Connecting Silos, May 2019

Executive Summary

The Connecting Silos conference is jointly hosted by the Center for Professional Responsibility for Business and Society and the National Center for Professional and Research Ethics at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The conference brings people from a range of settings together to share and discuss ideas for teaching and research in professional ethics. This year, the participants from industry and academia explored issues related to incivility, harassment, and values in promoting ethical conduct over the course of two days in Urbana.

The group affirmed the need for a broader sense of the definition of ethics: a definition that covers the basics of data integrity and compliance regulations, and also seeks to create an environment that enables all individuals to work and contribute productively and respectfully. Keynote speeches introduced evidence on the occurrence of sexual harassment in the workplace, and challenged participants to think about the role of values in ethics and compliance. Two case studies highlighted how gender biases surface and can distort interactions, and the discussion of the case studies lead to a rich conversation about creating cultures where those biases can be identified, mitigated, and addressed.

Learning Themes

During the presentations and discussion sessions, several key themes emerged.

How Sexual Harassment fits into Ethics Education/Programming

Billy Williams, Vice President for Ethics, Diversity, and Inclusion at the American Geophysical Union, provided an in-depth review of the National Academies and Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2018 report sexual harassment in academic STEM. The report documents that sexual harassment is pervasive, that there are still many who may not understand this, and that the stigma around facing these issues is persistent. His messages included that sexual harassment will not be eliminated by legal policies and practices, and that organizational cultures must create a climate where individuals understand—and trust—that certain conduct will not be tolerated.

And sexual harassment is just one form of incivility in the workplace. Harassment is rooted in bullying and abuse of power dynamics. These behaviors cultivate fear and secrecy and lead to unethical conduct. Finding ways to identify and reduce power abuses is the first step toward creating cultures where all individuals can flourish and produce at the highest levels in their work.

The American Geophysical Union has taken a range of steps toward cultural shift in its practices, starting with defining sexual harassment as a form of research misconduct. They have implemented programs to make all AGU meetings welcome and safe spaces, including training a cadre who are available to help people at meetings who need to report a harassment or other safety issue. Trained individuals wear "SAFE AGU" buttons so are visible and accessible; there has been continuing interest and demand to join the trained cadre to be available to assist and support.

Implicit biases

Stephanie Bird, Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Science and Engineering Ethics*, led the group through an exercise exploring gender biases in research settings. Through discussion of two scenarios, with exactly the same content but different genders in different roles, participants confronted their assumptions. Bird's exercise created an "a-ha" moment for many as some participants immediately identified gender biases in the scenarios and others did not, leading to a vibrant conversation around how biases influence our actions. The conversation evolved to consider how to navigate implications for our own work. Effective ways to convey and teach these concepts to both academic and corporate audiences closed out the conversation. Many in the session expressed and shared a sense of the power of the exercise. It is available upon request.

Ethics vs. compliance

In the second case study exercise, Blair Marks, Vice President of Ethics and Business Conduct, brought the conversation toward the work of corporate ethics programs by sharing ethics training materials produced for the employees at Lockheed Martin exploring ethical dilemmas in the workplace and teaching a set of tools and a methodology for speaking up. In the ethics program's videos, a summary after each vignette is delivered by top executives. That leadership participation amplifies the effects and power of the learning conveyed, Marks believes. The programs have become a cultural element for every level of employees.

Marks shared the 2019 Leader's Guide to Lockheed's "Voicing our Values" program. This is a facilitator guide for leaders in the organization, who lead the ethics training in their areas. The guide integrates research and practice in ethics education, and is based on Mary Gentile's *Giving Voice to Values* program through Lockheed's adaptation to their environment.

One of the lessons is that industry informs academia and academia informs industry. Areas where industry informs research include practices such as training on how to prevent ethical dilemmas; dissemination of the statistics on ethical dilemmas that industry faces; and specific strategies, such as taking an individual to the proper resource when they are too uncomfortable to go on their own. In turn, these practices are rooted in and iteratively improved by academic research. The videos that Blair shared are structured according to research on teaching ethics in the classroom—they are short scenarios, they are contextually relevant, they present values conflicts, and they offer solutions on how to handle the situation. These videos are available to academic institutions via a free license and can be accessed here (https://www.lockheedmartin.com/en-us/who-we-are/ethics/awareness/index.html).

