

## Annual Report of the Taylor University Center for Ethics

2011-2012

The Taylor University Center for Ethics made the transition from being a vision to beginning to implement that vision this academic year. We formed the steering committee for the center which consists of some faculty from the original task force that created the vision for the center and new members from the Taylor faculty and staff. Members of the steering committee for this year have been Steve Bird, Julie Campbell, Jeff Cramer, Hadley Mitchell, Jennifer Moeschberger, Steve Phillips, David Poucher, and Jim Spiegel. The steering committee is focused on finding ways that we can help students along with all of the Taylor community learn to think more intentionally about our moral values and how we put those values into action in our lives.

Much effort was put into the development of some resources in ethics for the Taylor community. We developed a document titled “Framework for Ethical Discernment” that provides an introduction to Christian ethics and how to make moral decisions. This can be used by faculty in their classes or by students exploring how to think ethically. We put together a list of sources of information on ethics to help people get started in learning about ethics. This includes web sites, books, journals and codes of ethics that can be used as a starting place to learn what people are saying about ethics. These resources are available on the Taylor University Center for Ethics website at [ethics.taylor.edu](http://ethics.taylor.edu) that was developed this year.

With input from a number of students we planned and sponsored a faculty led student discussion about how to live out our moral values about sexuality in real life. This was held as a follow-up to the week-long focus on how to view our sexuality from a Christian perspective featuring J.R. Briggs that was sponsored by residence life. Students discussed several real-life

scenarios and how they would deal with them based on their Christian values. We plan to develop increased input from students into what the center does and hope to be able to sponsor similar discussions in the future.

The center is closely associated with the very successful Taylor Ethics Bowl team who had their best showing ever in the national Ethics Bowl competition this year. The center will provide a home for the team. We sponsored a scrimmage on campus prior to the national competition to allow people here to experience what they do in competition.

We have begun the process of developing a measurement tool to assess how students think and live regarding their moral values. This will help us understand what students' needs are and will help us assess in the future how successful we are at impacting those needs. We are being led in this by Steve Bird with his expertise in sociological research.

In order to find people who can partner with us in implementing our vision we developed a brochure to let people know what the Center for Ethics is about. We also developed the Taylor University Center for Ethics web site at [ethics.taylor.edu](http://ethics.taylor.edu) to enable us to connect to people both on campus and wherever those who share our vision may be. We made contact with many who are interested in Taylor and the need for helping students prepare to face the ethical challenges of our world to let them know what we are doing and seek their input. One outcome of that input is that we have decided to proceed with the formation of an external Advisory Committee for the center that will involve people from outside the Taylor campus to provide input and guidance in the development of the center. We will be looking for people involved in the academic side of ethics, those in business and professions who see the practical side of ethics, and those who represent how the church can be involved in ethics to be on this committee. We will also need to

have people who will partner with us financially for the center to move beyond the initial steps of implementing our plan and we are trusting that God will help us find those partners as well.

Our goals for next year include developing training in ethical discernment and making moral decisions for student leaders, particularly those in leadership within residence life. For faculty, we plan to develop educational opportunities to learn how to integrate ethics more intentionally into classes taught across the curriculum. We will provide support for departments wanting to develop courses in ethics within their discipline. We will continue to develop a measurement tool to assess how students think and live regarding their moral values.

Stephen A. Phillips

Chair of the Taylor University Center for Ethics