

## **Annual Report of the Taylor University Center for Ethics**

**2014-2015**

The focus of the 2014-2015 academic year for the Center for Ethics has been engaging all parts of the Taylor University community in developing ways to help students grow in moral character and the understanding of Christian moral truth. This has involved the continuation of previously established methods of engagement and developing new ones.

The central core of the Center for Ethics continues to be the steering committee. This year Layla Campbell, Diane Dungan, Tracie Manning, David Poucher, Kelsie Rodman, Jim Spiegel, and Jeff Wallace have participated in the steering committee along with Steve Phillips as the chair. Layla Campbell was our student representative, and Tracie Manning joined us for the first time this year. The steering committee plans and facilitates the activities of the Center.

In November 2014 we held the first meeting of the newly formed Center for Ethics Advisory Council. This group grew out of the previous Center for Ethics Advisory Task Force and will be meeting once a year to provide input and accountability for the Center. The advisory council consists of Pauline Beange, J. Daryl Charles, Paige Cunningham, Brian Dunkel, Brett Garret, Adolf Hansen, Chris Hook, Rachel Jonker, Luann Van Campen, Father Jim Warnock, and Bruce Wright. Eight of the eleven members were able to attend the meeting in November which focused on how we can develop interactions between students and those outside the campus community that can assist students in their moral development.

Another first for the 2014-2015 year was the initial Walter Randall Lecture on Ethics and Research. This will be an annual lecture given in honor of Walter Randall who engaged Taylor University students in his research toward the end of his career as a physiologist. The initial lecture was presented by Dr. David Prentice on the ethical issues related to stem cell research.

This ongoing lecture series should provide a way to engage students, faculty, and others from the community in thinking about important ethical issues.

Students for Ethics is an ongoing group of students with interest in engaging other students in thinking about ethics. They have focused on engaging students in discussions of timely issues in our world. For this academic year they sponsored student discussions of the ethical issues involved in the response to the Ebola outbreak in west Africa, the moral obligations we as Christians and as a nation have toward victims of the war in Gaza, the ethical issues related to the Keystone XL pipeline, and a discussion of religious freedom that was focused on the Indiana Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The religious freedom discussion included a faculty panel with Dr. Nicholas Kerton-Johnson, Dr. Stephen Phillips, and Dr. Jim Spiegel and was able to engage largest number of students and faculty of all the discussions.

A major focus of the steering committee was working on developing some new ways to engage students in thinking about ethics and moral values. This began with the recommendation of the advisory council that we develop a list of questions that students could use to engage the people that they work with outside the campus community when they are doing internships and practicums in conversations about moral values and the impact they have in the workplace. A list of questions was developed which can be found on the Center for Ethics website at [ethics.taylor.edu](http://ethics.taylor.edu) on the ethics resources page. We are currently working on ways that a set of questions like this can be integrated into internship and practicum programs throughout the University.

While that set of questions was being developed the steering committee recognized that a more basic set of questions about ethics and moral values could be a valuable tool in helping students reflect on these ideas throughout their time at Taylor. We have developed an initial

version of a set of questions that could be integrated into foundational core courses so that students would begin to think about these questions as a freshman, reflect on them through their years at Taylor, and revisit them as seniors so that they could see how their thinking about ethics and moral character have developed during their time as a Taylor student.

We continue to partner with the Office of Sponsored Programs to engage students in discussion sessions associated with the training in responsible conduct of research that Taylor requires for students doing research which may be presented outside the university. Four such discussion sessions were held during the school year with another planned in June for students doing research over the summer.

We continue to be involved in engaging faculty to help them integrate ethics into the courses that they teach across the curriculum. For the first time this year the Center for Ethics was involved in Colleagues College by presenting a discussion session on “How Emerging Adults Think about Morality”. This was followed up by a BCTLE faculty workshop on how to deal with students who express the ideas of moral individualism and consequentialism which have been identified as themes of moral thinking among emerging adults. Other BCTLE faculty workshops presented by the Center for Ethics this year included one on the virtue of open-mindedness by Dr. Spiegel and another related to our work on using internships and practicums to help students learn about the role of moral values in the work environment.

The Center applied for and received a grant from the Women’s Giving Circle. One part of that grant allowed us to partner with BCTLE to offer mini-grants to faculty members to assist them in redesigning a course to integrate ethics into the course. We have accepted three proposals for these mini-grants for the summer of 2015. The other part of the grant allowed us to

give \$500 to the library toward the purchase of 27 books that were chosen by the steering committee as important resources in ethics for students and faculty.

The Center is convinced that every member of the Taylor community is important in the moral formation of students. We continue to engage university staff and this year participated in professional development day with a discussion of how helping students develop moral character is important to the mission of the university.

During this academic year every part of the Taylor University community has been going through a review process called the University Programs Review. As an academic support program, the Center for Ethics submitted an Academic Support Unit Review which described the mission and purposes of the center along with our resources and productivity. It also allowed us to express our vision for the Center and how we can enhance the mission of Taylor University to the primary decision makers for the University. This review helped to show what the Center has been able to accomplish with very minimal financial resources, and that there is a need for additional resources for the Center to be able to more fully contribute to the mission of the University. In recognition of this the advisory council wrote a letter of support for the Center to President Habecker.

This has been a year of progress for the Center for Ethics in increasing its engagement with many members of the Taylor community to further the goal of helping students develop moral character and understanding of Christian moral values. We look forward to further progress in developing more effective engagement in the years to come.