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UCF and Core Commitments: Educating Our Students for Personal & Social Responsibility Nancy A. Stanlick



Nancy Stanlick is Associate Professor of Philosophy. She teaches a variety of courses in ethics and social philosophy, logic, and the history of philosophy. She is a past recipient of TIP, SoTL, and Excellence

in Undergraduate Teaching Awards. Her recent publications and research include works in ethics, teaching methods and theorizing about academic communities, and the history of philosophy.

UCF was chosen in January 2007 to receive a \$25,000 grant as one of 25 American universities/colleges that comprise the Core Commitments Leadership Consortium for the Association of American Colleges and Universities' project, "Core Commitments: Educating Students for Personal and Social Responsibility." Recognizing the importance and central place of ethics education across the disciplines and in personal and professional contexts, a group of UCF faculty, researchers and administrators formed a team to write a proposal for UCF's participation in Core Commitments. Below are descriptions of original and extended UCF projects.

Further, in this issue of *Faculty Focus*, you will find the transcript of an interview conducted by Nancy O'Neill, UCF's AAC&U/Core Commitments liaison, about the scope, goals, and aims of AAC&U's Core Commitments project. In addition, two documents to which AAC&U provides free access, encompassing some of the ideals of education for personal and social responsibility, are the following articles from the Spring 2006 and Summer/Fall 2005 issues of AAC&U's *Liberal Education*. They are: "Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility" <a href="http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-sp06/documents/le-sp06\_">http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-sp06/documents/le-sp06\_</a> Feature1.pdf> and "Fostering Personal and Social Responsibility on College and University Campuses" <a href="http://www.aacu.org/liberal-education/le-sufa05/le-sufa05/eature1.cfm">http://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/le-sufa05/le-sufa05/eature1.cfm</a>>.

UCF's Core Commitments (UCF-CC) grant activity began with a proposal to implement 5 projects at UCF that are directed at enhancing graduate and undergraduate education in curricular and co-curricular realms with respect to the 5 dimensions of Core Commitments. These dimensions, as outlined in AAC&U's project site, are: striving for excellence, cultivating personal and academic integrity, contributing to a larger community, taking seriously the perspectives of others, and developing competence in ethical and moral reasoning see <http://www.aacu.org/core\_commitments/index.cfm >.

Our five original UCF-CC projects are the creation of proactive academic integrity seminars, internal UCF ethics bowl competitions, creation of student-led ethics task force committees across the university, faculty development opportunities to introduce and implement Core Commitments content into selected courses, and Interactive Performance Lab scenarios (through Philosophy, IST, and the School of Film and Digital Media) to develop immersion experiences in ethical decision-making scenarios. These five projects have, in the past 7 months, grown into additional, subsidiary projects that are also supported by the Core Commitments grant, by matching funds, and by a College of Arts and Humanities Research Grant that was awarded to us to support work in UCF-CC grant activities.

At this time, 17 UCF faculty members, administrators, and students are part of the UCF Core Commitments team. They include faculty from Philosophy (Nancy Stanlick, Ronnie Hawkins, Michael Strawser), Engineering (Manoj Chopra), Political Science (Annabelle Conroy), English and the UCF Quality Enhancement Plan for Information Fluency (Martha Marinara), Health Professions (Dawn Oetjen), and Religious Studies (John Burris); administrators and specialists from the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Alison Morrison-Shetlar, Dean and Director of the Faculty Center, and Eric Main, Project Coordinator), the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (Rick Schell), and the Office of Student Conduct/Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (Patricia MacKown); researchers from IST/Philosophy (Steve Fiore) and the School of Film and Digital Media (Jeffrey Wirth) for IPL; the Burnett Honors College (Alvin Wang and Kelly Astro); and undergraduate student participants in grant activities in teaching and research (Robert Slade, Civil Engineering) and Ben Tucker (Philosophy). The UCF Quality Enhancement Plan for Information Fluency is also a major aspect of the projects included in Core Commitments work. In short, the UCF-CC team represents diverse interests and specialties—but all of them have one common focus: educating students for personal and social responsibility by including Core Commitments content into a wide variety of courses, programs, and university-wide activities, projects, programs, and events.

Below is a description of these projects with information about their scope and a call for participation from interested administrators, faculty, staff, and students who would like to be involved in them. Contact information for each of the projects is provided as well.

Proactive Academic Integrity Seminars. The Office of Student Conduct and the Department of Philosophy already offer a non-credit, 2 hour seminar in academic integrity for students who have been referred to this course by faculty or by the Student Conduct Board for some violation(s) of UCF's academic integrity standards (as outlined in the UCF Golden Rule). But seeing that there are many documented instances of students who make serious errors in the conduct of academic research and who may sometimes do so as a result of lack of knowledge of appropriate methods and principles of research, we are creating opportunities for faculty members to send their students to proactive seminars, and for students to attend these independently of specific courses. The seminars will include instruction in and information about academic ethics generally, as well as sources of information about and instruction in appropriate methods of research in various disciplines. Graduate and undergraduate students across disciplines will be among the facilitators. These seminars will begin in late fall 2007 or early spring 2008. For more information on these seminars, or if you know of students (graduate or advanced undergraduate) who may be interested in being facilitators, please contact Nancy Stanlick in the Department of Philosophy or Patricia MacKown in the Office of Student Conduct.

**UCF Ethics Bowl Competitions**. Three years ago, the Southeast Regional Ethics Bowl was created and is held every fall in St. Petersburg, FL. UCF has participated with teams from the Department of Philosophy since the inception of the Southeast Regional Competition and is scheduled to participate again this year (November). From our students' participation in this competition, we have seen the benefits to students in learning to do research about and engaging in reasoning concerning ethical issues, dilemmas, and problems. To bring the insights and benefits of the educational value of ethics bowl competition home to UCF, we have developed structures to implement ethics bowl competitions on campus. We are seeking at least 6 teams of students (with teams composed of 3–7 students each) from departments and colleges to compete with each other in a public venue on campus. For example, there could be teams created from individual colleges (such as the Burnett Honors College, College of Arts and Humanities, College of Sciences, College of Engineering, etc.), and individual departments may also form teams for competition.

In the summer term, three UCF students were employed to write cases following the format of ethics bowl cases utilized in regional and national competitions for use here at UCF. Those ethics bowl cases are now ready for distribution to teams as they are formed so that those teams may begin researching cases and preparing for competition. The first of the ethics bowl competitions is slated for the spring term 2008. Team formation will take place throughout the fall term, and distribution of cases will begin in November so that teams may have ample time to prepare and research cases. If you are interested in helping to form a team of students from your department or within your college, or if you are interested in being a faculty judge in the upcoming competitions, please contact Michael Strawser or Nancy Stanlick (Philosophy), Martha Marinara (English), or Kristin Wetherbee (CAH) for further information.

Ethics Task Force Committees. The Faculty Senate Ethics Task force is composed of a diverse group of faculty, administrators, staff, and students at UCF. To increase student participation in the processes and issues involved in the creation and evaluation of policies and procedures related to ethical issues on campus, ethics task force committees for students, departments, and colleges will be created and serve in an advisory capacity to the Faculty Senate Ethics Task Force. If you are interested in helping to facilitate student participation in ethics-related policies and procedures on campus, please contact either Rick Schell, chair of the Faculty Senate Ethics Task Force, or Patricia MacKown at the Office of Student Conduct.

