

2011

[Spring 2011 TLTC Ethics Series Report]

Sponsored by the Texas Tech University Ethics Center, the Teaching, Learning and Technology Center (TLTC), and the Graduate School

Spring 2011 TLTC Ethics Series Report

Introduction

In collaboration with the Teaching, Learning, and Technology Center (TLTC) and the Graduate School, the Texas Tech Ethics Center (TTU Ethics Center) hosted three luncheons during the Spring 2011 semester. This luncheon series touched on research ethics topics and values, justice and genetic discrimination, and ethical classroom behaviors for students and teachers.

All three sessions were well attended and received mainly positive feedback. The following report summarizes the three Series sessions in detail.

Session I

Event Name: Research Ethics Topics and Values

Date: 1/27/2011

Time: 12:00 - 1:00 PM

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

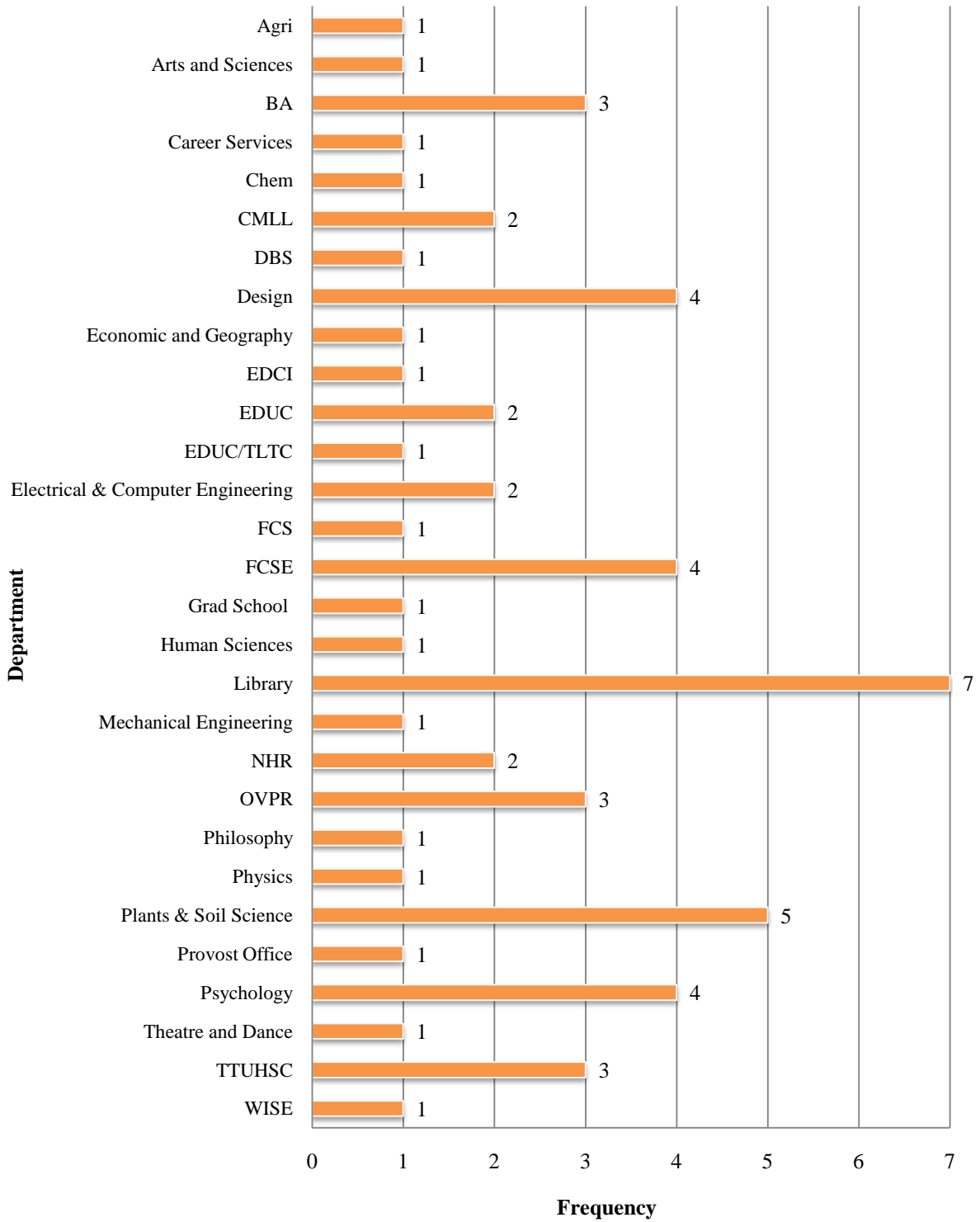
Speaker: Dr. Howard Curzer

Event Summary: “Most classes aim to instill knowledge and/or skill, but Research Ethics aims to motivate behavior, too. Forbidding wrongdoing and threatening punishment are insufficient; they merely produce increasingly clever rule-breaking. To succeed, one must get buy-in from the listener by explaining why the wrongdoing is wrong in ways that the listener will accept. That is, one must connect the desired behavior with values already held by the listener. In my Research Ethics course I grapple with a range of RCR topics: Scientific Misconduct, Authorship, Dual Use Research, Publication and Peer Review, Conflicts of Interest, Intellectual Property, Mentoring and Collaboration, Data Management, Responsibilities to Animal Subjects, and Responsibilities to Human Subjects. To these topics correspond a range of ethical behaviors. What values do listeners already possess that enable them to buy into these behaviors? How does one motivate virtue?”¹

Number of Participants: The 58 participants came from 29 different departments/units. See the following chart for a more detailed description of the composition of participants.