Values and ethics

Kimberly White, Corporate Compliance Officer of Ingredion Incorporated, shared her experience of working to revise the code of conduct to be more accessible to the whole organization. She discussed challenges in the process of infusing values into the company code of conduct.

At the dinnertime keynote, Marks spoke about the role of values in Lockheed Martin's ethics programs, which are rooted in its three part values statement: do what's right, respect others, and perform with excellence. These values are embodied in the code of conduct and their ethics training, and are supported and promoted by the leaders of the organization. Marks compared the Federal Sentencing Guidelines (primarily a compliance-based framework) with the Defense Industry Initiative's guidance for a values-based ethics framework (https://www.dii.org/home).

The topic of values in teaching and leading ethics was pervasive throughout the conference. Michael Davis posed the question, what is ethics: morality, ethics, or standards of conduct? This point led to conversations about codes of conduct. Greg Ferrence shared a working draft of the American Chemical Society's *Chemical Professional's Code of Conduct* . These examples support the point that ethics is an evolving process—and that a group's ethics will change and adapt to its needs.

Diane Dean shared practices that are being implemented at her institution to improve ethical climate, including an equity review cycle, in which a group over a given period will evaluate the equity of aspects of the work environment (i.e., tenure, promotions, salary). These practices are examples of value-driven efforts to improve ethical culture.

The theme of embedding values in teaching and leading in an ethical manner was consistent throughout the program and emerged through various conversations.

Student engagement in promoting research ethics

Kelly Laas, Librarian and Information Researcher at the Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions at Illinois Institute of Technology, described a research project called "A bottom up approach to enhancing responsible research." This NSF-funded project seeks to explore the ethical culture of research groups and culture in STEM research environments. Student ethics committees are convened to draft, revise, and implement guidelines that then are presented to departmental faculty for discussion and, it is hoped, adoption. Findings from this research project align with the 2017 National Academies report *Fostering Integrity in Research*. The primary purpose of the project is to empower students to understand and work to improve the culture of their work environments.

Jodi Schneider, Assistant Professor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, presented an example of a research project in which she, and one of her graduate students, explored the citation path of articles that had been retracted and yet are still actively cited in the literature. One of her findings was that many retracted articles are not clearly marked, or are live online for months before the print versions are formally retracted. This

leads to citations of bad science. She demonstrated the work of one of her students, a Zotero plugin that alerts users to retracted articles.

In conclusion

It's essential to have successful transmission of academic ideas into practice, to have self-awareness and self-reflection, and to keep posing the question of how to shift the focus from the the ends to the means—to enjoy research for the process as well as the outcome, and to work in an ethical context.

Participants indicated satisfaction with the conference experience, with a 9.9/10 average rating. Comments highlighted the importance and value of connecting the silos of academia and practice, as well as a feeling that participants were leaving with new ideas and tools they could use.

One participant wrote:

"The keynote speakers were excellent. I liked how we got the perspectives of both industry and non-profit organizations. It made me aware of how issues of harassment, sexual or otherwise, inhibit the functioning of organizations and how this needs to be brought into our institutional policies to foster inclusive environments."

Participants also indicated questions that emerged for them during this conference.

> *How do we incorporate values into codes of ethics?*
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> *How do we make codes of ethics more accessible?*
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> *What is the intersection of values and compliance?*
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> *How to we create culture change to generate more ethical cultures and individuals?*
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> *Do people in research ethics talk to the folks in philosophy or business ethics?*
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> *How do we address diversity and discrimination in academics and industry?*
>
> *How does social media impact incivility and bullying behaviors?*

Thank you

To the conference organizers and administrators:

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Sylvie Khan—*Assistant Director, NCPRE*

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2019 Conference Participants

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