**Faculty Development**. At the 2007 Summer Faculty Development Conference, the first "Core Commitments Track" was introduced. Several faculty members participated in this track, creating course content revolving around the five dimensions of Core Commitments. Among those who participated were Ronnie Hawkins (Philosophy), Annabelle Conroy (Political Science), John Burris (Religious Studies), Manoj Chopra (Engineering), and Dawn Oetjen (Health Professions). A Core Commitments track will also be included in the 2008 FCTL Summer Faculty Development Conference, and at least one Course Innovation Project will be devoted to Core Commitments. Watch for announcements from the Faculty Center for the Summer Conference and CIPs regarding these faculty development opportunities. The AAC&U Core Commitments grant includes funding to support faculty members for these projects. Contact persons for faculty development are Nancy Stanlick (Philosophy) and Annabelle Conroy (Political Science).

**Interactive Performance Lab/StoryBox Ethical Dilemma Scenarios**. Jeff Wirth, the Director of UCF's Interactive Performance Lab (IPL), Steve Fiore (Philosophy and IST), and Martha Marinara (English and QEP) are developing StoryBox scenarios for immersion experiences in ethical decision-making contexts. IPL is a ground-breaking development, and its potential to study the philosophical and psychological aspects of ethical decision-making is truly remarkable and promises to create opportunities for further research, grants, and publications among participants in a variety of disciplines. If you are interested in observing IPL ethics scenarios as they play themselves out in live action, or if you are interested in participating in this research, please contact Jeff Wirth, Steve Fiore, or Martha Marinara for further information.

**Other UCF Core Commitments-Related Projects**. In addition to the grant activities described above, there are additional projects that are supported by the AAC&U Core Commitments Grant, the CAH Research Grant, and the Department of Philosophy's participation in the Quality Enhancement Plan for Information Fluency.

• The UCF Core Commitments Blog. As a service to the UCF community and in support of UCF-CC, a blog for UCF-CC appears at <a href="http://ucfcorecommitments.wordpress.com">http://ucfcorecommitments.wordpress.com</a>. We invite anyone who is interested in any of the projects for Core Commitments to participate in discussions and contribute ideas to this forum.

• UCF Academic Integrity Web Site. Patricia MacKown, Assistant Vice President for Campus Life, has created the "UCF Integrity" site at <a href="http://www.integrity.ucf.edu">http://www.integrity.ucf.edu</a>. At this site, resources for faculty, students, staff, and administrators are being added regularly. If you have ideas for sites, links, and content to be included in this site, please contact Patricia MacKown.

• Philosophy/Information Fluency annual conferences. See <a href="http://www.if.ucf.edu/projects/conferences\_papers.php">http://www.if.ucf.edu/projects/conferences\_papers.php</a>. The 2008 conference (to be held in January) is on "Knowledge Rights and Knowledge Sharing." See the call for papers at the IF web site or contact Steve Fiore for additional information.

• PSRI (Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory). As part of UCF's participation in the Core Commitments project, we will distribute AAC&U's PSRI to the UCF Community. Campus dialogues, which are part of the Core Commitments project, will also be held in conjunction with the administration of the PSRI. Information on opportunities to participate in this inventory will become available within the next few weeks and will be distributed throughout the university. If you have any questions regarding the PSRI, please contact Eric Main at the Faculty Center.

UCF's Core Commitments grant personnel are eager to work with the entire UCF community to develop and expand the programs and projects discussed here, as well as to add those that will also serve to enhance the educational experiences of our students. We look forward to and appreciate the opportunity to develop collaborative projects with others. If you are interested in participating in any way with the UCF-CC, please let us know.

UCF Core Commitments and CAH Grant Personnel with Contact Information:

- Nancy Stanlick, Philosophy, UCF-CC Grant co-PI and CAH Research Grant PI (stanlick@mail.ucf.edu)
- Alison Morrison-Shetlar, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, UCF-CC grant co-PI (aims@mail.ucf.edu)
- Martha Marinara, English and UCF QEP (mmarinar@ mail.ucf.edu)
- Alvin Wang, Dean, Burnett Honors College (awing@ mail.ucf.edu)
- Rick Schell, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (schell@ mail.ucf.edu)
- Steve Fiore, Philosophy and IST sfiore@ist.ucf.edu
- Patricia MacKown, Office of Student Conduct (pmackown@mail.ucf.edu)
- Jeffery Wirth, IPL/Film and Digital Media (jwirth@mail. ucf.ed)

UCF Core Commitments Affiliated Personnel:

- Annabelle Conroy, Political Science (aconroy@mail.ucf. edu)
- Eric Main, Project Coordinator, FCTL (emain@mail.ucf. edu)
- Kelly Astro, BHC (kastro@mail.ucf.edu)
- Kristin Wetherbee, CAH Dean's Office (kristin@mail.ucf. edu)
- Michael Strawser, Philosophy (strawser@mail.ucf.edu)
- John Burris, Philosophy/Religious Studies: (jburris@ mail.ucf.edu)
- Manoj Chopra, Engineering (chopra@mail.ucf.edu)
- Ronnie Hawkins, Philosophy (liveoak@pegasus.cc.ucf. edu)
- Dawn Oetjen, Health Professions (oetjen@mail.ucf.edu)
- Robert Slade, Philosophy IF and CC Student Assistant (viccer@usa.com)

Web Sites Related to Core Commitments:

- Association of American Colleges and Universities: <a href="http://www.aacu.org"></a>
- UCF Core Commitments Blog: <a href="http://ucfcorecommitments.wordpress.com">http://ucfcorecommitments.wordpress.com</a>
- UCF Integrity Site: <a href="http://www.integrity.ucf.edu">http://www.integrity.ucf.edu</a>

#### *Core Commitments: A Larger Enterprise* Nancy O'Neill and L. Lee Knefelkamp



Nancy O'Neill is Director of Programs in the Office of Educational and Institutional Renewal at AAC&U, and she is the Assistant Director for Core Commitments. At AAC&U, she has served as the principal editor for a series of publications on diversity and institutional change developed through the Campus Diversity Initiative Evaluation Project and Making Excellence

Inclusive initiatives. She has worked on the association's efforts directed at underserved student success, student transfer, and educational quality, and has served as a faculty liaison at the Greater Expectations Institute.



L. Lee Knefelkamp is Professor of Psychology and Education in the Social-Organizational Psychology Program at Teachers College, Columbia University, and she is the Director of Dialogue and Assessment for Core Commitments. She has been the Director of the Student Development Graduate Program at the University of Maryland, Dean of the School of Education

at American University, Academic Dean of the Faculty at Macalester College, and Chair of the Higher and Adult Education Department at Teachers College. For thirty years, she has researched and written about student intellectual, ethical, identity, and intercultural development; curriculum transformation; issues of race, ethnicity, and gender; campus climate assessment; and the psychology of organizational change and resistance to change.