¹ <https://www.tlrc.ttu.edu/WebApps/EMSEventEnrollmentDev/View/RSS/RSS.aspx/GetEvents> (accessed, 01/26/2011)

Distribution of Departments

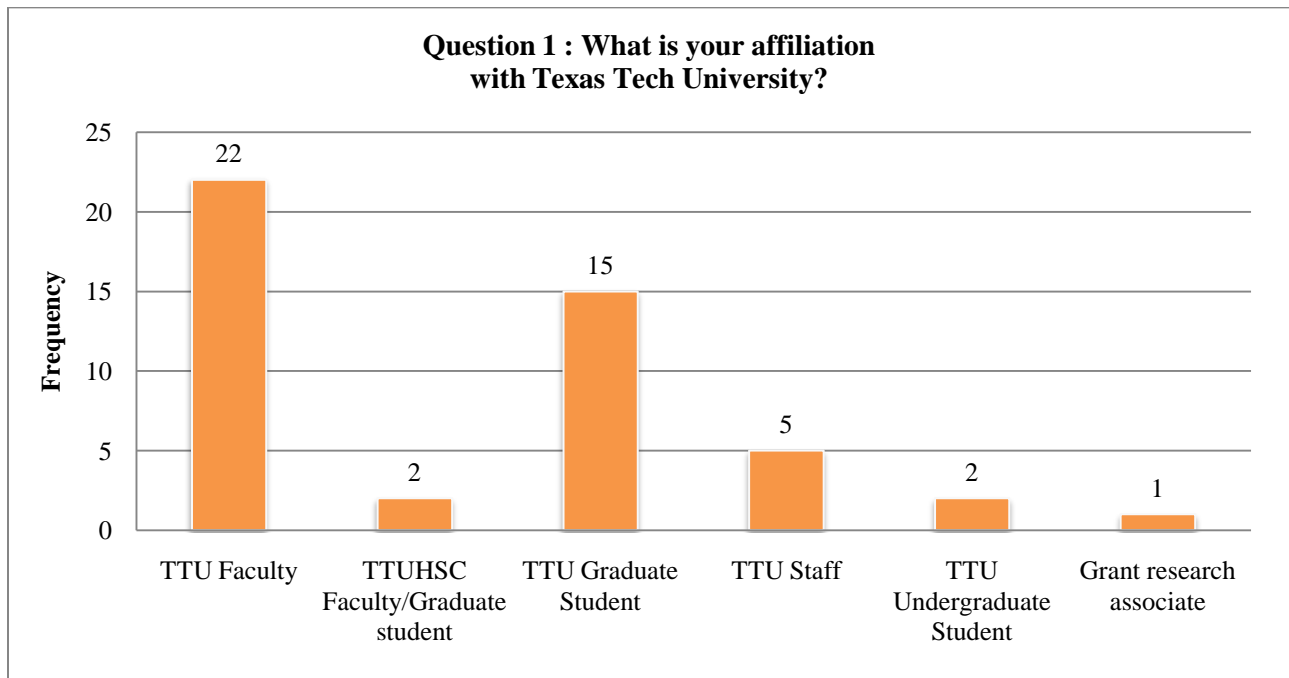


Event Questionnaire: 47 questionnaires were collected and included the following five questions or statements:

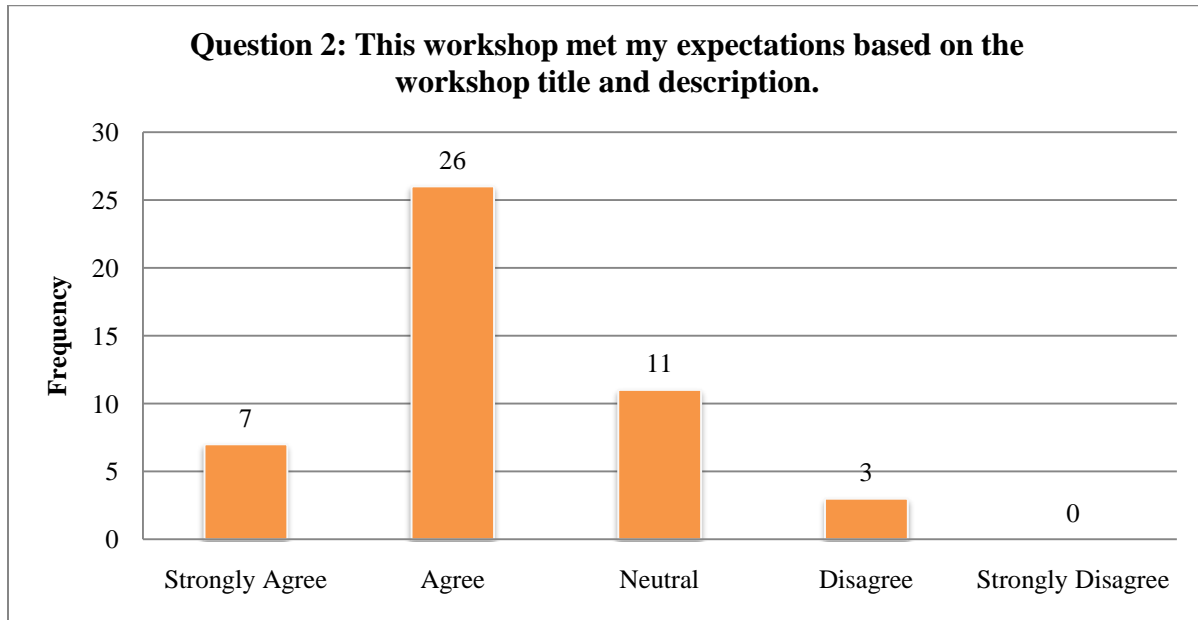
1. What is your affiliation with Texas Tech University?
2. This workshop met my expectations based on the workshop title and description.
3. I would recommend this workshop to my colleagues.
4. Do you have any comments or suggestions you would like to share regarding this workshop?
5. Do you have any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

The charts summarize the answers to the first three questions/statements.

