Put an Ethicist on the Team!
A Promising but Neglected "Third Way" to Teach Ethics in a Business School

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Abstract. How can business schools best prepare their students to deal with the ethical challenges they will face in the 'real world'? For three or four decades members of business (and other professional) schools have debated the relative merits of teaching ethics in a stand-alone "foundational" course or teaching a little bit of ethics "across the curriculum" in every course. This paper explores a third option—having an ethicist as a member of a team that teaches an integrated approach to management—which combines the advantages of the two traditional options while avoiding some of their shortcomings. The paper begins with a lengthy discussion about the interdisciplinary nature of the field of business ethics and about the pedagogical implications of this conception of the field. And it concludes with a case study of the team-teaching approach at the Sauder School of Business of University of British Columbia.

Keywords: business ethics, team-teaching, pedagogy, MBA, ethics accross the curriculum.

1. Introduction

What sort of training in ethics should business students receive before they are released into the big, bad world? Should they be offered (or required to take) a stand-alone "foundational" course in business ethics; should they be encouraged to think about ethical issues as they arise within the subject matter of all of their other courses (the so-called "ethics-across-the-curriculum" or "diffusion" approach); or should they be exposed to ethics in both of these ways?

As other commentators in this volume point out, this debate has raged in business schools, and in professional faculties generally, for three or four decades (see, e.g. Bok and Callahan 1980). The recent controversy over the role of ethics in the AACSB's accreditation standards for business schools scratches old wounds. By seeming content with a half-hearted endorsement of the ethics-across-the-curriculum approach, the AACSB has raised the ire of most business-ethics specialists who, not surprisingly, tend to argue for both a required foundational course and the "infusion" of ethics in the courses devoted to other managerial disciplines.

I want to make a case here for a rather different approach to teaching ethics in a business school: namely, having an ethicist as a full member of an interdisciplinary team that is responsible for delivering a significant component of the course work for a business degree. (Call this the team-teaching approach, for the sake of brevity.) Below I will discuss a case study of this model in the team-taught MBA Core that has been run at the University of British Columbia for the last several years. I will not enter directly into the controversy reopened by the AACSB's new standards, for at least three reasons. First, because there are issues about the role of such accreditation bodies that are independent of the pedagogical issues at hand (in other words, there may be good reasons why such a body should not try to *force* business schools to adopt a standard even if there are very good reasons why the schools should nevertheless adopt such a standard voluntarily). Second, I do not wish to spend too much time rehearsing very well-known arguments for and against the "foundation course" and "ethics-across-the-curriculum" approaches, except to show that the "team-teaching" approach does much to capture the best of both worlds. And third, it is not at all my intention to argue that the AACSB should be requiring business schools to adopt the team-teaching approach to business ethics training.

In general it requires a significant amount of re-engineering, innovation, customisation, and faculty buy-in to incorporate an interdisciplinary team-teaching segment into a degree program; it is inconceivable that an accreditation body would require such a thing. It is also difficult to conceive of a business school going to all the trouble of incorporating team-teaching modules merely for the sake of providing a good vehicle for the teaching of business ethics. Why then am I presenting a case for teaching business ethics in a team-teaching context? Because if your program already involves interdisciplinary team-teaching, or if it is considering this option in a process of reform, then business ethicists should jump at the opportunity to be involved. This article is, in effect, a defence of this piece of advice.

2. What Do Business Graduates Need to Know about Ethics?

Any argument about how business ethics should be taught must say something about what it means by "business ethics". Our field obviously has a less definitive shape than most of the other disciplines taught in management faculties. I will

work here with a very broad conception of the field which shades off into questions of moral psychology at one end and political economy and political philosophy at the other. Many professors of business ethics focus on a narrower range of issues, but most of the normative topics covered in business ethics courses should fit into the following set of categories. Like any set of categories, it is not true or false, but only more or less useful. I propose the following way of carving up the issues in order to make some observations of how, where, and by whom ethics can be taught in business schools.