To bring a national perspective to this special issue of *Faculty Focus*, Core Commitments assistant director Nancy O'Neill sat down to interview Lee Knefelkamp, who is the director of dialogue and assessment for the initiative and also a long-term faculty member at Teachers College, Columbia University.

**Nancy:** Let's start with the basics—what are these five dimensions that figure so prominently into the initiative, and what is the guiding philosophy of Core Commitments?

Lee.: When we began this project, we asked ourselves, is there enough that we know now about student development that we can study it around notions of personal and social responsibility? We convened an expert panel, which determined that there is indeed enough known about student development and student learning regarding their impact on the capacities of personal and social responsibility that are so crucial in the 21st century. These capacities are what we are calling the five dimensions of personal and social responsibility: (1) striving for excellence, (2) cultivating personal and academic integrity, (3) contributing to a larger community, (4) taking seriously the perspectives of others, and (5) developing competence in ethical and moral reasoning.

The guiding philosophy is how we conceive of doing this work on campus, and that relates to notions of student learning being the collective responsibility of all individuals and units responsible for the curriculum and co-curriculum; that education for personal and social responsibility, to be intentionally fostered in all students, must pervade the institution's culture; that institutions must care about and unapologetically teach for personal and social responsibility; that ethical, civic, and moral development must be closely tied to a substantive vision for student learning in the college years that is shared across constituent groups; and that these forms of learning be cumulative, build on prior knowledge and experience, and assessed along the way.

**Nancy**: Where does Core Commitments spring from, in your view?

Lee: I trace the work we're doing in Core Commitments back to the late 1960s/early 1970s, and this explosion of theoretical work being done on college students. Think about who was publishing—Bill Perry on intellectual development, Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan on moral development, Art Chickering and Nancy Schlossberg on identity development, and Jane Loevenger on ego development. Nevitt Sanford published a piece on "the freshman as an authoritarian personality," which examined (somewhat tongue in cheek) what we'd now call the dualistic stage of development. Add to this the work of Joseph Axelrod and others on character in college and a newer generation of scholars working in racial/ethnic identity development, and you have some of the lineage of Core Commitments.

**Nancy**: How is Core Commitments distinct from these earlier conversations about character?

Lee: Well, the early writing on college and character can't be removed from its context—Sanford and others were deeply influenced by the experience of authoritarianism in the WWII era, and how educational systems often failed to mitigate against its pull. And the 1960s and 70s were a significant time in our own nation in terms of college students' involvement in the free speech movement, the expanding civil rights movement, and the students' rights, freedoms, and responsibilities movement.

**Nancy**: So some of the character work produced in the 1960s was in reaction to college students' "unruliness" or expanding autonomy?

Lee: Yes, some of it, and some of the work back then was very prescriptive. The distinction with Core Commitments is that it is not prescriptive. The project doesn't set forth a particular set of values or endorse a particular definition of character. Where we've operationalized concepts, like "striving for excellence" and "ethical and moral reasoning", we've drawn from decades of research in developmental psychology as well as other disciplines.

**Nancy**: Is "student development" just a fancy way of saying students are like clay, to be "molded"?

Lee: That's a question I get all the time! The key, for me, is that faculty and staff aren't in the business of shaping people. We're in the business of shaping environments. And whether or not we're thoughtful and intentional about it, we are shaping the environment regardless. As a faculty member, I want to create an environment that fosters students' ability to think critically and with complexity, to make reflective judgments, to tolerate ambiguity, and to consider their own welfare and the welfare of others when they act in the world, all of which relate to Core Commitments. And I don't believe there is a subject matter that is not full of ethical questions and dilemmas for students to work through.

**Nancy**: Campus climate is a big focus of Core Commitments. UCF and other consortium campuses will be administering an institutional inventory that helps gauge campus climate in relation to the five dimensions of personal and social responsibility. Why?

Lee: We focus on campus climate because students are experiencing, assessing, and making judgments about the messages coming from their environments all the time, and they are very able to pick up on our inconsistencies and hypocrisies. I truly believe that students deeply experience when we are disconnected, as we often can be between the curriculum and co-curriculum; when there is no coherence to the courses we ask them to take or the activities we ask them to engage in; when things are done in piecemeal fashion.

**Nancy**: Are there other dangers behind such disconnection, besides being left to your own devices to make sense of your college experience?

Lee: You know, there's some interesting new work being done by Linda Treviño on the moral climate of organizations. Let's think about some of those organizations, at least, being populated by our graduates. We know how influential the college years are, especially for traditional age students. If we are socializing our students to be disconnected—through our "silos" or through a lack of connection between general education and the major—then how are we setting them up to be disconnected in future domains? Think about it—if I am socialized to take care of my moral self on Friday in synagogue, utterly disconnected from the person who goes to work on Monday, what happens? What happens to the welfare of others? Where is my ethical compass that will help guide my decision-making? Nancy: Describe the alternative a bit more.

Lee: If we commit to building greater reflection and deliberateness into our work on campus, the resulting coherence will produce a climate in which students can reflect and connect. At its heart, Core Commitments is about a parallel process of capacity-building. As we are building our campus capacity to do this work in a reflective, thoughtful fashion, we are helping students build their capacities to engage in deeply relevant and profoundly ethical questions in a reflective and thoughtful manner.

**Nancy**: Talk about the fact that the project weaves the personal and the social together.

Lee: I always use the metaphor of nested Russian dolls to describe Core Commitments—the grant is asking campuses to think about how we can be more intentional in helping students engage and develop (a) on an intrapersonal level (the self), (b) on an interpersonal level (the self in relation to others), and (c) on a broader, societal/global level (the self in context).

**Nancy**: Let's finish up by talking specifically about this work in relation to faculty members.

Lee: I'm beginning my 35th year of teaching, and I think I share with the majority of faculty a calling to this vocation. I think we are called to this because it is a way of life that attempts to satisfy our intellectual creativity and a longing for community, whether it is within our discipline, within our department, or within an association. I think we believe, fundamentally, that our academic community matters in the lives of our students, in our own lives, and in the life of our nation. Part of the silo problem in higher education is that, in spite of tremendous work done in student development and in civic engagement, we rarely have serious dialogue among our own faculty as to why our contributions matter to the larger enterprise of human development—why it matters to be part of something larger and not just all individual dots on the landscape. What happens in my course or in my program or in my unit should matter, and it should matter as part of something larger than itself.

**Nancy**: Speaking of dialogue, campus dialogues are also a significant element of the Core Commitments project.

Lee: For me, dialogues are fundamentally a way to model civic discourse on campus and a tremendous example of building our own capacity to enact the qualities of personal and social responsibility that we would like to encourage in our students. If we can begin to truly respect others and seek to understand their perspectives without feeling coerced into agreeing with them, then we can begin to have a deeper understanding of the complexity and richness inherent in our campus communities, within and across constituent groups, generations, and so on. And of course, we can also use the rich information we will gather to inform our future efforts.

**Nancy**: Any last thoughts as the Consortium campuses begin this comprehensive project of deepening education for personal and social responsibility?