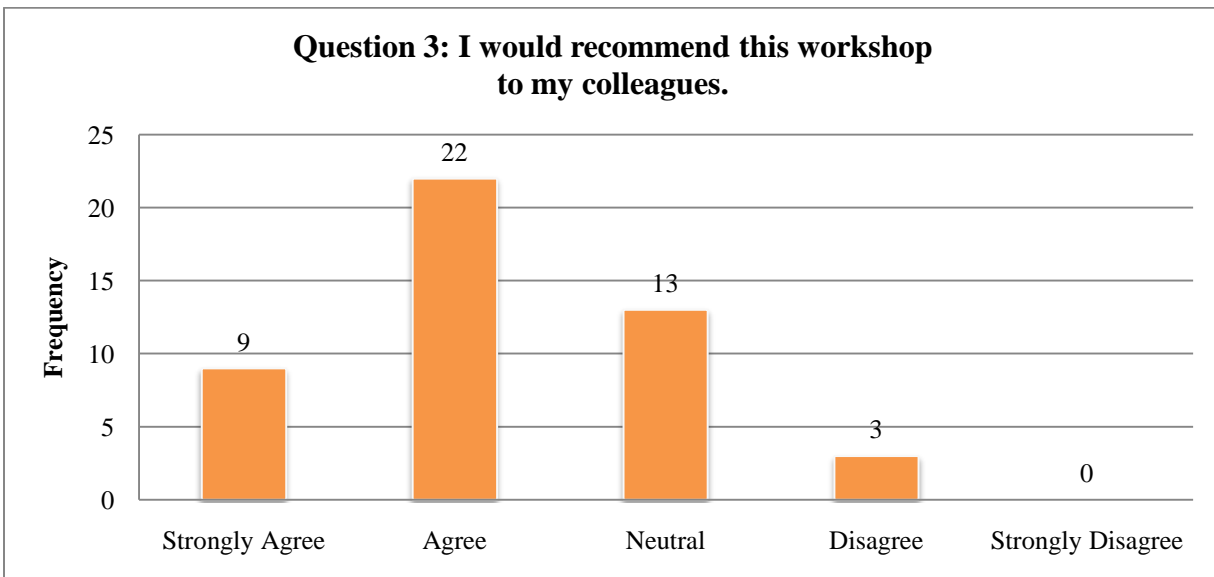
1. Most respondents were TTU faculty and graduate students:



2. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that this workshop met their expectations based on the workshop title and description:



3. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend this workshop to their colleagues:



4. The following comments and suggestions were provided by thirteen faculty members, one staff member, one TTUHSC Faculty/Graduate student, and ten graduate students.
- Comments and suggestions from faculty:
 - It was more on Dr. Curzer's class than on the general topic or on uses of researchers.
 - Make stream & PowerPoint available.
 - Hard to hear him.
 - Hard to hear from the back of the room. Put a mike on the speaker. Still unclear what the "take away" points are.
 - Good info on how to use ethic and values in doing research.
 - Great info. A mike would have helped. Good speaker. Great assessment of topics.
 - Repeat - annually?
 - Very well done.
 - It was difficult to hear the speaker.
 - Could have presented a case or two for analysis as a group. Talk more about what ethics is, i.e. how is it defined, how do ethics differ from principles, values, etc. Have the audience participate in examples of ethical dilemmas to experience what students might in teaching about ethics.
 - A microphone would be good. Speaker was difficult to hear.
 - Really interesting topic and presentation.
 - Need to be louder.

- Comments and suggestions from TTUHSC Faculty/Graduate students:
 - More space.
 - More topics on ethics & research would be great! More in-depth discussion on each issue.

- Comments and suggestions from the staff:
 - You imply that there is no definite answer to ethical decisions. I disagree - there are definitions that must be projected - Students' right is not the only answer to ethical decisions.

- Comments and suggestions from graduate students:
 - Thanks.
 - Sometimes it was difficult to hear our speaker.
 - Although he told us at the beginning that his presentation would be directed toward faculty, in the description I was led to believe it would be beneficial to students as well. The information was relevant but left me feeling unfulfilled.
 - Though I had nothing to contribute, I enjoyed the Q&A and discussion period after the seminar. I wish the seminar had taught more about ethics than how to teach ethics.
 - I enjoyed and found it interesting. I enjoyed learning about the philosophical approaches to ethics. The jokes were cute, too. Also, great job fielding questions and comments from the audience.
 - Great.

- It'd be interesting to see how TTU's IRB applied deontology utilitarian approaches in approving or rejecting proposals. One person asked about how to transfer this information to graduate students. As a grad student, it seems like if more advisors/faculty were aware of this approach and used it. It would help. Many faculty will state their reasoning (say the utilitarian) as a fact, truth etc (not something that could be argued with). Because students are aware of conflicting ethical reasoning, this can actually hurt our ability to make these decisions because we don't want to accept this as fact, but do not know how to approach a solution to this dilemma.
- Please use MIC. Can barely hear.
- I expected to learn things I should avoid in academia. What will be plagiarism, for example; I don't think it was mentioned at all.
- More topics on ethics & research would be great! More in-depth discussion on each issue.

5. The following suggestions for future ethics workshop were provided by three faculty members, and two graduate students.

- Suggestions from faculty:
 - Tibor Nagy as a speaker.
 - More like this.
 - Healthcare discrimination to include: socioeconomic, age, race, disabilities.
- Suggestions from graduate students:
 - Lunch was a great idea! & Please provide more examples.