When we think that business students should learn ethics we may be thinking about helping them to improve the sorts of skills, attitudes, or knowledge implicit in the following questions:[2]

1. How do you *recognise and describe* ethical issues in a business or organisational setting?

2. Once you recognise that there is an ethical issue at hand, what *motivates* you to want to do the right thing?

3. Once you are motivated to want to do the right thing, what *tools or theories* can you use to decide what is the right thing to do in this case?

4. How do we develop, select and *justify organisational policies* and decisions? How do we predict the consequences of business practices and what principles do we use to evaluate them? (This broad category includes most of the topics that would arise when we ask about the ethical issues in functional areas like marketing, accounting, finance, etc, or about ethical issues relevant to workplace safety, consumer protection, and so on.)

5. What kinds of *leadership and organisational structures and cultures* will best enable an organisation to avoid or deal with ethical issues? What ethical infrastructure (codes, training programs, etc) can best sustain these?

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2. The following list can be seen as expannding upon an analysis by the psychologist James Rest (1986) of four key components in ethical behaviour:
    - the ability to recognize a situation as having moral significance;
    - the ablility to make a judgement as which action is right, fair, just and appropriate;
    - a commitment to morally appropriate action; and
    - possession of appropriate personal qualities (fr example perseverance and courage) to carry out morally appropriate actions.
    See McDonald (2003) for a practical discussion of how this scheme can guide the development of an ethics progarm in the education of professional accountants.

6. What are the appropriate *governance* structures and practices? To whom do senior managers owe fiduciary obligations, and how can we best ensure that they fulfill these responsibilities?

7. When are *external regulations* (by governments, professions, trade associations, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, etc) appropriate for dealing with certain kinds of ethical or social issues? (Similarly, when are government regulations *not* justified; in other words, what justifies open markets?)

8. Over and above obeying the law and avoiding unethical behaviour and practices, when ought businesses to adopt more rigorous standards of "*corporate social responsibility*"? (And relatedly, how should such social and environmental performance be measured, verified, and reported?)

Again, I make no claim for such a list being definitive or complete. A good course in business ethics need not deal with all of these issues, although a quick survey of business ethics textbooks suggests that the typical issues will fit somewhere in these categories. Many texts and teachers will work primarily within category 4, with sections of the course dealing with ethical issues arising in, for example, marketing, finance, employee safety and privacy, consumer protection, environmental policy, and so on. Moral philosophers new to the field often focus on issues in category 3, concerning theoretical tools (such as moral theories) for solving dilemmas. Others focus mainly on corporate social responsibility, or on justifying markets or government limits on market behaviour.

This list facilitates three general observations of relevance to our pedagogical question (about how business ethics should be taught in a business school).

2.1. First Observation on the Set of Categories

Conceived in this way, *the field of business ethics is radically multidisciplinary*. One cannot expect to give a satisfactory answer to any one of these questions without taking into account the knowledge and skills of both *moral philosophers* and experts from at least two or three of the managerial subdisciplines. Scholars with backgrounds in *psychology*, *human-resource management* and *organisational behaviour* have much to contribute on questions 1-5 and 8. Knowledge of business law is helpful, and sometimes indispensable, for questions 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 (in the latter case, because a radical CSR program may require reform of corporate law to protect managers from hostile takeover). *Accountants* can help with issues arising in questions 4, 6 and 8 (especially concerning the adoption of accounting paradigms in social auditing); and they can also give a

perspective on external professional obligations (question 6) within an organisational context. *Economics* is essential for addressing foundational regulatory issues in question 6, but also agency problems in questions 2, 5 and 6, as well as cost-benefit perspectives for question 4. And of course it goes without saying that one cannot adequately address ethical issues arising in functional areas like *marketing*, *IT*, *finance*, *accounting*, *operations*, *industrial relations*, etc, without a decent knowledge of these disciplines. These claims are summarised impressionistically in the following chart.