Lee: Two things. One is John Dewey's notion of college being an opportunity for "moral rehearsal"—what a wonderful way to describe our work as educators! The second relates to doing this work collaboratively and collectively. The writer and philosopher Nikos Kazantzakis once said something like, "if you leave me to myself alone, I shall try to succeed alone. If we try it together, the task will not be easier, but it will be deeper and richer." I come back to that quote again and again.

### *Teaching Ethics in Engineering—A Modular Approach* Manoj Chopra



Manoj Chopra currently serves as the chair of the Faculty Senate and a member of the UCF Board of Trustees. He received his doctorate from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1992. He joined UCF in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in 1993 and specializes in Geotechnical Engineering. He also serves as the director of the UCF Deep Foundation Test

Site funded by the Department of Transportation and affiliate faculty in the Stormwater Management Academy. He has received two Teaching Incentive Program awards, the Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching award, the Excellence in Advising award, and the Tau Beta Pi Engineering Professor award three years in a row. For his research activities, he shared the 2001 Excellence in Environmental Engineering award and also received the NASA Gold Quality Award for Continual Improvement for his patented work in innovative groundwater cleanup techniques. He is a registered professional engineer in the State of Florida and was the recipient of the 2000 Engineer of the Year award from the Central Florida National Engineers Week committee.

Why did the collapse of Interstate 35 in Minneapolis cause us to be glued to the television? Why did the explosion of the Challenger space shuttle or the TWA fuel tank make us sit up and take notice? Engineering is a discipline like few others that relies on ethical and professional practices and sets a very high level of expectation for the practitioners. Perhaps medicine and nursing come close in the level of impact on human life. Similar to these two fields, the implications of failure are often life and death. In my own discipline of civil engineering, we spend a lot of research efforts on improving the designs of structures and systems and providing a significant amount of "safety factor". There is very little room for error and none for failure. But, most of all, there is certainly no tolerance for unethical behavior.

I have often asked myself and my colleagues if this important message is getting through to our students. Our accreditation boards require evidence of exposure to topics dealing with ethics in our curriculum. The nationally administered and standardized Fundamentals of Engineering examination that a number of students take (all students in civil and environmental engineering), have questions dealing with engineering ethics and related case studies. Moreover, the Professional Engineering licensure marks a strong commitment to ethical practice by an engineer. A registered professional engineer is held responsible for all activities performed by that person or persons under their charge. It is vital that our engineering students understand the role of ethical and responsible practice in their chosen discipline.

The project that I selected under the umbrella of Core Commitments at UCF deals with the development and implementation of a module for ethics in engineering in an introductory engineering class that is taken by all engineering students, i.e., EGN 3310 Engineering Statics. The concept of a module, which may take the form of an online, self-paced tutorial, is significant since, from my personal experience in teaching this course for the past 14 years, there is no room for adding more content to the actual course. The module will be in the form of an Intellitutor storyboard that I describe below.

The primary goals of this project are to

- Introduce the basic tenets of core commitments to the student,
- Relate the definitions of core commitments to different engineering scenarios,
- Develop and implement a module covering ethics, professionalism and plagiarism.

The areas within the course that are impacted by this project include

- The syllabus—which will lay out the process for accessing this content and the objectives of the module,
- Revisions to the course control documents for the accreditation review showing how the implementation of this module can significantly enhance the exposure of this topic and help the engineering programs meet the accreditation requirements,
- A self-paced Intellitutor storyboard with embedded content that will include narratives, presentations, and multimedia. This content will provide information, case studies and links to resources (such as the code of ethics for the various professional societies),
- The establishment and maintenance of a blog on the topic that will provide an excellent forum for discussions. The blog may span more than a single offering of the course providing students with different perspectives.

The process of developing the various components of this project is discussed below. The topic will be divided into three different parts consistent with the overall goals of the Core Commitments project. Each topic will have several case studies to illustrate good and bad practice of ethics and related decision making. The parts are as follows:

- General Ethics Concepts including social ethics, academic dishonesty,
- **Plagiarism** including library resources, effective search techniques and use of turnitin.com,
- Code of Ethics including National Society of Professional engineers (NSPE) guidelines, professional society codes (ASCE, ASME, IEEE etc.) and the role of professional registration.

The ethics module will be made up of five components or vehicles. These are

- Documents—Course syllabus, ABET Course Control Documents,
- Intellitutor—User-friendly storyboard tutorial, powerpoint presentations and embedded links to other resources,
- Videos—Duke University ethics videos, professional society videos,
- Blog—Class blog, links to individual student blogs, links to other blogs on similar topics,
- Invited speakers—recorded lecturers from local engineers as embedded links.

In order to relate this project to the goals of the overall Core Commitments project, I have mapped the five tenets of the Core Commitments discussion to the corresponding issues within the engineering context. The Core Commitment tenet of striving for excellence maps to effort, perseverance, and technical knowledge in the engineering field. The second tenet of personal and academic integrity maps to the professional honor code and the academic creed. Next, the tenet of making a contribution to a larger community translates to service to the profession, teamwork and improving the quality of life for the general public. The fourth tenet of taking into account the perspectives of others maps to a fair and open-minded evaluation of sources of data, materials and equipment to carry out engineering design and implementation. Lastly, the fifth tenet of ethical and moral reasoning corresponds to the critical evaluation of alternatives and moral leadership and decisionmaking.

Next, let me discuss the concept of an Intellitutor. It is a storyboard approach that was developed by Professor Avelino Gonzalez and his colleagues in Computer Engineering at UCF and uses a self-paced but staged learning process. It is a point-and-click flowchart with content that becomes available to the student progressively as various levels are reached within the program. It is similar to the levels of play within a computer game, and this our students should be very familiar with and comfortable using. The embedded links within the storyboard provide content and assignments to be completed before moving onto the next stage. There will be guided steps and a help facility to assist the students in navigating through the program. This type of module is ideal for housing various types of content such as scanned print materials, multimedia content and links to other resources. The blog for the discussion on ethics will be hosted by the faculty member and will have links to other blogs across the globe on these topics. It may also have links to individual student blogs related to this discussion. In addition, the blog can also contain RSS feeds that track new developments and updates in the news based on the associated key words, e.g., engineering ethics and professionalism.

Finally, as I had alluded to previously, this module can play an important role in assisting engineering programs with their assessment related to the outcome that each program must inform the student of ethical responsibility and professional registration issues. The 2007 summer conference at the Faculty Center provided me with an excellent opportunity and environment to work with the core commitments group on developing the ideas for this project. I am looking forward to working on the development of the various components and the final implementation.

#### *The Equity of a Pegasus* Cyndi Gundy



Cyndi Gundy has been a member of the Marketing faculty for 7 years with a teaching focus in the areas of personal selling and sport marketing; she teaches in the department's Advanced Professional Selling Program. She is also President of Power Principles, a forward-thinking sales consulting and training organization. She has 11 years of leadership expe-

rience and a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Central Florida.

**B**rand equity is a concept in marketing that associates a value with a name. Industry giants like McDonalds, Coca Cola and Shell are among the most recognized brands in the world and have an associated brand equity in the billions of dollars. So what is the equity of a Pegasus, the symbol that represents a degree from the University of Central Florida? A major part of the Pegasus' equity is how the market values it; what worth do local, national and international employers place on our brand? Well that depends....It depends on the "product" we turn out.

