Envisioning Integrity: A Collaborative Approach to Reinvigorating Ethics as a Core University Value

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Introduction

What do we hope to accomplish today?

- Provide you with information about ethics and integrity at the University of Virginia.
- Encourage reflection about the role of ethics and integrity at your institution.
- Demonstrate a collaborative model for incorporating ethics and integrity in the University community, both in and outside the classroom.
- Demonstrate this collaborative model as a “best practices” program.
The Collaborative Model

Community of Trust

Honor System
Student focused
Disciplinary: Lying, Cheating & Stealing
Inside and Outside the Classroom

Envisioning Integrity
University Focused
Co-curricular: Applying Personal Ethics to Everyday Situations
Inside and Outside the Classroom

Institute for Practical Ethics
Student Focused
Curricular: Practical Application of Ethics-Based Curricula
Inside and Outside the Classroom
University of Virginia Honor System

- Began in 1842 after a period of student-faculty tension.
- Has continually evolved since then.
- System is entirely student-run.
- Covers lying, cheating, and stealing in and out of the classroom.
- Single Sanction:
  - Permanent dismissal.
- Broad jurisdiction:
  - Operates in the City of Charlottesville and the County of Albemarle, and whenever a student represents him or herself as a UVa student.
University of Virginia Honor System

Honor is a core value of the University of Virginia, and a key element of the University community:

- Strong historical tradition (161 years old).
- Tangible benefits for students.
- Supportive alumni (both financially and qualitatively).
- Board of Visitors and administration backing.
- Exemplar of student self-governance.
- Good resources for education and outreach.
University of Virginia Honor System

- Student interest and involvement high:
  - Overseen by a 23-member committee, representative of all schools.
  - Competitive try-outs net 150 student support officers.
  - Strong participation in student elections when Honor issues are on the ballot.

- Initiations arguably low:
  - Average 87 investigations/year with 26 guilty verdicts or “LAGs” (students leaving the University admitting guilt).
  - Overwhelming majority of cases academic integrity.
  - Overwhelming majority faculty-initiated.

- Elaborate process from initiation to conviction:
  - Initiation
  - Investigation
  - Screening Panel
  - Trial
  - Post-trial
  - Recent past characterized by tremendous procedural expansion
    - Mindful of litigation risk.
    - Discomfort with the single sanction.
Why UVA? Why now?

- Increasingly, Honor is associated with the judicial processes of the Honor Committee
  - The Honor Committee and its support officers do not have the staff or resources to discuss the Community of Trust.
  - Too narrow a definition of honor and integrity.
  - Afraid student view of honor and integrity limited to what would get you “caught.”
  - Limited to student participation – students often viewed faculty and staff outside of “honor” because they were not a part of the formal Honor System.
Possibilities & Challenges

- This evolution of the “honor culture” at the University provided some unique possibilities and challenges when thinking about a more broad-based effort at promoting reflection regarding honor and integrity in and outside the classroom.
  - The bond of the Community of Trust
  - Common conversation on Grounds.
  - Promoting new initiatives without undermining the student-run Honor System.
  - Collaborating across organizational lines and in cooperation with students, faculty, administrators and staff.

- Solution = use our strengths!
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- 2001 Presidential Mandate
  - Established University-wide “Honor Team”
  - Composed of broad range of leaders from the student body, faculty, staff, alumni, and administration.
  - **Mission:** to recommend a series of approaches by which all undergraduate students would confront, question, and reflect on their own ethical foundations, values, and integrity.
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- Immediate Challenges
  - Potential to undermine partners.
    - Emphasis on collaborative approach.
  - Singular focus on undergraduates too narrowly conceived.
    - Entire community -- students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, and parents -- needed to be included.
    - All members of the University community need to act as exemplars of integrity.
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- **Revised Name & Mission**
  - **Name:** Envisioning Integrity at the University of Virginia: Invigorating a Community of Trust
  - **Mission:** to expose the entire University community to sets of experiences in which they confront, question, and reflect on honor, integrity and trust, as core values underpinning all University life.
  - **Co-Chairs:** Patricia Werhane, Ruffin Professor of Business Ethics & Ed Freeman, Olsson Professor of Business Ethics
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- Building Support...
  - Subcommittees formed to offer practical, cost-effective, viable, and results-oriented proposals.
  - Interim report was issued in early-2002.
  - Presentation made to the Board of Visitors (BoV) in May 2002 seeking affirmation.
  - Presentations continue to be made to additional constituencies
  - Capitalized on media outlets such as Alumni News, Cavalier Daily, Inside U.Va.
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- The Core Team

- Patricia M. Lampkin
  VP for Student Affairs

- Pat Werhane
  Ruffin Professor of Business Ethics
  Co-chair, EI Team

- Ed Freeman
  Olsson Professor of Business Ethics
  Co-Chair, EI Team

- Nicole Eramo
  Special Assistant to the Honor Committee

- Marsh Pattie
  Assistant Director of Student Affairs
  Darden School

- Leanna Blevins
  Doctoral Student
  Center for the Study of Higher Education

- Dave Wolcott
  Doctoral Student
  Center for the Study of Higher Education
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- Starting Small
  - LASE 151: Honor & Ethics in Everyday Life
  - Grounds for Discussion
  - EI Educator Training
  - “Dorm Talk” presentations
  - Envisioning Integrity website
    - [www.virginia.edu/envisioningintegrity](http://www.virginia.edu/envisioningintegrity)
  - U.Va. Ethics website
    - [www.virginia.edu/uvaethics](http://www.virginia.edu/uvaethics)
  - Center for Academic Integrity 2002 conference
  - Conference presentations (AACU, CAI, ASJA, etc.)
  - *These initiatives focused on utilizing existing resources and partnerships.*
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The Funding Gap…

- Existing initiatives have been either low-cost or funded through “good-will.”
- Interim funding for next steps has been sought from VPSA and the non-alumni Parents Program.
- Long-term funding has been sought from foundations without success.
- Recent shift in focus to private philanthropy has generated interest from capital campaign.
- The long-term funding goal is to endow Envisioning Integrity at a level which will permit self-sufficiency.
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Progress to Date

- **Phase I (2002-2003):** Practical ethics seminar; Grounds for Discussion; CAI conference; Partnership with IPE and Honor Committee
- **Phase II (2003-2004):** EI website; U.Va. ethics website; conference presentations; presence during summer and/or fall orientation; roundtable discussions; faculty and teaching assistant forums
- **Phase III (2004-2005):** full-time coordinator, film series; graduate dinner forums; faculty fellows program; faculty orientation; staff orientation; CD-ROM
Lessons Learned

- Take stock of institutional strengths and/or opportunities.
- Don’t be afraid to alter goals in the face of fiscal and institutional limitations.

- Collaborate and play-off each other's successes.

- Identity a core group to maintain momentum.

- Start small and build off existing programs.

- Articulate a funding goal for the initiative.

- Presidents office, Faculty Senate, administration, etc.

- Secure buy-in from a variety of critical sources (BoV, Board, etc).

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- Take stock of institutional strengths - identity how your initiative will support those strengths.
The End Result

Never suppose that in any possible situation or under any circumstances that it is best for you to do a dishonorable thing however slightly so it may appear to you…Though you cannot see, when you take one step, what will be the next, yet follow truth, justice, and plain dealing, and never fear them leading you out of [any difficult situation] in the easiest manner possible.

– Thomas Jefferson