Figure 1: Disciplines most directly relevant to different kinds of normative questions in business

	Moral/Political Philosophy	HR/OB/Psych.	Law	Economics	Accounting	Marketing	IT	Operations, etc
1. Recognition	✓	✓	✓	✓				
2. Motivation	✓	✓		✓				
3. Tools	✓	✓	✓	✓				
4. Justify policies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Leadership, culture	✓	✓						
6. Governance	✓		✓	✓	✓			
7. Regulation	✓		✓	✓	✓			
8. CSR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			

Pedagogical implications of this observation: The most obvious implication of the radical multidisciplinarity of business ethics is that one would be wary of hurling a newly minted PhD in moral philosophy in front of an MBA class for a semester-length course in business ethics. At the very least, some enculturation in managerial studies is needed for a moral philosopher to provide a reliable course in a business school. Another pedagogical implication of multidisciplinarity is that it would be wonderful—at least in some ideal world where budgets and staffing issues do not impinge—if business ethics classes could be taught by a cohesive team of professors coming from ethics and two or three other disciplines, with occasional guest professors from additional disciplines as needed. In a more realistic world, I will suggest below, an ethicist should be brought into an interdisciplinary team whose aim is to teach an integrated approach to management more generally. This first observation does not speak directly to the choice between a stand-alone course in business ethics and the ethic-across-the-curriculum approach. It might appear to open the door to the latter, given that all eight basic types of question require knowledge of some managerial discipline or other. This door closes somewhat when we consider that no one discipline deals with all of the questions or all of the relevant perspectives on any given question; and the divergent perspectives of different disciplines on particular questions are likely to conflict in ways that can leave students confused. (Consider question 5: a lawyer may try to ensure ethical behaviour from employees by recommending a comprehensive set of rules and compliance-checking procedures; an economist may recommend a system of economic rewards and punishments; an organisational theorist may recommend fewer rules, sticks and carrots and argue for an integrity-based culture inspired by a charismatic leader. But most students would not take all three courses, and perhaps in no one course would they compare and contrast these three approaches.)

In general it is never a good idea to suggest that there is no need for a special class in an interdisciplinary field of study on the grounds that elements of this field can be studied in classes concentrating on each of its components. Consider, for example, the interdisciplinary field of "entrepreneurship studies": arguably all of its elements come from finance, strategy, leadership and organizational behaviour, marketing, business law, etc. It does not follow from this fact, however, that a business school can expect to adequately prepare its graduates to be entrepreneurs without offering special courses in entrepreneurship. It is hardly sufficient to suggest that there is "entrepreneurship-across-the-curriculum" because the School urges professors to draw attention to the special issues facing entrepreneurs in their various classes in finance, strategy, and so on. The case for a special course in business ethics is even stronger, since, as we will see in the next "observation", one element of the interdisciplinary mix, namely philosophical ethics, is simply not taught anywhere else in the business school.

2.2. Second Observation on the Set of Categories

At heart none of these eight types of questions can be adequately answered without rigorous normative analysis and argument, which is of course the primary knowledge and skill of those trained in the discipline of moral or ethical theory. Put boldly (and a bit bluntly), those trained in sciences (e.g. applied mathematics, IT, environmental sciences), social sciences (e.g. OB, economics, accounting) and professions (e.g. law) provide useful information and experience for normative analysis; but when they cross the line from saying how thing *are* to how things *ought to be*, then they are leaving the primary domains of their disciplines.[3] They are, if you will, no longer speaking as experts or scientists, but rather as informed citizens. Of course there is nothing to prevent someone originally trained in, say, a social science from becoming a fully competent moral theorist—indeed; some of the leading business ethicists today have that sort of intellectual biography. Similarly, there is nothing to prevent a moral philosopher from learning some of the relevant areas of managerial studies. But in both cases such learning takes time and serious dedication. In short, although business ethics is an interdisciplinary field incorporating the very latest insights in management studies, it is also, properly speaking a branch of 2400-year-old discipline of ethics.