Imagine for a moment that we are a manufacturing facility and our students are our top notch, high tech products (yes, I know our students are much more than products, but the analogy will help to illustrate a point). Each class they take, each class we teach, is a step in the manufacturing process, and students who perform below standards in our classes should not make it to the next step in the "manufacturing process," moving them one step closer to graduation, ready to head to the marketplace, bearing the UCF brand. So what can we do as faculty to ensure an ever-increasing brand equity of the Pegasus?

What we can do: We all agree that standards and accountability are crucial to a student's development. I push my students hard and hold them to a standard of excellence; they groan now but thank me later. If they don't meet the standard, their grade reflects it. If a paper is full of grammatical mistakes, there's no way it will receive a passing grade because it's not acceptable for a top-notch, high-tech product to reflect these flaws (students don't get enough practice writing). If there is a breach of academic honesty, I handle it immediately and fairly (I've met faculty who prefer to not deal with these issues). On the first day of class, I have the students fill in a Student Data Sheet where I collect standard info (contact info, major, etc.) and then ask what their dream job is and what they like and dislike that instructors do. Their responses are both interesting and helpful as I try to learn more about what's important to them. I also learn every student's name first thing, first class. I call on them by name as we review the syllabus; I want them to leave feeling a part of something! They return ready to participate! Yes, these things take precious time, but when our brand equity is on the line, when the students' brand equity is on the line, I see no alternative. We send a message to our students if we accept or deliver less.

What we can have them do: Let's create a classroom experience for our students, one that engages them in learning. Be creative. Design new assignments that have them test drive a career in a field related to your class. They'll see firsthand the value of what they are learning in your classroom, lending credibility to your work in their eyes. Students learn by doing. For example, a favorite class of mine to teach is Professional Selling: students are required to get business cards for the class (they are free at <www.vistaprint.com>); they have to job shadow a professional salesperson for at least 2 hours (they find a person to shadow as part of the assignment-must be someone they've never met). They interview them with a list of questions and write a paper about the experience (grammar counts!) They have to attend a professional networking event and bring back 3 business cards from new contacts they've made (they also get to use their new business cards). All of this is in addition to covering the material necessary for the course, of course! Guest speakers from industry are a great addition to any class and why not take it one step further-take your class to the guest-have the class meet there; the companies love it and so do the students!

College is a place where students grow academically and professionally into productive members of our community. When they leave here, they represent us and our brand; they are our future, our brand equity. The equity of the Pegasus is therefore up to us as we move students through the stages of the "manufacturing process." For faculty, it is our job, our duty, our honor to give them roots and wings. For students, college is about exploring opportunities; after all, that's what we so proudly stand for! Somatics and Simulation: Bridging the Body and the Brain To Understand Ethics Education Stephen M. Fiore



Stephen M. Fiore is Assistant Professor in Philosophy and a Research Scientist at the Institute of Simulation and Training (IST). He is director of IST's Cognitive Sciences Laboratory, a collaborating research unit affiliated with the Cognitive Sciences Program in the Department of Philosophy. He maintains a multidisciplinary research interest that incorporates aspects of cognitive, social,

and organizational theory in the investigation of learning and performance in individuals and teams.

There is a convergence occurring at UCF—a convergence of theory, practice, and technology. UCF's leading-edge technology in simulation-based training and digital media, coupled with its innovative methods in interactive performance, are converging with theories of learning arising out of a variety of disciplines—all focusing on ethics education. In this essay I briefly highlight how the brain and the body are becoming a focus for study as we explore the impact of emerging technologies on ethics education.

#### The Body and the Brain

From *soma*, ancient Greek for body, somatic describes "of the body," and over the years somatic theories have emerged in varying disciplines attempting to understand body and brain and their intimate connection. For example, embodied cognition, somaesthetics, and somatic education are related theoretical developments separately arising, respectively, out of cognitive science, philosophy, and education, but overlapping in their connection of body and brain. As with earlier theories such as situated learning, embodied cognition theory posits that cognition is not only heavily situated, but that we use the environment to both ease and off-load cognitive work-most succinctly, that both the contents and the operation of the brain are grounded in one's physical characteristics and embodied experience. Somaesthetics describes the critical study of experience, that is, the body and its use in sense perception and feeling. Last, in its various forms, somatic education similarly attends to the sensory-motor experience, with a focus not only on movement but also on emotion and the lived experience. Thus, while earlier theories such as situated learning did attend to the learner in relation to the environment and the learner situated in a particular practice or activity, the point here is that the aforementioned theories attend to, not only the context, but also the *body* in that context—that is, include the affective and emotional reactions of the body to the context.

Such approaches exist in stark contrast to, for example, theories of cognition and learning heavily dominated by information processing views of the brain. Further, these are more than just theories of learning by *doing*, and even more than learning by *feeling*. These pertain to both the epistemologically and ecologically relevant neurophysiological underpinnings of experience. As such, they form a potent theoretical foundation for understanding the impact of ethical dilemmas on, not only student thinking, but also the student experience when faced with such scenarios, that is, the impact on the brain and the body. Pedagogically, as my colleague in Philosophy, Mason Cash, explains, ethics education requires the student to not only be comfortable with cognitive complexity, but to also become "bodily" comfortable with uncomfortable situations that are sometimes the very nature of ethical dilemmas. By immersing the learner in the ethical dilemma, he or she becomes familiar, and more comfortable with, the experience. Theoretically, when learning via such immersion, and from a resource perspective, one may not be as weakened by the body's physiological reaction to the situation and better able to manage the cognitive complexity. Along these lines I next discuss how we are researching innovative methods to enhance ethics education and assess their impact on learning.

#### Simulation, the Body, and the Brain

Weaving the aforementioned theories together, UCF researchers from Philosophy, Digital Media, and the Institute for Simulation and Training are developing methods for ethics education that attend to the experience, the body, and the body's reaction to experience. As part of UCF's Core Commitments grant from the Association of American Colleges and Universities under the leadership of Dr. Nancy Stanlick of the Department of Philosophy, and UCF's campus-wide Information Fluency initiative, led by Dr. Martha Marinara of English, and Dr. Chuck Dzubian of the Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness program, these efforts involve an innovative combination of multidisciplinary approaches integrated to examine how simulated experience can enhance learning and critical thinking. We are exploring two forms of experience, one using simulation-based learning games, and the other involving interactive performance. First, from simulation and digital media and research in cognitive science, we are examining how simulation-based games can enhance ethical decision making. Second, from interactive performance, we are examining how playing a character surrounded by live inter-actors and immersed in a complex ethical scenario, produces profound changes in perspective.

