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Ethics for Deans

Who's here?

- Presenter
- Participants

Ethics for Deans: Outline

- Ethics vs. the law
- Clarifying one's personal ethics
- Common ethical challenges
- An ethic of administration
- Resources

Ethics for Deans: Case 1

Dean Blutarsky is a divorced 48-year-old man. When Mrs. Sternbottom, the executive secretary who served under Blutarsky and the four prior deans, retires, she is replaced by Emma Wodehouse. Dean Blutarsky finds himself immediately attracted to the 24-year-old Wodehouse. Within weeks of her starting, he begins doing small favors for her such as bringing her coffee in the morning. Blutarsky frequently asks Wodehouse to stay late to help him complete small projects. At first, Ms. Wodehouse thinks that she is lucky to have landed a job with a such a pleasant and attentive boss and she likes earning the overtime. As time goes on, however, she begins to feel that Blutarsky is flirting with her and she is uncomfortable staying late to complete tasks that could easily be finished the next day during regular work hours. One night as they are finishing up, Dean Blutarsky suggests that she allow him to buy her dinner to thank her for her hard work. She politely declines saying that she has to be up early the next morning. Wodehouse is shocked when Blutarsky responds "Don't worry, my alarm goes off at six. We'll get up in plenty of time."

Is Blutarsky's behavior wrong?

Why?

- Law
 - Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination that violates [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#).
 - Most states also have laws against sexual harassment.
- Institutional policies
 - e.g., “It is the policy of the University of Maine System that no member of the University System community may sexually harass another.”

Why (continued)?

- Professional Ethics
 - e.g. **3.02 Sexual Harassment**

Psychologists do not engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, that occurs in connection with the psychologist's activities or roles as a psychologist, and that either (1) is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile workplace or educational environment, and the psychologist knows or is told this or (2) is sufficiently severe or intense to be abusive to a reasonable person in the context. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts." (American Psychological Association, *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*).
- Personal Ethics
 - Personal beliefs about sexual harassment.

Ethics for Deans: Case 2

The *Flintstone Museum of Really Old Stuff* is housed within the College of Arts and Humanities at Euphoric State University. Twenty-three years earlier the Flintstone received a donation of a personal collection of artifacts in a bequest from B. Rubble. At the time of the gift, the university's Board of Trustees adopted a resolution of appreciation to Mr. Rubble indicating that the gift would become a permanent part of the museum and would never be sold in part or in whole. Included in the documentation of the gift was a note from Mr. Rubble indicating that it was his intention that the collection be displayed for public and educational purposes.

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Mr. Rubble and his wife are deceased, and their heirs have no relationship to Euphoric State. The Flintstone's collections have grown considerably and museum space is at a premium. The museum is badly in need of renovation and the director suggests to the dean that some pieces from the Rubble collection be decommissioned and sold. The heirs were contacted and had no objection to selling part of the collection. University counsel indicated that the Board may legally take formal action to reverse the terms of the previously adopted resolution, freeing the museum to sell the pieces. The President of the Euphoric State tells the dean "The Flintstone is in your shop. It's your call."

What should the dean do?

Guidance

- Law
 - Is it illegal for the dean to sell pieces from the Rubble collection?
- Institutional Policies
 - Would selling pieces of the collection violate institutional policy?
- Professional Ethics
 - Disciplinary ethics codes are likely silent on this type of dilemma.

Professional Ethics for Deans

- CCAS largely silent on ethical principles and/or codes for deans.
 - Exception is “The Ethics of Faculty Recruitment and Appointment” statement adopted by CCAS in November, 1992.
- American Association of University Administrators
 - “The administrative function in higher education exists to serve the educational community by facilitating the process of education and by the creation and maintenance of a milieu conducive to the teaching, learning, research and service functions of higher education. The exercise of academic responsibility and academic freedom by administration requires clearly understood conditions of employment parameters of the operation of the offices, career considerations and personal responsibilities and rights (1975).”