Pedagogical implications of this observation: If this observation is valid, then it will be very difficult to keep the door open to a pure ethics-across-the-curriculum approach to teaching ethics in a business program. That is, without a concerted effort within a business school to train faculty members in the latest developments in ethics, and to promote advanced research in the field of business ethics by members of the various managerial disciplines, it is unlikely that students will learn to deal with all of the basic dimensions of business ethics in a coherent, consistent, rigorous way. I will not dwell on this point, since it is persuasively defended elsewhere in this volume (see Windsor, and Hartman and Hartman). I will also not dwell on the even more common observation that without a very pro-active commitment of a professional faculty to ethics-across-the-curriculum, it will not be the case that a little bit of ethics will be taught in every course (albeit, disconnectedly and even contradictorily), but rather it is more likely that it just will not be taught at all.[4] I will discuss a possible explanation for misguided

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3. This "blunt" claim requires some explanation. Obviously, social scientists and professionals are often legitimately commenting on how things ought to be done in their fields. For example, an accountant tells us how we ought to keep our books, a psychologist can tell us how we ought to conduct interviews in ways that do not bias the data. My claim in the text is using "ought" in its moral sense, referring to moral duties and rights in a particular situation. A psychologist, for example, might be able to measure the amount of stress that certain kinds of management practices cause the employees. But as a psychologist she can not tell us what level of stress the boss ought or ought not to be putting on the employees. I thank Chris MacDonald for urging this clarification.

optimism about the adequacy of the ethics-across-the-curriculum in the "observation" to follow. At this point, we can infer from the first two observations that if a faculty is serious about teaching ethics it would do better to have a required stand-alone course by a well-rounded expert in business ethics—someone who can tie together the issues from all or most of the eight categories, and who can do it with adequate knowledge of the relevant disciplines—than it would be to rely on a hodgepodge of brief and disconnected normative discussions across its courses. But of course, these two observations about the field of business ethics also point to the obvious advantages of teaching ethics within an integrated team.

2.3. Third Observation on the Set of Categories

Before discussing the team-teaching option in more detail, I want to focus on one of the eight categories of normative issues, namely, question 2: once you recognise there is an ethical issue at hand what *motivates* you to want to do the right thing? Or more to the point, perhaps, what can a business school do to motivate its graduates to do the right thing when they are faced with a clear choice between right and wrong? The third "observation" is two-fold: the "motivation" question seems to be the one that most people have in mind when they think that (post-Enron) business schools should assume a greater responsibility for the ethics of their graduates; but ironically, courses in business ethics will spend very little time directly attempting to motivate the students to be ethical. In other words, most people outside the field think that ethics training is about exhorting students to be moral, but almost all of the content of business ethics courses concentrates on other things. For the most part, a business ethics course will assume that you want to do the right thing, and will proceed to help you to choose and implement the best solution in a complex organisational and political environment. The interesting and challenging issues are not typically those that involve a choice between an obviously ethical and an obviously unethical action; but rather between actions that will benefit different individuals or stakeholders, or sometimes between a set of actions none of which is particularly desirable. Of course, indirectly business ethics courses serve to reinforce the idea that ethics does matter, despite pressures in the business world to achieve results through unethical means. They can explore the way different organisational cultures can serve to encourage either ethical or unethical kinds of behaviour and business practices; and they can make students more aware of the kinds of rationalisations that can blind one to the ethical implications of one's choice. But generally speaking, professors of business ethics do not think it is their job to wag their finger at students imploring them to do the right thing.

4.   Again, see Hartman and Hartman (this volume), as well as Piper 1993: p 128-9, and Bok and Callahan 1980: p 74-5.

Pedagogical implications of this observation: The implications of rejecting the "business ethics as exhortation" view are enormous. If you think that the primary job of a business-ethics teacher is to preach virtue to students—and in particular, to convert unethical students to ethical behaviour—you are unlikely to be very optimistic about the usefulness of inserting an ethics course into the curriculum. This is surely the origin of the oft-repeated argument that by the time students are in their 20s or 30s it is too late to teach them ethics: "either they learned it at their mother's knee, or they will never learn it". Similarly, if you hold this limited conception of ethics education, you are likely to be satisfied that a gentle reminder from professors in other courses that students should be ethical in their professional careers will be at least as effective as a stand-alone course by a moral preacher. In short, a position not dissimilar to the AACSB's seeming preference for "diffusion" over "foundations" follows from this very narrow conception of ethics education concerned primarily with question 2 in the categorisation scheme proposed above. The briefest glance at the other seven kinds of questions about ethics in organisations reveals the fragility of this position. As Lynn Sharp Paine puts it in her excellent new book,