Our first component, headed up by Dr. Rudy McDaniel of the Digital Media department, is investigating how emerging technologies can support information fluency skills related to ethics education and the development of critical thinking skills. Here we are using advanced game-based technologies to immerse students in challenging decision making scenarios and diagnose learning across multiple levels. This involves using simulations to facilitate the elaboration of critical content as well as the affective experience. Role-playing games are well-suited for our research in that they allow us to reify complex ethical scenarios using variations in 1st and 3rd person perspective, potentially producing differing emotional responses and possibly resulting in differing learning outcomes. What is particularly intriguing when considering simulationbased games in the context of somatic theorizing is that video games can have associated with them virtual avatars (i.e., body representations in the virtual world). Players identify with this avatar, projecting some element of the self into the virtual environment, opening questions as to how the avatar's virtual embodiment influences cognition, or, quite possibly how the player's behavior and emotional responses may alter the avatar's embodiment. Our second component, led by Jeff Wirth, Director of the Interactive Performance Lab (IPL) in the Digital Media department, utilizes the StoryBox experience to examine how applications of interactive performance can enhance learning. In this context ethical scenarios are the backdrop against which a fictional story is developed by the participant and performers, or, to use IPL terminology, dynamically co-created by the *spect-actor (or participant)* and interactors. Surround-sound technology augments the participant's experience and real-time audio/video capture distributes the experience to a viewing audience. As the scenario unfolds during the performance, the spect-actor must dynamically attend and respond to the often emotionally charged changes.

Importantly, the instantiation of these scenarios is cemented in *story* as a powerful content delivery mechanism—one encompassing cognitive, social, and affective factors. Essentially, these stories generate not only a cognitive response, but also an affective response—understanding both the intellectual and bodily response will help us determine the efficacy of such methods. Further, the scenarios are being developed as part of the Core Commitments initiative for use, not only in our program of research, but also for UCF's annual ethics bowl competitions led by Dr. Nancy Stanlick. As such, we are integrating a number of efforts across campus through the use of challenging scenarios devised to require critical thinking—that is, scenarios inherently ambiguous and without a *right* answer, presenting both cognitive and emotional challenges to the learner.

#### **Experiencing Ethics**

In sum, at its most general level, our overall research program is exploring how simulation-based games and interactive performance may be used to augment the classroom approach to ethics education by immersing the student in the experience. We are looking not only at cognitive changes as a result of such experiences, but also the emotional changes produced by these environments. Our goal is to better leverage concepts from differing disciplines to measure multiple levels of reaction and experience when exposing students to ethical dilemmas. We will assess the degree to which the learner is able to address future situations in such a way that they now are familiar with, and understand, the affective nature of the situation-that is, the bodily basis of their reactions, potentially helping them to address the situation intellectually, rather than emotionally. By being able to understand and manage the somatic experience (e.g., manage the anxieties produced by social pressures), the student may be better able to use their cognitive resources for the appropriate response.

### *Glimpses into a Professional Future* Lisa Roney



Lisa Roney is Assistant Professor of English, teaching mainly fiction and nonfiction Creative Writing workshops, and the occasional course in the cultural studies of home, health, illness, disability, and/or medicine. She earned an MFA and a Ph.D. from Penn State University and has published a book-length memoir, *Sweet Invisible Body: Reflections on a Life with Diabetes*, as well as short work

in *Harper's*, *Sycamore Review*, *RE:AL*, *So to Speak*, and *M/C Journal*. In Spring 2007, she received an Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award.

One of the ways in which I try to empower my students is to help them look forward to their future as writers. They have been told many times by parents, peers, and other teachers over the years that choosing Creative Writing as a major (or minor) is starry-eyed, dreamy, and unrealistic. Of course, I talk with my students about the usual, legitimate understanding of the liberal arts as a foundation for a broadly educated, thinking person capable of adapting to a wide variety of careers. However, their way forward is not as straightforward as

it is for those in some other fields, and preserving the artistic spirit while navigating the "real world" can be tough. Therefore, I have incorporated discussions and activities that help students envision a variety of futures in which they can continue to develop as writers.

#### Even in introductory courses, I be-

gin a dialogue with students about how to maintain a writing life after college, even when they might not yet be working for pay as a writer. We start off with a comment made by one of my own mentors years ago: "Only become a writer if you have to," and with a realistic discussion of the challenges and opportunities for writers.

We discuss the isolation that can sometimes lead to inertia and that attracts so many in all of the creative and performing arts to the sense of community provided in academia. I encourage them to make "writer friends" while in school, and remind them that they can continue to send manuscripts via email to these professional compatriots long after school is over and they are scattered. They meet in small groups outside of class to comment on each others' work and proofread it, thereby establishing independent work habits.

I also remind them that almost all of the stories any of us have ever come to love—from Poe to Kerouac, from Austen to Morrison—have come to us thanks to an industry. Although this industry is in a state of constant flux, and the Internet is in the process of changing things even further, books and magazines, even literary ones, go through a process of selection, editing, design, production, marketing, and sales. I make an effort to educate students about these non-dreamy aspects of writing, and in the Spring of 2008, I will be introducing a new elective course about the editing and publishing field.

In senior-level Creative Writing workshops, I engage students with the process of publishing and with the range of outlets available by assigning each student a letter from the alphabet and asking them to obtain at least one literary magazine starting with that letter—for A they could bring in *Agni* or *Allegheny Review*; for R, *Raritan* or *Rosebud*. They are required to write a cover letter to accompany one of their own essays or stories as a submission, and to read each magazine carefully and write a report on the content, design, and other aspects. Then on the last day of the semester we bring them all in and compare notes on numerous magazines. Which ones are powerful, which ones never responded to queries at all, which ones have won awards, which contain work by writers you admire? Whose work from our class might fit in this publication?

Another strategy that can raise their awareness about process and circumstance is to have students keep a writing log, in which they record the hours, places, and other issues surrounding the act of writing. Every week, everyone reports how

"We discuss the isolation that can sometimes lead to inertia and that attracts so many in all of the creative and performing arts to the sense of community provided in academia. I encourage them to make "writer friends" while in school..." many hours they've "worked on writing" during the week, and what precisely they've done—research, editing, drafting, revising, ideagenerating, even wool-gathering, if someone considers it relevant. This allows students to see very clearly what their habits and writing patterns are, as well as places that they can intervene in their own writer's

block or destructive procrastination techniques. It helps them add new strategies to their repertoires.

Over and over again, students express their gratitude for these insights into their futures. Even in, perhaps especially in creative fields where our main focus is on the "art" of what we do, we owe students this kind of de-mystification of the professional process.

"Our present study is not, like other studies, purely speculative in its intention, for the object of our enquiry is not to know the nature of virtue but to become ourselves virtuous...."

—Aristotle

#### **Encouraging Engaged Scholarship** Annabelle Conroy



Annabelle Conroy is Assistant Professor in the Political Science Department at the University of Central Florida. Her main field of research is Comparative Politics with a focus on Latin American politics.

I think that my experience illustrates how much we can learn by exchanging ideas with our colleagues (even colleagues in other departments!) Like everyone else, I am always looking for new ideas to encourage students to become active rather than passive learners. As I was preparing my syllabus for the Spring 2007 term, I came across a *Faculty Focus* article by Donna Malvey (October 2006 issue) on using blogs as a class assignment. What struck me about this article was that she was confronting exactly the same problems I was grappling with

- 1. Student discussions, particularly on WebCT, were interesting, but for many students they had just become one more thing to be done quickly, without much thought or preparation.
- 2. Assignments, even those which required analysis, were basically a regurgitation of facts with little effort to relate them to the real world.
- 3. Research often demonstrated a minimal amount of work and a minimal number of works cited (and often included Wikipedia).