Session II

Event Name: Justice and Genetic Discrimination

Date: 02/24/2011

Time: 12:30 - 1:30 PM

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

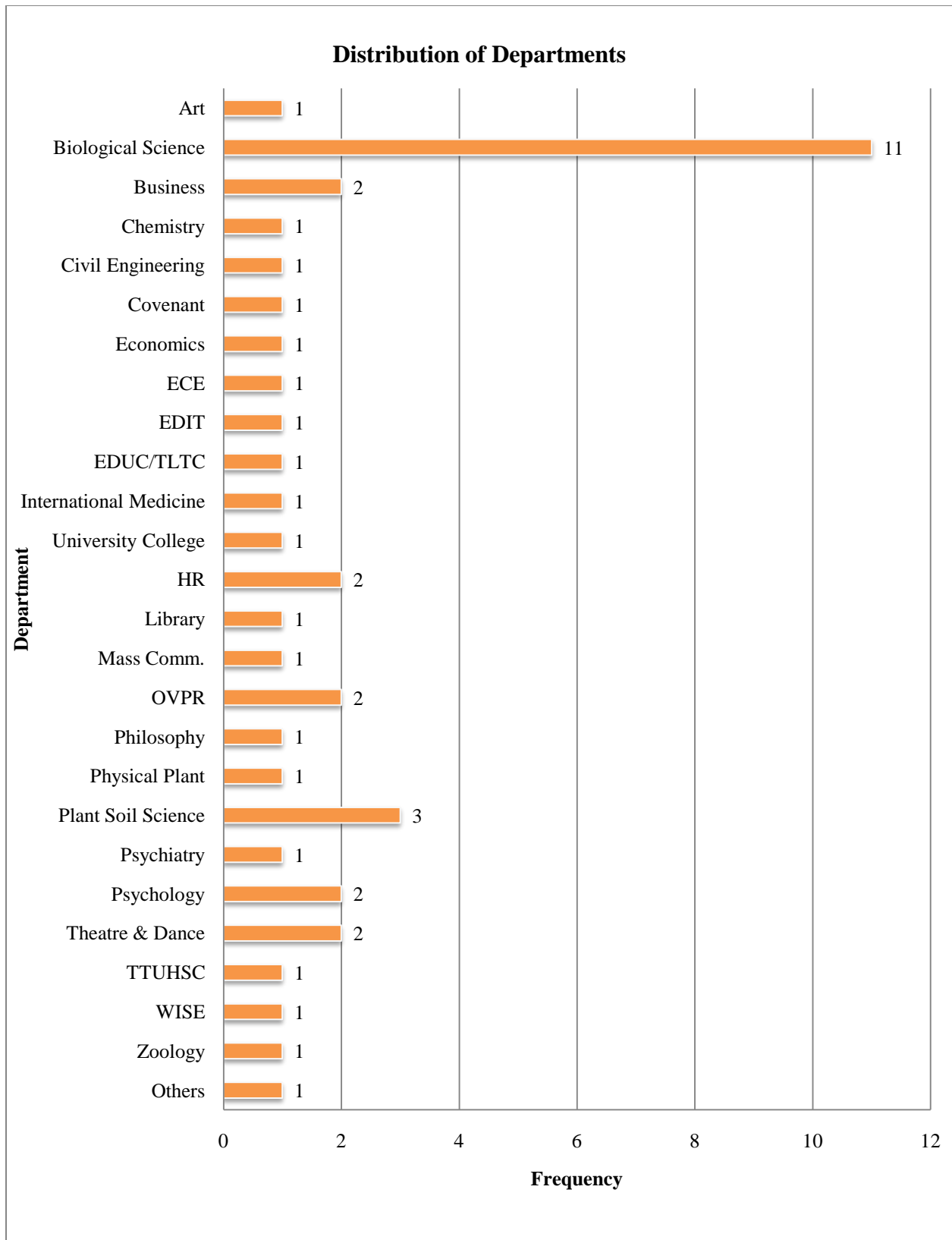
Panelists: Dr. Cheryl Erwin

Event Summary: “The TLTC and TTU Ethics Center Spring Series: “Justice and Genetic Discrimination” with Cheryl Erwin, JD, PhD, Visiting Professor, Texas Tech University Law School.

Genetic discrimination is the denial of rights, privileges, or opportunities or other adverse treatment based solely on genetic information. Individuals worry about potential discrimination at a higher rate than which they experience such incidents. This worry may motivate them to place subtle and/or overt limits on themselves, such as keeping their family history a secret, abstaining from genetic testing, or passing by opportunities to change employers. While the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act of 2008 seeks to address these concerns, it is not clear whether these worries have been allayed, or whether the perception of genetic discrimination has diminished. This discussion will highlight Genetic Discrimination, the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act of 2008, and Huntington’s disease.”²

Number of Participants: The 43 participants came from 26 different departments/units, and 11 of them were from Biological Science:

² <https://www.tlct.ttu.edu/WebApps/EMSEventEnrollmentDev/View/RSS/RSS.aspx/GetEvents> (accessed, 01/28/2010)



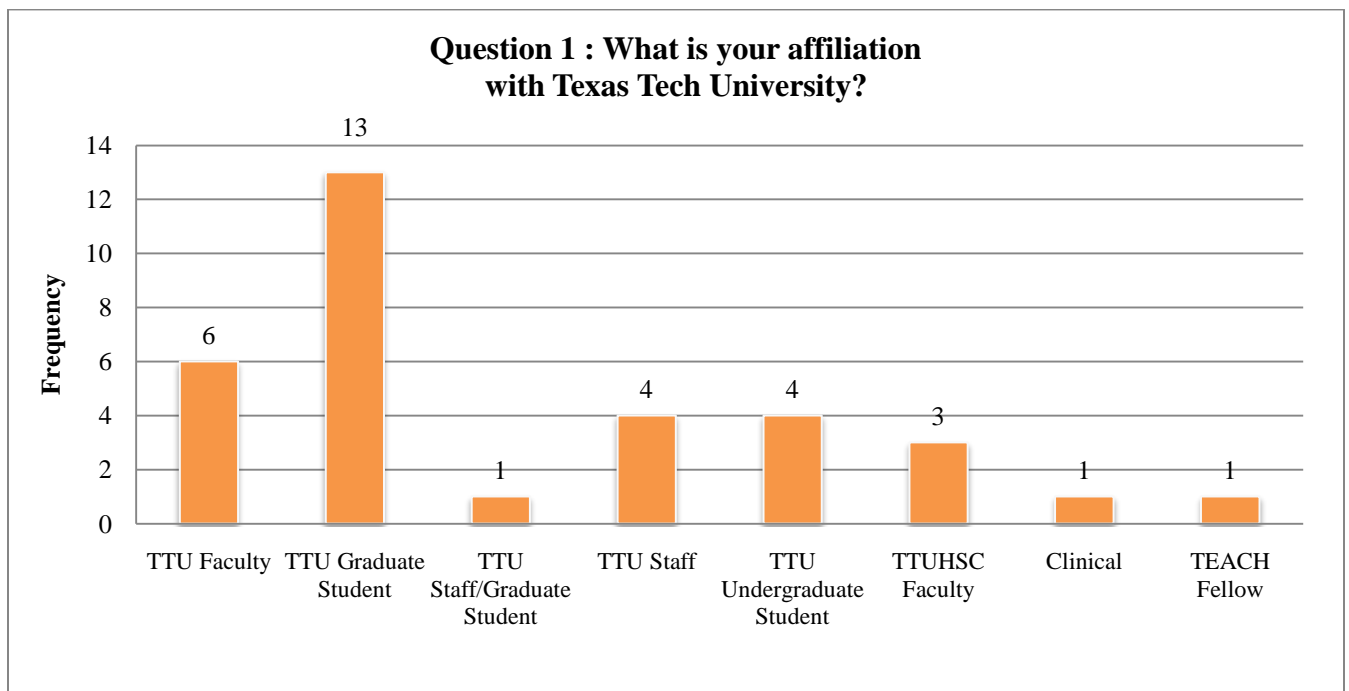
Event Questionnaire: 33 questionnaires were collected.