> Although children do learn important values at their parents' knee—and many of these do carry over into corporate life—the special responsibilities of executives or the challenges of dealing with the complex moral problems that often present themselves to managers are unlikely to be among these lessons. So far I have yet to meet even one manager who learned at 'mother's knee' about fiduciary duties, conflicts of interest, or product stewardship. (Paine 2003: p 149)

Of course, it is important for business schools to motivate students and to stiffen their courage to do the right thing when they might be tempted to do something unethical. And critics of business ethics programs are justified in being sceptical about the expected value of preaching and finger-wagging. But in failing to understand the broad range of issues that constitute the field of business ethics, they do not see the numerous ways that well-rounded education in business ethics will reinforce students' ethical motivation and courage *indirectly*. By learning how best to use an ethics program and leadership styles to shape an organisational culture that encourages ethical behaviour, for example, students are likely to see a great deal of convergence between ethical management and sound management generally. Similarly, by studying corporate disasters, from Ford's Pinto to Enron and Andersen, students are likely to learn about the long-run strategic folly of allowing irresponsible cultures to take hold within an organisation. This kind of lesson can go a long way toward shielding future leaders from future temptations.

One final implication of a more sophisticated view about what motivates people to be ethical in business concerns the importance of the "signals" that a business school sends *outside* of the classroom. Universities influence how students behave "through the subtle messages they convey about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and its consequences" (Pfeffer 2003: p 60). Such subtle

and not-so-subtle messages include whether ethical questions appear in the application stages (e.g., on the application form to the MBA program, as at HBS); how seriously the school treats its honour code; whether the school encourages or even requires volunteering by students in community groups and not-for-profit organisations; how it supports initiatives from student groups for ethics, community programs, social responsibility; whether it invites guest CEO speakers to address ethical questions; whether it supports chairs and research centres in business ethics, etc. Of course, one of the strongest signals a business school can send about the importance of ethics is by having a clearly identifiable presence of ethics in its curriculum. Or perhaps more to the point, one of the least subtle ways a school can signal that it does *not* take ethics seriously is through the conspicuous absence of ethics in the curriculum.

Let us briefly sum up the pedagogical implications of a rich, multidisciplinary conception of the field of business ethics discussed so far.

- There is a strong case for "diffusion" of ethics across the curriculum because so many of the tools, skills and knowledge relevant to ethics management come from domains like HR/OB, strategy and economics, law, and so forth.

- There is also a strong case for a foundational ethics course, in part to learn the skills of ethical reasoning that are inherent to the field of ethics, in part to help students to integrate the ethically relevant background knowledge they learn in other disciplines.

- There is much that a business school can do outside of the classroom to signal that it expects the highest standards of its graduates when they enter (or return to) the "real world". But the strongest signal of all is a conspicuous presence of ethics in its curriculum.

Of course, good policies are often rather easy to identify; it is implementation that tends to provide most of the challenges. In this case, both the "foundation" and "diffusion" goals require innovation, commitment and resources. It is no easy feat for a business school to design and deliver a required course in business ethics that students will respect and appreciate.[5] This may require recruitment of one or more faculty members with scholarly backgrounds and experience in both ethical theory and management studies. And it is common knowledge that positions, even chairs, seeking such candidates often go unfilled. Ideally, as Duane Windsor argues persuasively elsewhere in this issue, we need more and more PhD programs in business ethics to develop this kind of expertise. Many business schools will find it even more challenging to implement a "diffusion" or ethics-