The idea of using blogs appealed to me because they had the potential to address some of these problems. In fact, Donna Malvey's article on how successful this tool had been

in getting her students to be more attentive to the way they present their arguments, enticed me to try it in my own class. Blogs do have some weaknesses, though. Because they tend to be more geared towards an "opinion-reaction" format, they are not as useful for projects requiring in-depth research into a particular area. In addition, they can be difficult to navigate, since posts have to be done sequentially; if you want to refer back to an earlier post, you need to scroll down until you find what you are looking for. After further research, I discovered that wikis compensate for this problem and thus offer an excellent complement to blogs.

Wikis are websites dedicated to a particular topic that can be edited by several people, and, thus, provide an excellent opportunity for collaborative research and peer review. I use collaborative research projects in several of my classes (an idea I borrowed from Dr. Nancy Stanlick in the Philosophy Department). In my experience, students generally like the projects because they can divide up sections of it, and, by having other students look at their work and comment on it before it is graded, they can usually improve on it before it is turned in. I like this type of project because it gives students an opportunity to react more actively and constructively to the work of their peers. The main drawback of this type of project, however, is that it is often very difficult for groups to find a common convenient time to meet. Wikis obviate this problem by making online collaboration a lot easier. Thus, I decided to introduce wikis with embedded blogs into one of my courses.

The course I chose to use as a test of the effectiveness of these tools was INR4075 Human Rights Policy. This is an interesting course to teach because, unlike other subfields within Political Science, it begins from a value-laden perspective (what is "right" as opposed to what is "wrong"). Thus, it involves a more active form of research and learning because the main objective of the learning process is to effect change in order to end human rights violations.

The final wiki project included the following components:

- 1. A resource file (main international conventions, definitions, scholarly articles, etc.),
- 2. Critical/investigative essays,
- 3. Campaigning strategy,
- 4. Blog,
- 5. Class evaluation (where the class graded each wiki).

"I only had one area of concern: although students had become more active learners, they were still not "engaged" learners in the sense that they had difficulty acknowledging or discussing the ethical implications of their use of particular cases." Overall, I was extremely pleased with the final projects. In the great majority of cases, students reviewed the work of their peers and collaborated quite effectively in the creation of the wiki. I noticed that the very public nature of both wikis and blogs compelled the students to write and discuss the issues in a very professional manner. I only had one area of concern: although

students had become more active learners, they were still not "engaged" learners in the sense that they had difficulty acknowledging or discussing the ethical implications of their use of particular cases. As luck would have it, I was invited by Dr. Nancy Stanlick to participate in the Summer Conference section organized by Core Commitments precisely to examine these types of issues. The series of seminars related to this topic exposed me to a variety of strategies that other faculty members are using to address these issues, and I hope to incorporate them into my future wiki projects.

#### *Discussing Global Climate Change & Ethics: Some Tools from Philosophy* Ronnie Hawkins



Ronnie Hawkins is Associate Professor of Philosophy, teaching courses from environmental philosophy and bioethics to philosophy of science and existentialism. She earned an M.D. from UF's College of Medicine, where she participated in neuroscientific research, and a Ph.D. from UF's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, where she took graduate

courses in conservation biology as well as philosophy; she also completed a residency in anatomic pathology at Yale. Her ongoing work addresses the many dimensions of our human place within the larger spectrum of life on Earth.

TCF has some talented teachers when it comes to educating people about the science of global climate change; when I was responsible for the core course in Environmental Studies, for example, John Weishampel and Chris Clausen regularly presented the relationship between atmospheric gases and planetary heat retention in a clear and concise manner, and Jane Waterman gave annual updates on the decreasing availability of sea ice, and hence the increasing threat of starvation, confronting her studied polar bear population. But for facing and dealing with the implications of climate change, more is needed than just a grasp of the science. Since I went back for my Ph.D in part precisely to address the factors that intervene between understanding our biospherical situation and taking corrective action, I'd like to offer some conceptual tools, one from each of several major branches of philosophy, that may help expand our thinking on this topic.

From ontology: the distinction between physical/biological reality versus socially constructed reality. In his 1995 classic The Construction of Social Reality, John Searle distinguishes those things having an "ontologically objective" mode of existence, such as rocks and trees, mountains and molecules, from the things with an "ontologically subjective" mode of existence, things like money, marriages, and nation-states. The former exist independently of our human minds and the representations we make of them, while entities in the latter category depend for their very existence on continuing, collective human agreement. If nobody believes that a certain piece of paper with a given pattern of marks on it is a hundreddollar bill, in other words, then it no longer is a hundred-dollar bill-it's just a piece of paper. Our systematized body of scientific knowledge is also, in itself, a very complex social construction, but-unless you're an unreconstructed antirealist, and it's very hard to live in the world that way-what our science is about has an ontologically objective mode of existence. The distinction should be not only obvious but empowering. We humans didn't create the ocean currents, or the gaseous products of combustion, or the bodies of living organisms (including our own) that make up living ecosystems, and we significantly alter their parameters at our own peril; we did, however, create things like "derivatives," and "demand," and the current global economic organization that is structuring our human behavior in particular ways and ruling out other ways of living. We constructed these things—Searle even tells us how we did so, at the conceptual level—and hence they are far more malleable should we decide they need to be changed to ensure our future survival and flourishing. Ontologically speaking, the situation is pretty clear.

From epistemology: the notion of a "web of belief." A book of the same name by W. V. O. Quine and J. S. Ullian is intended to convey a sense of the overall consilience of science, but the metaphor can be usefully extended to help us envision both the interconnectedness of the particular set of beliefs shared by a given language community and the way these shared beliefs bind those people together into a cohesive group. The structure of the belief-web takes on a certain normative force from our psychological needs to be a part of a group-a survival-related trait for our ancestors-even if, at this point in our human history, some webs have relatively few remaining points of contact with ontologically objective reality. Currently, the "believers in" and the "deniers of" global climate change are enmeshed in rather different webs of belief. What sorts of themes form the midribs of these webs, what sorts of ideas cluster together along them, and what values gather the strands together at the center? These are questions that can be explored in academic discussions. And popular fiction writer Michael Crichton—as one example—has kindly provided us with an excellent item for critical analysis with his 2004 State of Fear, which spins a web proposing that "the theory of global warming" is an invention of greedy environmental organizations to keep their donations rolling in (and which, unfortunately for Crichton, came out just before Hurricane Katrina, the record heat of recent summers, and the 2007 report of the IPCC).

