at least it came. Reading formalistic regulations, as Brenda did, feels like CYA [Cover Your Ass] on her part and the university's; it's [sic] effect, I suspect, is more intimidating than informative--which, given my new mantra, may be appropriate.

25. I'm a visual learner and listening for one hour is difficult for me. PowerPoint presentation or handout in addition to the lecture would be greatly appreciated.
26. This is something that should be attended by all faculty. I hope you will find a way to make the information available or to repeat the session.
27. Really needed handouts, at very least a list of presenters' names and contact information, even a distribution of their business cards. Also the names, departments, and contact information of third party who were mentioned as potential assistant. And why not handout the FERPA form?
28. I appreciated the perspective from the three panelists. It enriched the comprehensive of the information.
29. Was best and most effective session of the semester. Very strong audience engagement and responsiveness from presenters.
30. Summary handout of what's protected information. Maybe a what/when can you share information with parents handout. What about professors talking to each other about students. And what if other students overhear? Facebook - what if a professor posts about finding "a" plagiarized paper?

Appendix B

Suggestions for future ethics workshops provided by attendees at “FERPA & Student Data: The Ethics of Information Sharing in Higher Education” session

1. More panels as it's great to get multiple perspectives.
2. Bigger room.
3. How to handle the flexible wording leading up to an SJP report for OP 34.12.
4. More training sessions for faculty and staff.
5. I think a similar discussion/presentation should be presented to TTU advisors!
6. More FERPA and advising topics.
7. Consider making them a little longer for questions/comments.
8. Time.
9. What can be said to parents after student is admitted but before classes begin?
10. It helped that presenters were not thrown off by questions. This is good.
11. Consider how to apply science to other fields, like arts, engineering.
12. Have more on common topics that are tricky, such as student counseling, student judicial, legal services.

13. Dealing with plagiarism: how to prevent it? How to respond when it happens first then second time.
14. Student rights in the classroom: excused absences; how does the instructor address issues and what are the instructor's rights?