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5. The many tales of Harvard Business School's attempts to mount an ethics initiative in the early 90s give an excellent survey of these challenges. See Piper 1993.

across-the-curriculum strategy. Once we drop the idea that ethics teaching is little more than moralistic exhortation, we realise that encouragement and assistance will be needed to help existing professors in functional disciplines (marketing, accounting, economic, law, OB, etc) to incorporate sophisticated treatment of ethical issues into their otherwise mostly empirical courses. Most business schools currently have little experience with "continuing education" for their professors, especially with training given by colleagues from outside a professor's own department. In short, it is difficult to find serious scholars in ethics who also have a well-rounded understanding in management; and it there are very few examples of schools that have managed to convince legions of non-ethics professors to upgrade their professional skills (and research) in ethics.[6] So although a business school ought ideally to put in place both a "foundations" course in business ethics and encourage the diffusion of ethics across the curriculum, in practice both (but particularly the latter) of the these strategies are difficult to implement.

3. Ethics in Interdisciplinary Team-teaching: Foundations and Diffusion at the Same Time

One innovative way to implement simultaneously both a "foundations" and "diffusion" approach to teaching business ethics is to include an ethicist in an interdisciplinary team that is responsible for teaching a broader range of integrated managerial knowledge and skills. Although incorporating team-teaching into a curriculum certainly presents some of its own challenges, it does provide a solution to both of the challenges to teaching ethics, described above. If an ethicist and one or more specialists from a managerial discipline are in the classroom together, none of them needs quite as much mastery of the others' disciplines than if they were trying to do it alone. Moreover, by the very act of preparing and teaching joint classes together, team members provide the kind of interdisciplinary "continuing education" for each other that is otherwise so elusive in the modern university. The pedagogical benefits of this kind of interaction go well beyond the team-teaching experience, since both ethics and non-ethics team members will be better prepared to lead discussions of business ethics when they arise in their other non-team-taught courses. Of course, the ultimate beneficiaries of this model are the students in a team-taught class: they should receive more sophisticated treatment of both the ethical and business

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6. Imagine how much professional upgrading would be necessary – and how much resistance there would be to it—if many schools really did take seriously their claims to "teach ethics in every course" rather than in a separate ethics course. Again, this claim could have at best a shred of plausibility if "teaching ethics" amounted to no more than professors in various courses occasionally urging students to resist the temptation to do obviously unethical things to succeed in business. It loses this shred when we come to see business ethics as incorporating the range of topics discussed earlier in this article.

elements of a problem or a case study than they would from a class taught from one perspective; they learn about how to integrate the knowledge from different kinds of experts in order to make managerial decisions; in all likelihood they will come to appreciate the general convergence of recommendations from different disciplinary perspectives, including ethics; and they will receive the "signal" from the business school that ethical considerations deserve equal treatment in managerial decision-making (they are neither "ghettoised", as in some foundations courses, nor secondary, as in "diffused" ethical discussions in non-ethics courses[7]).

4. The "MBA Core" at UBC

Allow me to finish with a brief description of one living example of the sort of team-teaching model I have in mind: namely, the "Core" component of the MBA program at the University of British Columbia that has been in place since 1996. This is of course only one of innumerable ways a business school can integrate ethics into a team-taught program. But illustrating it does show some of the potential for this kind of approach.

The Core is a 16-week, 18-credit, full-time required course for all students admitted each autumn to UBC's MBA program. It is the only "course" the students take in their first term of the 15-month program. The students spend four to six hours each week day in the same classroom, and are taught by the five members of the Core team and an array of guest professors from disciplines not represented on the team. Much of the time there is more than one professor in the room, and in some sessions as many as half-a-dozen professors may lead parts of the discussion. After "graduating" from the Core, students fill out their MBA program by taking typical courses in the standard disciplines of a business school, in many cases specializing in a particular area (Strategic Management, Finance, Marketing, etc.). This year-long "post-Core" segment of the program includes a full-time summer internship. (Only the Core, and not the post-Core, is team-taught.)