From existentialism: Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of "bad faith." As Sartre described this psychological maneuver, one avoids facing an unpleasant truth by fleeing into one pole or the other of our human existence—we either escape into our "transcendence," floating free of any limitation of bodily nature or personal history into an imaginary realm of omnipotence, or we deny all responsibility for making a choice by considering ourselves hopelessly determined, helpless lumps of passive matter buffeted about by external forces beyond our control. With respect to global planetary changes, many of us engage in bad faith by bouncing back and forth between a self-image that has us as mighty conquerors of nature, just ever so proud of, for example, having "successfully" multiplied our numbers by a factor of six in less than two centuries, and a "who, me?" response denying that our humble species could ever have a measurable impact on Mother Nature, now writ large. Good faith lies somewhere in between, but many seem to prefer the comfort of self-deception to the threatening possibility of taking responsibility for ourselves, our choices and our actions.

From ethics: the "centricity" of our ethical orientation. Who and what do we value, and how do we draw the boundary line separating what's included in our moral community from what lies on the outside, open for exploitation and abuse? If one is "ethnocentric," one's own language community and the accoutrements of one's culture occupy the privileged center. If one is anthropocentric, one may claim moral considerability for all human life (at least in the abstract), but everything else is just material for human use. Some people seem to live as though "the economy" lies at the center of their belief web, and even human life appears consigned to somewhere on the periphery. When one takes life itself-all life, our planet's coevolved lifeforms in dynamic balance under current climatic parameters-as the organizing center of one's web of belief, that's biocentrism. To a biocentrist, the looming fate of Jane Waterman's polar bears is not only a great tragedy, it represents a deep moral failing of our human species.

And finally, from philosophy of science: the phenomenon of paradigm shift, made famous by Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure* of Scientific Revolutions more than four decades ago. Yes, a whole society's web of belief does, from time to time, change shape in a significant way. As much as we continually maintain the "status quo" by reinforcing each others' comfortable patterns of thought day in and day out, the time does come when there's so much cognitive dissonance in the systemthe socially constructed reality has peeled off from physical and biological reality to such an extent—that the whole web "flips" over into a new set of conceptual connections. We are learning more and more about this process all the time, though even cognitive scientists may currently be resisting the actual making of a conceptual shift. And therein lies reason for hope—we have new tools for teaching and learning, as well as for philosophizing. As we start gaining closure on our human situation, we may be able to make the consciously reasoned decision to flip our socially constructed reality into a more functionally adaptive pattern, at some time before we push the ontologically objective biosphere into a new state, one that may be much less hospitable to our planet's present evolutionarv cohorts.

My philosophy of teaching centers on taking a basic approach of honesty toward all my students. I try to become as "informationally fluent" as possible about the subject matters I address in class, and then I use my educated human judgement as to what things are important and why-I try to convey to my students the "big picture" and hope that they will grasp the overall gestalt, if not all the details. This does not always make me the most popular teacher—particularly when the subject matter requires taking on serious issues that some would prefer to avoid thinking about. For me, however, it is a matter of intellectual integrity as well as concern for our larger human society. Public education was established by our "founding fathers" for a reason—only an educated populace will be able to keep our democratic system functioning. And, with respect to global climate change, only an ecologically informed society will be equipped to deal with the challenges of the twenty-first century.



#### Personal and Social Responsibility Institutional Inventory

The Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) has contracted with the University of Michigan (UM) research team, led by Prof. Eric Dey, to coordinate the Personal and Social Responsibility Institutional Inventory. The Inventory consists of four versions of a survey, designed for four campus constituent groups students, faculty, student affairs administrators, and academic administrators. These surveys will be accessible through a website and will be taken electronically by a sample from each constituent group. The surveys will be submitted anonymously, though demographic data will be included. The inventory is designed to assess the degree to which students are

- 1. Striving for excellence,
- 2. Cultivating personal and academic integrity,
- 3. Contributing to a larger community,
- 4. Taking seriously the perspectives of others, and
- 5. Developing competence in ethical and moral reasoning.

In the next few weeks, you will be contacted and asked to take the inventory. Please assist us in this effort. Thank you.

"It is time to invent moral reasoning of a new and more powerful kind, to look to the very roots of motivation and understand why, in what circumstances and on which occasions we cherish and protect life..."

-Edward O. Wilson



The UCF Core Commitments Grant Project is sponsoring the UCF Ethics Bowl for all colleges and majors.

# Teams are Forming in Fall Term 2007 for Competitions in Spring Term 2008

Ethics Bowl competition is for all undergraduate majors and undergraduate students of all interests and backgrounds. College and department teams are forming. If you wish to participate as a faculty team leader for your college or department, or if you are a student who would like to know more about ethics bowl competition, please contact us.

"Core Commitments is an initiative of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and is funded by the John Templeton Foundation. The Core Commitments language and graphics should not be reproduced for purposes unrelated to this project."

Contact: stanlick@mail.ucf.edu or ucfcorecommitments.wordpress.com

# Ethics: It's the Right Thing to Do!

# Call for Papers IF 2008

Knowledge Rights and Information Sharing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Interdisciplinary Conference January 30-February 1, 2008 University of Central Florida Orlando, FL



# Submission due via e-mail no later than October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007

# **Conference Overview**

This conference brings together multiple disciplines to comment and reflect on issues relating to the acquisition, evaluation, and use of information in today's knowledge economy. We invite presentations on topics illustrating how the dissemination and use of information is being affected by technological, political, and industrial influences.

Drawing on topics in science, business, government, and ethics, these important issues cut across academic disciplines. The goal of this conference is to be a forum for helping a community of scholars identify and define issues associated with knowledge rights in academic, personal, and social responsibility in information sharing.

# Potential Topics Include

- Private-sector funding of research and the patenting of scientific technologies and information by companies and its impact on knowledge sharing as it relates to the greater good.
- Political policy overriding science through either shifts in funding or the dilution of scientific findings in the dissemination of information to the public.
- Dissemination of quality scholarly output in the age of the electronic book/journal and internet knowledge portals.
- □ Fair use of knowledge in online learning environments.

Join us in discussing knowledge rights and information sharing as we consider the epistemic implications of the modern information climate.

## Submission Information

- ✓ Submissions should be abstracts of no longer than 500 words
- ✓ Only electronic submissions accepted
- ✓ Email submissions to Dr. Stephen M. Fiore (sfiore@ist.ucf.edu) at the University of Central Florida, Department of Philosophy, no later than 5:00pm, October 31<sup>st</sup>.
- ✓ Submissions will be reviewed by the conference committee and participants will be notified via e-mail by November 2007

*Presented by the Department of Philosophy, Office of Student Conduct and Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Office of Information Fluency, and the Philosophy Department Ethics Center Initiative* 

## Submissions

The *Faculty Focus* is a publication for all instructors at the University of Central Florida. This includes full- and part-time faculty and teaching assistants at all UCF campuses. Its purpose is to provide an exchange of ideas on teaching and learning for the university's community of teachers and scholars. It is envisioned that this publication will inspire more dialogue among faculty, whether in hallway discussions, departmental meetings, or in written articles. This represents an opportunity for faculty to reach their peers throughout the growing UCF community. The *Faculty Focus* invites you to contribute your ideas on teaching and learning in a short essay.

See the guidelines for submission online at <www.fctl.ucf.edu/focus/guidelines.htm>. Please send your submissions to *Faculty Focus*, (fctl@mail.ucf.edu).

**Check us out online!** 

www.fctl.ucf.edu

Faculty Center



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