The following five questions/statements were asked on the questionnaire:

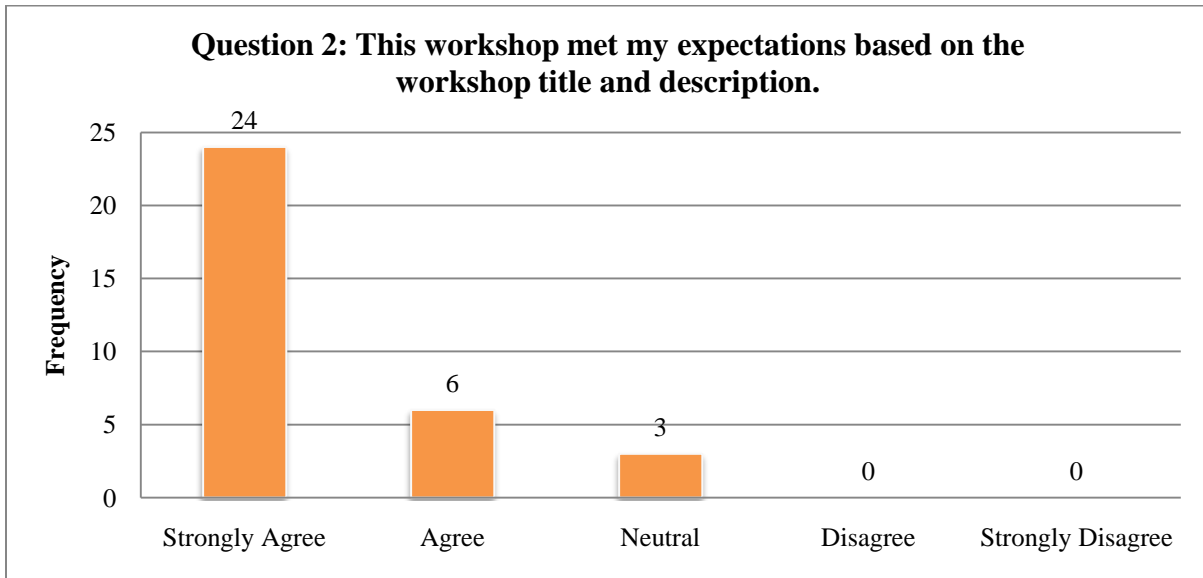
1. What is your affiliation with Texas Tech University?
2. This workshop met my expectations based on the workshop title and description.
3. I would recommend this workshop to my colleagues.
4. Do you have any comments or suggestions you would like to share regarding this workshop?
5. Do you have any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

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

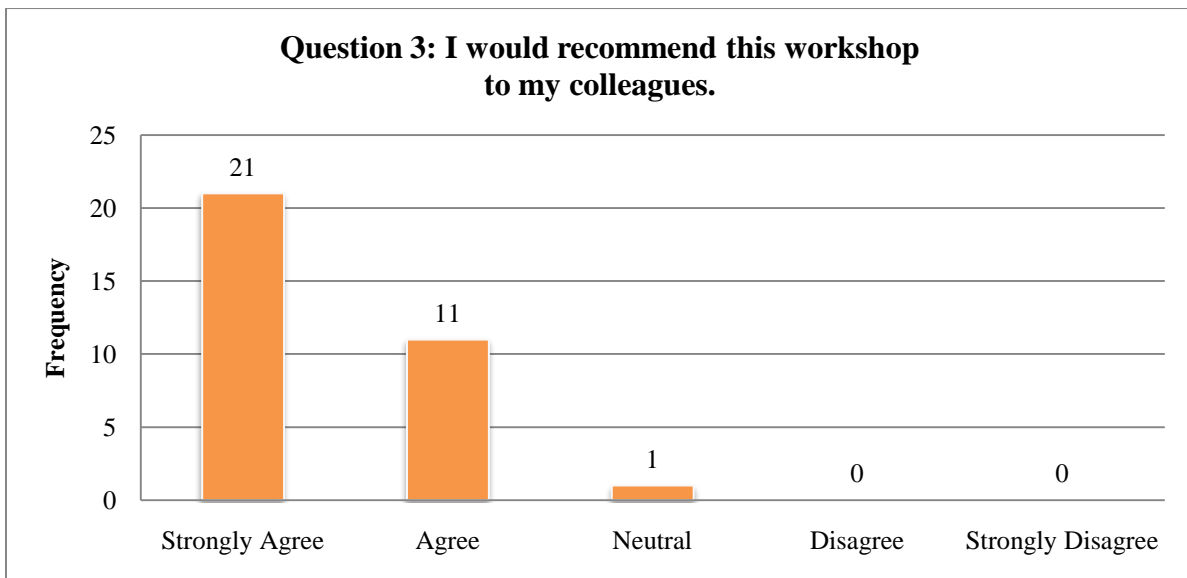
1. More respondents were TTU faculty and graduate students:



The majority of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that this workshop met their expectations based on the workshop title and description:



2. Most respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend this workshop to their colleagues.



3. The following comments and suggestions were provided by three faculty members, two graduate students, two undergraduate students, and three other participants (TTUHSC Faculty, Clinical, and TEACH Fellow).

- Comments and suggestions from faculty:
 - We need this.
 - The personal stories were particularly powerful and illustrative. Perhaps adding those in hard copy form.
 - Fascinating and a very necessary discussion!
- Comments and suggestions from graduate students:
 - It was a good PowerPoint.
 - I enjoyed it. Reminded me of Jeremy Rifkin's "Empathic Civilization" in the conclusion - (Global empathy/we/us).
- Comment and suggestion from undergraduate students:
 - Well done lecture. Very interesting and informative.
 - Very good workshop which helps raise awareness of problems related to "genetic discrimination!" Laws and social issues need to be kept in mind.
- Comments and suggestions from other participants:
 - Outstanding program.
 - Great talk. Great discussion - wish there was more time for discussion.
 - Very good workshop.