The Core team typically consists of five regular faculty members from the Sauder School of Business at UBC. The membership shifts from year to year, as do the disciplines "represented" on the team. The team generally includes professors drawn from accounting, organisational behaviour, strategy, ethics, marketing and operations. The team is wholly responsible for organizing the curriculum of the Core each year, and begins meeting several months in advance

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7.   Another perverse consequence of a pure diffusion strategy for teaching business ethics is this. If discussions about ethics arise only in the course of other realms of management studies, then ethical considerations will tend to be highlighted only in cases where ethics seems to conflict with what is "profitable". By failing to highlight all of the ways in which ethics supports successful business practices, this mistaken impression is likely to promote cynicism and defeatism in many students.

to plan themes and fill out the 100-or-so, two-hour classroom slots available to them. The team members themselves may cover two thirds to three quarters of the Core teaching duties, with colleagues and outside guests from other disciplines filling in the rest. Students are likely to get from four to a dozen classes in each of the many sub-disciplines of the School over the 16-week period. The highlight of each week is a four-hour session on Fridays devoted to one case study (usually a Harvard case), with all of the members of the Core team taking an active roll.

It should be noted that nowhere in the original rationale or objectives for the Core was there any suggestion that this would be an ideal platform for teaching business ethics. When the "new" program featuring the Core was launched in 1996 the School had no ethicist on staff. The Core's objectives ranged from introducing basic managerial concepts and methods, to promoting an integrated approach to managerial decision-making, and building a sense of cohort and loyalty among the students. I was hired in 1997 as the first Chair of Business Ethics in the Sauder School (then the Faculty of Commerce), and was slotted into the Core in my first year at UBC. The normative element of the Core grew over the four years that I was a member of the team.

- Most noticeably, the curriculum of the Core came to include about half-a-dozen two-hour classes in business ethics, which meant that there were about as many classes in ethics as there were in marketing or finance. Some of these would be classes like "Ethical issues in HRM" or "Ethical issues in Cost-Benefit Analysis", and the like, in which a colleague would take an active role.

- Similarly, I would be in the room during many of my colleagues' classes, and would be called upon to participate in or lead discussion of ethical dimensions in accounting, marketing, regulation, etc. It was clear to the students that they were encouraged to raise questions about ethical issues in the course of lectures in any discipline whatsoever; and so they did.

- Having an ethics specialist on the Core team also meant that there was now an ethics segment in every one of the integrated Friday case-study sessions. This was significant because initially none of these were chosen as "ethics cases" (they included HBS staples on HP, Nike, Microsoft, Great Lakes Diversified, GE, and so on), but in all of them students were encouraged to think about ethical and political issues of relevance. Over the years we introduced more and more Friday cases in which normative issues played a central role.

- The Core also involved two major projects where teams of students would study businesses and make small-group presentations and submit

written reports. As part of the requirement for these projects to incorporate an integrated approach to management, most teams would naturally include discussions of ethical issues for their companies. Many of the teams would also adopt the trappings of "ethics infrastructure" by, for example, agreeing to a code of ethics for the team at the outset of their project.

- Finally, I had the opportunity to introduce a number of "special" integrated sessions with normative overtones: e.g., a session of press-conference simulations where students playing company representatives would deal with public justification in "delicate" situations and would face questions from real journalism students; a session involving students presenting speeches they would like to have read for them on retirement, in order to reflect on the elements of a truly fulfilling career; as well as guest lectures from CEOs with ethical messages; field trips to not-for-profits, and so on.

It is not for me to judge the success of this multifaceted attempt to deliver ethics education in a business school. (The Core itself won a national prize in Canada, the Alan Blizzard Award for Collaborate Learning from the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.) But teaching ethics within a team-taught program does appear to have the following benefits:

- By embedding ethics as a component of a *mandatory* segment of the program, the School is assured that all of its students will receive instruction in ethics.