Personal Ethics

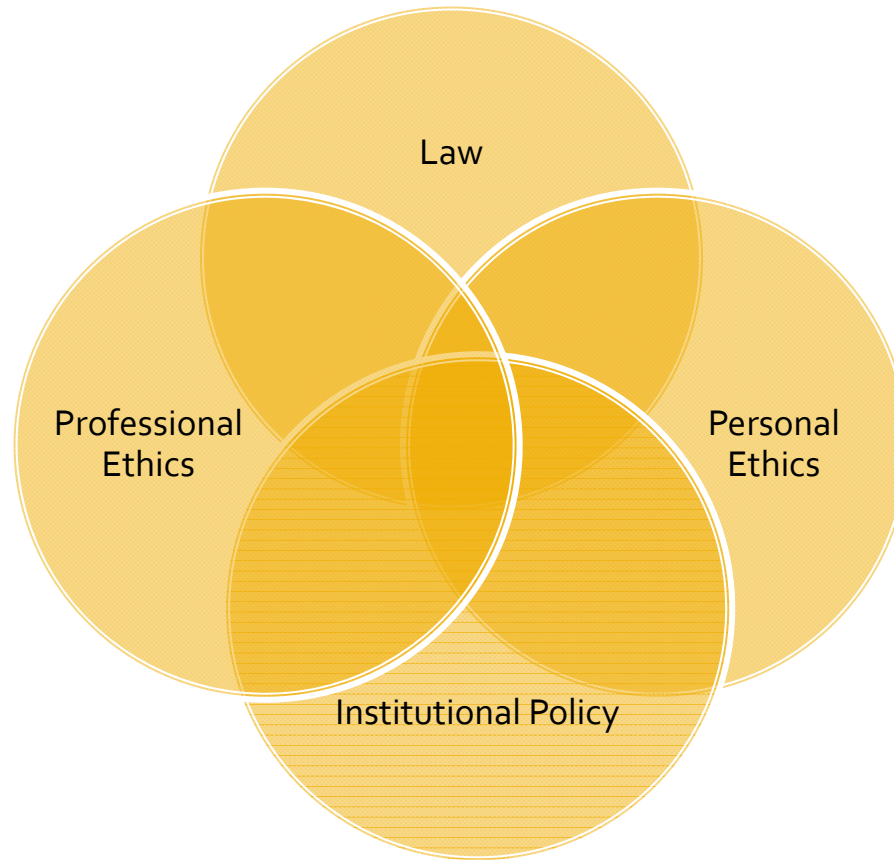
Approaches to Ethical Decision-Making

- If you said “yes” the dean should sell pieces from the Rubble collection, you likely came to this decision by applying a *teleological* ethical theory.
- Teleological approach: the morality of an action is based upon its consequences. An action is morally right if it results in more positive than negative outcomes.
- “the end justifies the means”

Approaches to Ethical Decision-Making

- If you said “no” the dean should not sell parts of the collection, you likely arrived at this decision by applying a deontological theory.
- Deontological approach: a set of moral principles are applied to determine the morality of an action. An action is morally right if it is consistent with a moral principle.
- “it’s the principle of the thing”

Relationships among law, policy, and professional and personal ethics



Personal Ethics: Exercise

- Write your own epitaph.



Epitaph

- “Dean Hecker never violated university policy regarding sexual harassment”

Epitaph

- “Dean Hecker treated everyone with whom he worked with respect.”

**Questions or comments about
ethics vs. law vs. institutional
policy?**

Ethical Pitfalls

- Lying
- Using institution funds for personal expenses
- Nepotism
- Sexual Harassment
- Theft

Broad Categories of Ethical Challenges

- Competence
- Multiple Role Relationships
- Personal versus Institutional Interests

Competence

Becoming an Academic Administrator

“One of the most puzzling aspects of higher education is that its front-line leaders are almost always selected for qualities other than an ability to run complex organizations. In fact, it is often seen as virtually disqualifying for a candidate to express anything but the anything but the most grudging willingness to assume administrative responsibilities. At least on the surface, the path to becoming a leader in an academic environment is to affect a lack of interest in and preparation for the job.” (Gunsalus, 2006).

