LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS:
Identifying Organizational Trends and Building Practical Strategies

Erica Solosky, Associate General Counsel and Director of Ethics, Policy, and Compliance

Scott Deyo
University Ombuds

December 5, 2023
What types of ethical dilemmas do you face?
Americans’ Confidence in Higher Education Down Sharply

By Megan Brennan

1 in 4 Prospective Students Ruled Out Colleges Due to Their States’ Political Climates
By Eva Sarrwell | March 27, 2013

Losing Faith And Finding Fault: Higher Ed Faces Facts And Fiction, Politics And Pundits
David Rosowsky | Contributor
I write about higher ed issues, leadership, finance, and innovation.

6 Reasons Why Higher Education Needs to Be Disrupted
By Thomas Chomoz-Premuzic and Becky Franklin

Can Politics Get Better When Higher Education Keeps Getting Worse?
Voters have the sense to resist notions like critical race theory. A generation from now, they may not.
By John Ellis
Jan 14, 2022 5:29 pm ET

The Growing Partisan Divide in Views of Higher Education

Americans now value in higher education — whether they graduated from college or not. Most say a college degree is important, if not essential, in helping a young person succeed in the world, and college graduates themselves say their degree helped them grow and develop the skills they needed for the workplace.

While fewer than half of today’s young adults are enrolled in a two-year or four-year college, the share has been steadily over the past several decades. And the economic advantage college graduates have over those without a degree are clear and growing.

For Americans, there is an undercurrent of dissatisfaction — even cynicism — among those who blame the college system for society, the top admissions decisions as made and the costs it results in what they pay (or don’t) is considered in college programs. And these views are increasingly fueled by partisanship.
8,910 Results

- Clinical ethics handbook for nurses: emphasizing context, communication and collaboration
- Medical research ethics: challenges in the 21st century
- Ethical journalism: adopting the ethics of care
- The ethics of global business
- Political ethics: a handbook
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• Primary responsibility is to seek and to state the truth
• Encourage the free pursuit of learning
• Respect and defend the free inquiry of colleagues
• Above all else, professors seek to be effective teachers and scholars
• Professors have the rights and obligations of other citizens and measure the urgency of these obligations in the light of their responsibilities to others
Commit to the highest level of integrity

Uphold the values of fairness and equity

Strive for accuracy and transparency

Respect confidentiality and protect the privacy of information

Support the missions of our institutions

Actively seek support when concerned about an ethical issue

Raise voices when ethical standards are not being upheld

Pursue professional opportunities to acquire new ethical knowledge and practices

Actively promote and disseminate these Principles
Ombuds Activity

Feb 2022 – Jun 2023

297 VISITORS

599 ISSUES

LEADERSHIP STYLE & IMPACT

COLLEAGUE & TEAM RELATIONSHIPS

PERSONNEL & ADMINISTRATIVE

APPEARANCE OF HIGH-RISK AREAS

STRATEGY & CULTURE

34%

20%

18%

15%

13%

201

122

104

93

79

Top Theme: Leadership Style & Impact

This issue mostly involved interpersonal behaviors of their leader:

- Disrespectful, unfair, disengaging, unresponsive, or unprofessional (57, 10%)
- Not promoting collaboration; not addressing workplace concerns (46, 8%)
- Not communicating frequently, clearly, or transparently (37, 6%)
- Concerns about leader’s values, ethics, integrity, and perceived commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion 21 (3.5%)
- Not open to program improvements; not soliciting or valuing new ideas (20, 3%)
- Not committed to improving personally; not aware of their negative impact on others; and not holding themselves accountable (20, 3%)

Ombuds Activity – Other Top Issues

- **Colleague & Team Relationships**: cooperation and collaboration (39, 7%); respect (38, 6%)

- **Personnel & Administrative**: general administrative decisions (41, 7%); adverse actions (18, 3%); and hiring/selection processes (18, 3%)

- **Issues with appearance of high-risk**:
  - Failure to address serious concerns (16, 3%)
  - “Isms, discrimination, harassment, disability/reasonable accommodation” (15, 3%)
  - Retaliation for speaking up (14, 2%)
  - Bullying/abuse of power (12, 2%)

- **Organization, Mission, Strategy, & Culture**: diversity, equity, inclusion, & belonging environment (23, 4%); priority setting and funding (20, 3%); and visitors not knowing the decision-making process (20, 3%)
Psychological Safety

Team members feel safe to be vulnerable and take risks

- Give and receive feedback
- Ask difficult questions
- Raise issues and concerns
- Ask for help
- Disagree
- Offer solutions to problems
- Ask for clarification
- Admit errors

Create Psychological Safety at Work

How will I…?

- Promote self-awareness
- Demonstrate concern for team members as people
- Actively solicit questions
- Provide multiple ways for employees to share their thoughts
- Show value and appreciation for ideas
- Promote positive dialogue and discussion
- Be precise with information, expectations and commitments
- Explain reasons for change
- Own up to mistakes

Make a plan. Write it down. Follow Through.