- The ethics component here includes a number of "*foundational*" lectures on the nature of ethics and ethical decision-making.

- It also provides what must surely be the ideal way of spreading *ethics across the curriculum*; mainly by ensuring that ethical issues will be discussed around concrete problems with experts in both ethics and the relevant disciplines present. It also helps avoid the pernicious "selection bias" of other diffusion approaches, where ethics only makes it to the agenda when it appears to conflict with successful business. In the team-teaching context, the ethicist is able to repeatedly highlight the way ethical considerations dovetail with other aspects of strategic and managerial decision-making.

- With ethics and an ethicist as essential parts of a major segment of the MBA program, the School itself sends a *powerful message* from the very first day of classes about its commitment to ethical business. This

message is reinforced repeatedly by the visible support of the non-ethics specialists on the team.

- The experience of working closely with colleagues from other disciplines provides a rare "*continuing professional education*" opportunity for both the ethicist and the non-ethicists to learn about each others' disciplines and to make themselves better able to deal with ethical issues in other courses they might teach alone.[8]

5. Problems and Challenges for the Team-Teaching Approach

Now in many ways, the UBC experience sounds too good to be true. What is the downside? There are at least three potential shortcomings to the approach exemplified by UBC's "Core". The first is the fact that in this particular team-teaching segment, ethics has to compete with perhaps eight other sub-disciplines for class time, and in the end there is likely to be less time spent on foundational elements of ethics than would be the case in, say, a required semester-long ethics course. To some extent this shortcoming can be made up for with the possibility of additional courses in ethics available during the "post-Core" segment of the program.

The other two kinds of problems with this approach are challenges inherent in team-taught courses more generally. First, many of the "cross-pollination" benefits from having an ethicist on the team will only happen if the ethicist and his or her colleagues are "compatible". It is tremendously reinforcing if the students can repeatedly see the ethics professor and the other professors converging on similar solutions in class discussions; and generally to have the other professors, and not just the ethicist, calling attention to the ethical issues. But if the ethicist is, say, perceived as fundamentally "anti-business" (or if one or more of the other faculties members overtly dismissive of business ethics), this is unlikely to happen, and students will instead be sent the very pernicious message that ethics and business simply do not mix.

The other inherent challenge to mounting successful team-teaching programs is that they can be hard to staff. In many cases, individuals have "selected" themselves into academia because they like working by themselves. (This is especially true of business professors, many of whom have more lucrative opportunities outside academia.) And of those who might be prepared to work in teams (as they do, say, on some research projects), there are relatively few who

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8. Closely related: a team-teaching context provides an excellent way for a business school to recruit and train an ethicist with a philosophy rather than a business-school background; and in so doing, it opens up a much larger pool of strong applicants for a business ethics position. For more on the challenges of recruiting in business ethics, see the papers in this issue by Windsor, and Hartman and Hartman.

are comfortable working in *interdisciplinary* teams where they will often be called upon to deal with issues outside of their areas of academic expertise. Staffing the Core at UBC presents challenges for the Dean's office every year. It is safe to say that only about one faculty member in ten is both (a) considered to be capable of the task, and (b) willing to commit to it. Given the intense pressures on the team to manage the complex and unpredictable class dynamics over a four-month period, the Core requires a tremendous commitment in terms of both time and emotional energy. Some colleagues have loved the experience unlike any other in their professional careers, but felt burnt out after two or three Cores.

Again, these are problems inherent to mounting a significant team-taught component in a business program, and are not about the ethics-element per se. Nevertheless, you cannot have an ethics element in a team-taught program without a team-taught program; so these are important implementation issues to consider when weighing the pros and cons of this "third way" approach to teaching ethics in a business school. My most general advice is that if a business school does have an interdisciplinary, team-taught segment, then it should think seriously about placing an ethics expert on the team. In programs that rely exclusively on standard discipline-based courses, ethicists on the faculty would do well to try to negotiate shared courses with their colleagues in other disciplines in order to replicate some of the advantages of teaching ethics on a multidisciplinary team.

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