4. The following suggestions for future ethics workshop were provided by two faculty members, three graduate students, two undergraduate students, and four other participants (TTUHSC Faculty, Clinical, and TEACH Fellow) .
- Suggestions from faculty:
 - Mental health stigma.
 - Keep up the good work!
 - Suggestions from graduate students:
 - Issues around assent & children's participation in research & clinical trials.
 - I would love to join you in other workshops regarding discrimination in other ways.
 - Just keep up the good work.
 - Suggestion from undergraduate students:
 - More time?
 - Keep on promoting awareness and discussion serious to see what everyone of us can do: bring ideas – brainstorming – involving people who have lived such experiences to help understand the issues. I would promote group sessions of people/experts in medical/research/insurance fields. Awareness – understanding – trying to find solutions.
 - Comments and suggestions from other participants:
 - Add TTUHSC Faculty - we are one community.
 - Data integrity in the "omics" and digital age.
 - Add on personalized medicine and genetic counseling.

- Would like to have more such workshops.

Session III

Event Name: Whose Responsibility Is It? Examining the Ethical Behaviors in the Classrooms for Students and Teachers

Date: 03/25/2011

Time: 12:00 - 1:00 PM

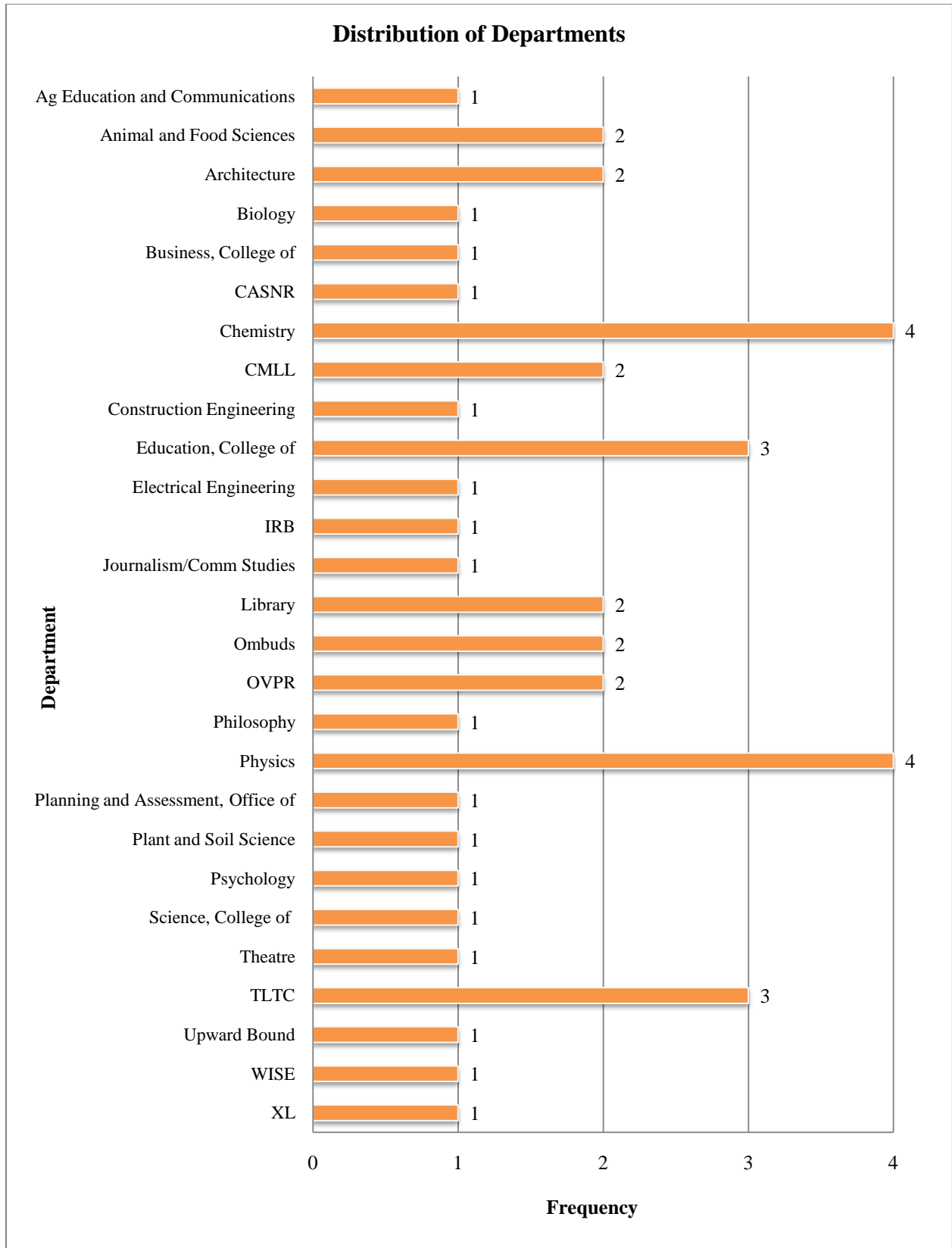
Location: Room 151 - Audio/Video Instructional Lab (AVI)

Speakers: Dr. David Roach

Event Summary: "The TLTC and TTU Ethics Center Spring Series: "Whose Responsibility Is It? Examining the Ethical Behaviors in the Classrooms for Students and Teachers." In a recent headline story, over 200 Florida students were caught in a cheating scandal and all 600 students were required to re-take a midterm exam as a result. While some applauded the faculty member's response and placed blame wholly on the student population, others found fault with the professor and voiced concern about the availability of test materials online and in particular, reliance on test banks. This session will involve a discussion of this case study and looks at the responsibilities and ethical considerations for both students and teachers. Please join the TLTC, the TTU Ethics Center, the Graduate School, and Dr. David Roach on 3/25/2011 for this session."³

Number of Participants: The 44 participants came from 31 different departments/colleges:

³ <https://www.tltc.ttu.edu/WebApps/EMSEventEnrollmentDev/View/RSS/RSS.aspx/GetEvents> (accessed, 01/28/2010)



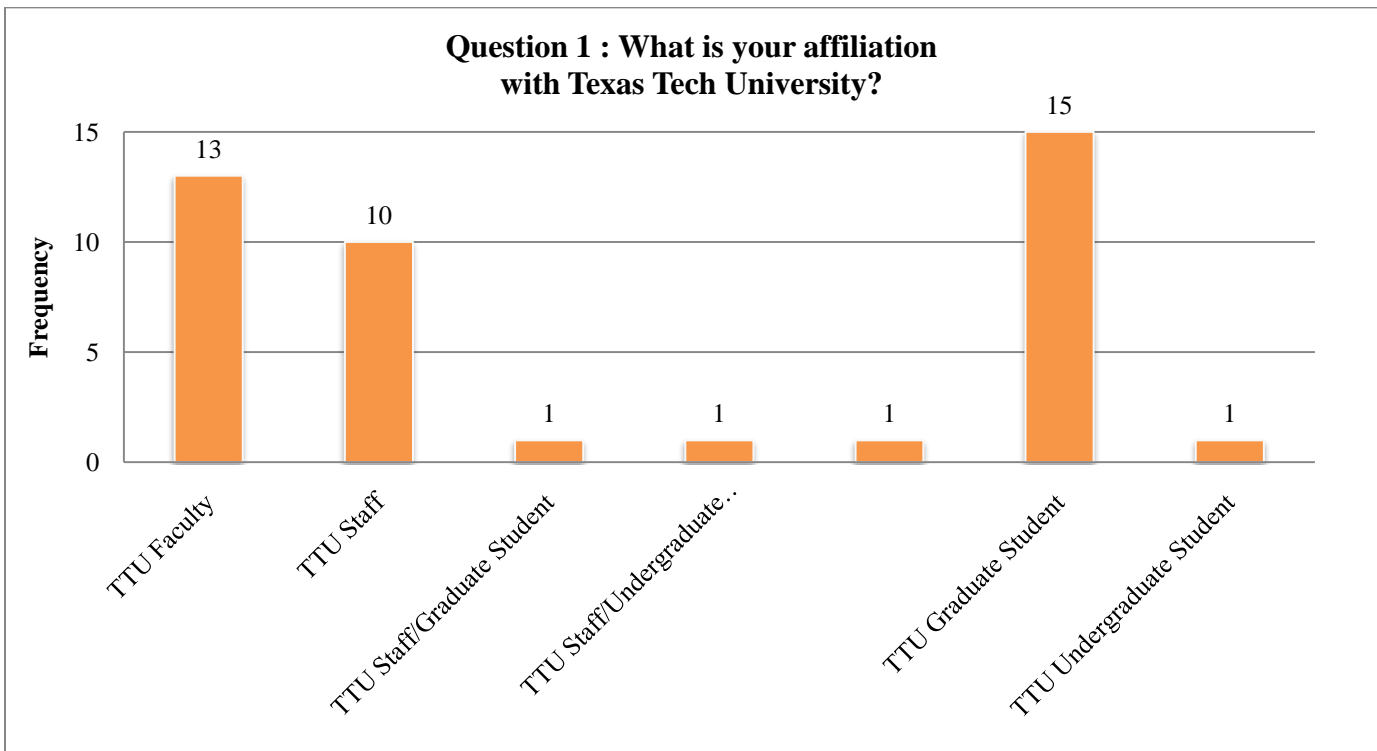
Event Questionnaire: 42 questionnaires were collected.

The following five questions/statements were asked on the questionnaire:

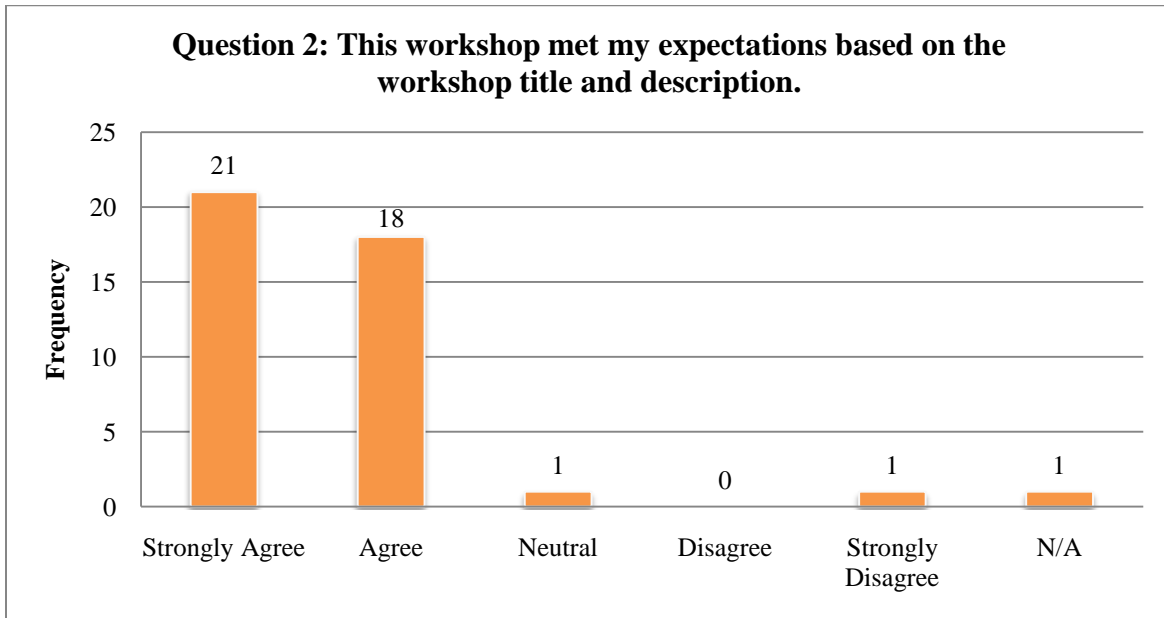
1. What is your affiliation with Texas Tech University?
2. This workshop met my expectations based on the workshop title and description.
3. I would recommend this workshop to my colleagues.
4. Do you have any comments or suggestions you would like to share regarding this workshop?
5. Do you have any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