Dean's Competencies

- Hiring practices
- Fund-raising
- Conflict management
- Budget management
- Strategic planning
- Public speaking
- Conflict resolution
- Evaluation of teaching
- Evaluation of scholarship
- Schmoozing
- Personnel management
- Employment law
- Leadership

Case Example 3

The first task Dean Newby took on in his new position was an evaluation of the staff and organization of the college office. He interviews each member the staff about their position, their views of the office organization and their impressions of the strengths and weaknesses of their fellow employees. A picture quickly emerges that the longtime office manager Bob Bickerson is a disruptive force in the office. He is abrupt and condescending with the rest of the staff, sometimes berating them publicly. He refuses to consider modifying procedures citing “previous practices.”

Case Example 3 (continued)

Dean Newby brings Bickerson in and explain that he will be reorganizing the office and that there will no longer be the need for the office manager position. He offers to contact HR to see about other office manager opportunities on campus if Bickerson is interested adding, “unless of course you’re considering retirement.” Newby is surprised when Bickerson reacts with anger and cites his long history with, and loyalty to, the college. Dean Newby then confides in Bickerson that he is not well-liked by the other staff members and says it would be best for everyone if Bickerson sought other opportunities.

Case Example 3 (continued)

When Dean Newby is contacted by the HR office, he is surprised to learn that Bickerson has filed a complaint. When the HR staff member queries about Bickerson's personnel file, Newby admits he has not read it. After hanging up, Newby retrieves the personnel file and learns that Bickerson was nominated twice for the campus "Professional Excellence Award." In his annual evaluations, Bickerson has consistently received ratings of "superior" or "very good" in every category.

Dean Newby notices that the rest of his staff, who had received him warmly when he started the job, are now respectful but somewhat cold and distant in their interactions. When he shares this observation with his associate dean, he learns that the staff are angry because he disclosed to Bickerson what they had said in confidence.

Where did Newby go wrong?

Threats to Competence

- You don't know what you don't know.
- Responsibility \neq competence
- Too many demands
- Personal problems

Guarding Against Incompetence

- Know yourself
- Know your resources
- Use your resources (seek advice)
- Develop competence
- Join professional organizations (e.g., CCAS)
- Develop a peer network
- Self-monitor

Multiple Role Relationships

Case 4

Dean Trump's children are adults now and scattered across the country. He and his wife decide to remodel a section of their large home to create an apartment to rent. Alan Cooper, newly hired assistant professor of music, rents the apartment. The arrangement works out well for the first several months. Cooper works long hours and is often away on weekends visiting his girlfriend who lives in another city. The relationship between landlord and tenant, however, becomes somewhat strained after Cooper's girlfriend, Layla Domino, relocates and moves in with him.

Case 4 (continued)

Cooper and Domino frequently host small get-togethers of friends who are also musicians. These get-togethers frequently turn into jam sessions that go on late into the night. Dean Trump talks to Cooper on a few occasions about the noise and Cooper is always apologetic. Nonetheless, the frequent parties continue. The relationship is further strained when a plumbing problem causes a minor flood in the apartment. Cooper feels that Trump is responsible for the repairs and replacement of damaged musical instruments. Trump thinks the problem was due to “overuse” of the toilet and wants Cooper to pay for repairs.

Case 4 (continued)

Cooper and Domino find another apartment and move out before the lease expires and without repairing the damage caused by the flood.

Later that year, Cooper is up for reappointment. The peer committee and department chair give him a satisfactory review and recommend reappointment. Both letters, however, note concerns about the quality of Cooper's teaching.

Dean Trump recommends against renewal. Cooper sues the university claiming that Trump's recommendation against reappointment was retaliation against Cooper for breaking the apartment lease.