Nested Theory of Conflict

The Fairness Triangle

**RELATIONSHIPS**
People-centered communication that emphasizes teamwork, collaboration, and respect

**PROCESSES**
Meaningful and thorough “in-reach”; valuing and giving due consideration of diverse perspectives

**DECISIONS**
The substantive outcome is lawful, ethical, timely, unbiased, and evidence-based

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<th>THE FIVE PRACTICES OF EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP</th>
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<td><strong>MODEL THE WAY</strong></td>
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<td>CLARIFY VALUES AND SET THE EXAMPLE</td>
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<td><strong>INSPIRE A SHARED VISION</strong></td>
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<td>ENVISION THE FUTURE AND ENLIST OTHERS</td>
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<td><strong>CHALLENGE THE PROCESS</strong></td>
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<td>SEARCH FOR OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPERIMENT AND TAKE RISKS</td>
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<td><strong>ENABLE OTHERS TO ACT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>FOSTER COLLABORATION AND STRENGTHEN OTHERS</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENCOURAGE THE HEART</strong></td>
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<td>RECOGNISE CONTRIBUTIONS AND CELEBRATE THE VALUES AND VICTORIES</td>
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A Case Scenario to Ponder

MEDICAL BACKGROUND: Pseudofolliculitis barbae (PFB) is a common inflammatory reaction of the hair follicle, most often on the face as a result of shaving, also known as “razor bumps” or “shaving bumps.” PFB can cause pain, skin irritation, rashes, and infection. Although PFB can occur in men of all races, it predominantly affects men of African ancestry (approximately 45–80%).

SITUATION: A federal police agency required officers to use personal protective equipment to defend themselves and others against possible exposure to explosives and chemicals. In this regard, the Agency prohibited them from having any facial hair to facilitate the use of a tight-fitting facemask respirator.

CONCERNS: Ten officers raised concerns about this policy and requested a reasonable accommodation for their skin condition.

Let’s think about a framework for thinking through situations like this
A Framework for Ethical Decision-Making
Identify the Issues & Examine the Facts

- What is the issue or dilemma?
- What are the complicating factors?
- What are the facts? (*What do we know or need to learn?*)
- Who is involved? What are their needs and interests?
Apply Guidelines and Standards

• What does our code of ethics and practice standards say about the situation? Are there conflicting standards?
• What are the applicable policies, guidelines, or laws?
• Is there research or literature available to help inform?
• Who should be consulted? (Legal Affairs, Human Resources, ADVANCE, Ombuds)
• Thoroughly and thoughtfully review all information
Evaluate Full Range of Possible Options

• Narrow down 3 potential courses of action. Consider the strengths and limitations of each.

• Would the courses of action:
  • Respectfully balance the needs and interests of everyone involved? Be considered fair & equitable? Not cause undue/unnecessary hardship?
  • Bear scrutiny of others & public?
  • Be consistent with core commitments?
Implement, Document, and Communicate Decision

- Decide on the most appropriate outcome and act
- Document the rationale for the decision, including an explanation of how it best supports the range of needs and interests considered
- Communicate your decision and rationale
Review and Reflect

• Think about both the process and decision
• Have there been any unintended consequences?
• What did you learn? What worked well?
• What could’ve been done differently for a better outcome?
• Share learning with others to the extent possible
“When decisions are classified as being “business” decisions (rather than “ethics” issues), values can quickly be left out of consideration and ethical lapses can occur.”

Policies - Is it consistent with our policies, procedures and guidelines?

Legal - Is it acceptable under the applicable laws and regulations?

Universal - Does it conform to the universal principles/values my organization has adopted?

Self - Does it satisfy my personal definition of right, good and fair?
Case Scenario – Applied

1. Identify the Issues & Examine the Facts
   - Police officers at this federal agency were required to wear a bio mask and be clean shaven;
   - 10 African American officers shared concerns about this requirement in light of their skin condition

2. Apply Guidelines and Standards
   - OSHA regulations that address proper use of tight-fitting masks
   - Americans with Disabilities Act & Reasonable Accommodation

3. Evaluate Full Range of Possible Options
   - What are the needs and interests of the officers? Of the agency?
   - What options might exist?
Ethics at UNC Charlotte

• Ethics principles guide UNC System and UNC Charlotte Policies:
  • UNC Policy Manual and Code (examples)
    • Chapter VI – Academic Freedom and Tenure
    • 200.1 – Dual Memberships and Conflicts of Interest
  • University Policy 804, Standards of Ethical Conduct
• Supporting the University’s Mission, Vision, and Guiding Commitments
  • Integrity and Respect: Ensuring the highest academic, professional, and ethical standards and a collegial culture that embraces different perspectives, civil discourse, and free expression, where all University members are treated with respect, fairness, and dignity.
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Office of Ethics, Policy, and Compliance: https://compliance.charlotte.edu/

Office of Legal Affairs: https://legal.charlotte.edu/