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

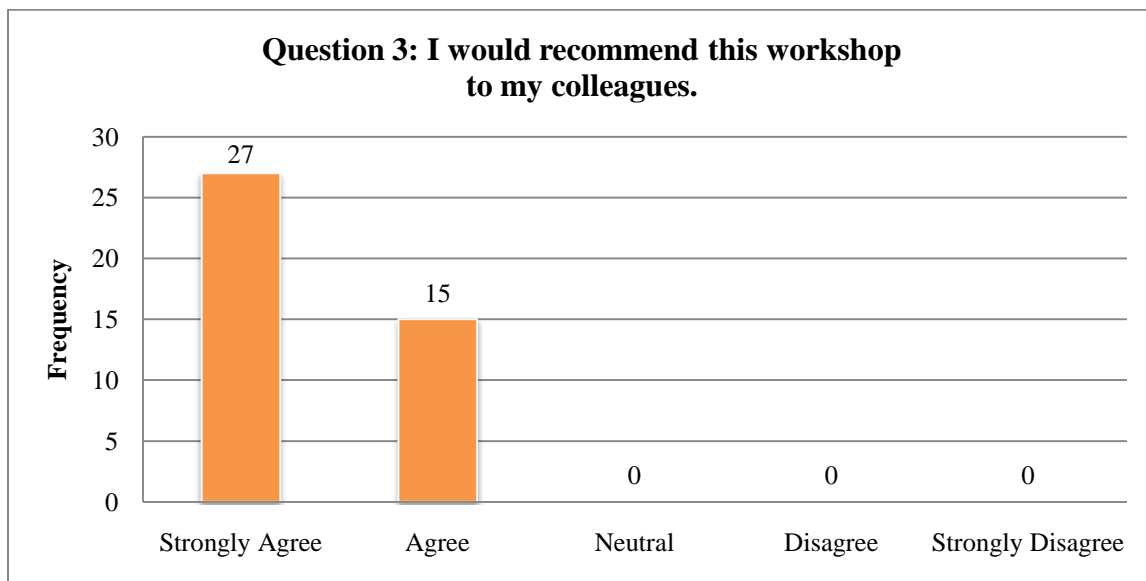
1. Answers to the first question show that most respondents were TTU graduate students and faculty; the next largest group was TTU staff:



2. Almost all of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that this workshop met their expectations based on the workshop title and description.



3. All respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend this workshop to their colleagues (see the chart below).



4. The following comments and suggestions were provided by seven faculty members, eight staff members, and six graduate students.

- Comments and suggestions from faculty:
 - More time! Good discussion and great speaker!
 - Plenty to discuss, but make the student-portion available/included. I'd like to hear what the students thought/think.
 - Learned from this workshop.
 - Good content, use of technology, discussion availability. Gave good specifics, thought provoking.
 - There are courses which do not have exams, but rather projects. Ethics are as critical here as an exam.
 - Good job.
 - Effective strategy.
- Comments and suggestions from the staff member:
 - Have a 2-hour time period if not longer for ideas and discussions.
 - IF cannot control, make rules!
 - There was a good discussion on ethics on professors, but no discussions on research ethics law had been discussed. Being a postdoc, I would be more interested in "Research Ethics."
 - I enjoyed engaging in such an open discussion.
 - I enjoyed the dialogue and ideas presented.

- Nice job.
- Dr. Roach is an enthusiastic, knowledgeable presenter. Thank you! Great topic.
- Schedule part II. This single topic could fill a series of presentations.
- Comments and suggestions from graduate students:
 - Very helpful.
 - Nice done!
 - Perhaps a bit longer would allow for more discussion.
 - Need more time for discussion.
 - The time just flew by.
 - I really liked this workshop; would like to have more of such workshops.

5. The following suggestions for future ethics workshop were provided by two faculty members, two staff members, one faculty/graduate student, and three graduate students.

- Suggestions from faculty:
 - The leader should talk about TTU "Ethical Codes," especially the main ones.
 - Build an idea about ways to structure class activities; risks of prepared materials that accompany text books.
- Suggestions from staff:
 - It's nice workshop! At the same time, the student should also have similar workshop to share with the faculty.
 - More like this one.

- Suggestions from faculty/graduate students:
 - Thank you. Maybe we look at student's expectation.
- Suggestions from graduate students:
 - I was expecting it to focus on relationships with teachers and students (i.e. how approachable to convey yourself).
 - It would be helpful to discuss ways to handle plagiarism, cheating, and other ethical issues as a follow-up workshop.
 - Would like to discuss about Research Ethics Guest authorship in Publications.

Conclusion

The evaluations from the Spring 2011 TLTC Ethics Series showed that these workshops were informative and well-received, benefiting the participants in several ways. The evaluations show that a great number of the respondents (83.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that these workshops met their expectations based on the workshop title and description. Many participants believed the workshops provided insightful information and raised some interesting and important topics. Also, the majority of the respondents (86.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend these workshops to their colleagues.

For future workshops, the respondents suggested inviting outside experts, hosting more workshops each semester, and involving more students in the workshops in order to hear their perspective and expectation. Topics of interest included data integrity, mental health stigma, personalized medicine, genetic counseling, healthcare discrimination (socioeconomic, age, race, disabilities, etc.), and ways of handling plagiarism, cheating, and other ethical issues.

On the other hand, a few participants wished for more examples or cases for analysis, and more definitions on ethics (codes) and the differences between ethics and principles. Many people also suggested allowing more time for audience participation; the “one-hour” limit seemed to prevent more in-depth discussions. A couple of technical issues were also addressed, such as the use of microphone to aid soft presenters.

Compared to the Fall 2010 TLTC Ethics Series, the Spring 2011 Series saw an increase in the attendance: the average Fall Series attendance number was 28, while the Spring Series reached 48, an increase of 71.4%. Consequently, the Spring Series also received more feedback: the Fall Series had an average of 24 evaluations returned per session, while the Spring series had 42 evaluations.

Overall, the results were very positive. Many participants suggested additional time for each session and expressed interest for more workshops on various topics of ethics.