How did Trump get into this mess?

Multiple Role Relationships

- Administrator has a relationship with someone in their administrative role and simultaneously a relationship in another role.
- Examples
 - Dean-faculty member and research collaborators
 - Dean-faculty member and husband-wife
 - Dean-department chair and golf-buddies
 - Dean-faculty member and business partners

Why should we be concerned about multiple role relationships?

- Potential for exploitation
- Loss of objectivity
- Misinterpretation of communication
- Public perception

Multiple Role Relationships: General Guidelines

- Avoid when possible
- Assess potential for
 - Exploitation (power differential)
 - Loss of objectivity
 - Miscommunication
 - Problems with public perception
- Extract oneself from one role if possible
- Consult colleagues or peer networks
- Clarify role
- Avoid being the Dean in social situations

Personal versus Institutional Interests

Case Example 5

Dean U. Ward Mobile's career plan has him moving on to his next position as Provost of a research university within the next three years. Mobile is aware that his record to date is lacking in concrete evidence of a strong commitment to diversity. Mobile assigns one of his associate deans the task of gathering a group of faculty members together to work on applying for an NSF Advance Institutional Transformation grant. In addition, he aggressively pursues hiring an established African American scholar away from another university. Mobile knows this woman personally as they had been colleagues when they were both assistant professors. There is not a strong need for another scholar in her area at Mobile's institution. Nonetheless, Mobile makes this hire his top priority even though it comes at a price tag that could have been used to fill two much needed positions in other areas at the assistant professor level. When asked by the Provost to justify the hire, Mobile points out the need to diversify the faculty.

**Is there a problem with Dean
Mobile's actions?**

Institutional vs. Personal Goals

- Faculty member writes a textbook and assigns it as the primary and required text for class.
- Department chair assigns herself overload course to meet the demand for popular course.
- Dean who plans to return to faculty gives top priority to renovation of lab space in his home department.

Personal versus Institutional Goals

- Fortunately for Deans, in most instances working toward the good of the institution is also good for the Dean.
- But not always.

Guidelines for Dealing with Institutional versus Personal Goals

- “To thine own self be true”
- Be open about potential personal gains
- Articulate decision-making process to others
- Create processes that invite third party scrutiny for decisions where decision-maker stands to gain.

**Comments or questions about
personal versus institutional
interests?**

An ethic of Academic Administration: Three Cardinal Virtues (Curran, 2009)

- Commitment to the good of the institution
- Good administrative judgment
- Conscientiousness in discharging duties

Resources

- Englehardt, E.E., Pritchard, M.S., Romesburg, K.D., & Schrag, B.E. (2009). *Ethical challenges of academic administration*. New York: Springer. (This edited book covers a wide range of topics and includes detailed descriptions of five cases and analysis of each. Curran chapter is in this volume.)
- Gunsalus, C.K. (2006). *The college administrator's survival guide*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Not about ethics per se but full of practical advice and examples. Focus is on problems encountered by department chairs.)
- Weingartner, R. (1999) *The moral dimensions of academic administration*. Lantham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. (Deals more with moral obligations of institutions of higher education than with practical problems faced by deans.)

Resources not specific to academic administration but pretty good

- Geuras, D., & Garofalo, C. (2005). *Practical ethics in public administration* (2nd Edition). Vienna, VA: Management Concepts.
- The Association for Professional and Practical Ethics (<http://www.indiana.edu/~appe/>)
- The Society for Ethics Across the Curriculum (<http://www.rit.edu/cla/ethics/seac/>)

Sources of Case Examples

- Case 2 adapted from Romesburg, K.D. (2009). Ethical Dimensions of Presidential Leadership. In E.E. Englehardt et al. (2009). *The Ethical Challenges of Academic Administration*.
- Case 3 adapted from Gunsalus, C.K. (2006). *The College Administrator's Survival Guide*.
- Cases 1, 4, and 5 adapted from my experience and imagination.