

## Annual Report of the Taylor University Center for Ethics

2012-2013

This year was the second year for the Taylor University Center for Ethics to begin implementing our mission of helping the university develop ethical servant leaders. The activities of the Center are led by the steering committee. This year Steve Bird, James Dolezal, Diane Dungan, Hadley Mitchell, Jennifer Moeschberger, David Poucher, Kelsie Rodman, and Jim Spiegel have been involved as steering committee members. Kelsie Rodman joined us in the fall as a representative of the university staff. James Dolezal joined the committee in January as our first student member, and Diane Dungan joined as a faculty member in March. Jeff Cramer, who had been involved with the Center since the very first brainstorming meetings in 2009, stepped down from the steering committee due to his increased involvement in the core curriculum and becoming the coordinating faculty person for the Foundations of Christian Liberal Arts course for freshmen that is being revised for fall 2013.

Our engagement with students began this year with a teaching session for the PAs during their training just prior to the start of the school year. The session focused on how to make ethical decisions and used a small group case study discussion to help them think through how to handle an ethical dilemma. A group of four students, James Dolezal, Peter Jordano, Toby Magers, and Suzanne Neefus met with Steve Phillips through the year and discussed ways to get students involved in discussions about moral values and how those values impact how we live. Student discussion of the ethical implications of everyday campus issues using a blog on the Center for Ethics web site was piloted, but still needs some work to be effective. We are hopeful that efforts to develop a group of students who will engage other students will grow in the coming year.

Jeff Cramer has invited the Center to be part of the Foundations of Christian Liberal Arts course which is being extensively revised and which he is coordinating. This is a required course for freshmen. He wants to have a focus on ethics as a part of the course and we are working with him to help determine how that can be done in a way that will engage students in thinking about their moral values and how they live them out and make that an area of focus for them throughout their time at Taylor University.

The Taylor Ethics Bowl team which is coached by Jim Spiegel had its most successful year ever. They entered three teams in the regional competition in the fall and all three teams placed in the top four with one team winning the regional competition. At the national Ethics Bowl competition in the spring where only one team can be entered per school, Taylor's team advanced to the championship match and finished in second place by only one point.

Two faculty workshops were led by members of the steering committee in conjunction with the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence to help faculty learn how to better integrate ethics into their teaching. Hadley Mitchell and Jim Spiegel led a session at lunch after the February faculty meeting on how to teach ethics across the curriculum. Steve Phillips led a session later in February on how to use case studies as a method of teaching ethics and connecting ethics to the content of courses in different areas. The workshops were well received and more will be planned. We also provided assistance in the development of a new ethics course in the Environmental Science department and Steve Phillips provided a guest lecture for that course.

We are continuing to work on developing an ethics measurement tool. We have spent time determining what it is that we desire to measure and how we want use that information to help guide the development of the tool. We have begun to define the different ways that people

think about ethics so that we can identify indicators that can be measured. Steve Bird, Jim Spiegel, and Steve Phillips will form a subcommittee to work on defining and identifying these things more clearly over the summer.

In order to engage people from outside the university campus in the development of the Center for Ethics and help us have a broader perspective on the things we are trying to accomplish, the Center for Ethics Advisory Task Force was formed. Eleven people with interest in ethics and what we are doing here at Taylor related to ethics agreed to come together for a series of three meetings to provide advice and guidance to the Center. Those who agreed to help us include Adolf Hansen, Bruce Wright, Christopher Hook, Dave Rodriguez, J. Daryl Charles, Josh Corwin, Luann Van Campen, Paige Cunningham, Pauline Beange, Rachel Jonker, and Stephen Edwards. The Task Force met in November, 2012 and in April, 2013. We will be meeting again in November, 2013.

At our first meeting we reviewed the mission and purposes of the Center, discussed the ethical challenges that Taylor students will need to be ready to face, and how the Center can help the university prepare students to face those challenges. The Task Force expressed a strong sense of the importance of what the Center is trying to do and the need for this to be a focus throughout the university. Students need to develop a Christian way of thinking and living and need to engage in conversations that allow them to deepen their understanding of Christian moral values and the moral issues of our world. The task force helped us look at what the center is focused on and led to the steering committee revising the Mission and Purposes statement to be more in line with our focus on students. The revised statement is appended at the end of this report.

In November we talked about how our efforts to prepare students to be ethical student leaders need to be system wide and comprehensive in the university with multiple layers.

Students need a strong foundation in a Christian worldview and an understanding that living out our moral values involves an integration of how we live our personal lives and how we engage our world and social issues. The importance of measurement was stressed and it was recommended that the development of a measurement tool be given high priority. We discussed how the Center can help students engage in ethical discussion with people outside the campus and recommended taking advantage of mentoring and shadowing relationships that already exist by encouraging students to ask questions about ethical issues. Discussions of ethical issues can be included in discussion sessions with speakers who come to campus and students could engage in discussions with community and business leaders of their moral values. Many other ways to engage in ethical discussion could be developed. We also looked at the future and the group suggested we establish a vision of where we want the Center to be in five years including how preparing students to be ethical servant leaders is a distinctive of Taylor University and how that fits into the university's strategic planning. We need to help people throughout the university see how moral preparation of students is essential to what we do so they will buy in to being a part of that. We need to find ways to connect with people in business and professions and with churches in nearby communities so they can work with us in achieving our goals.

Taylor University has a strong tradition of helping students grow both spiritually and intellectually in their time here. As we look ahead to the future, we recognize that a Christian understating of moral values and learning to live out those values in every part of life is essential for students to become the servant leaders we desire for them to be. We will strive to help the university nurture that in the lives of students.

Stephen A. Phillips

Chair of the Taylor University Center for Ethics

## **Taylor University Center for Ethics Statement of Mission and Purposes**

The mission of the Taylor University Center for Ethics is to support the development of ethical servant leaders who can minister Christ's redemptive love and truth to our world by helping students have a Christ-centered understanding of moral truth and apply that truth in their lives.

In order to advance this mission, the Center for Christian Ethics is committed to the following purposes:

- To expose students and faculty to the best current thinkers in Christian ethics, seeking a broad exposure to authentic Christian thinking from a variety of traditions while remaining faithful to the scriptural values of Taylor University
- To promote a focus on living out Christ-centered ethics by integrating the understanding and practice of Christian moral truth into the existing community life of the university in accord with the biblical responsibilities that are the foundation of the Life Together Covenant
- To advance scholarship in Christian ethics, its application to the moral issues of our world, and the teaching of ethics
- To support the teaching of ethics across the curriculum and provide growth opportunities for faculty in the understanding of Christian ethics and how to incorporate it into their teaching and interaction with students in cooperation with the university's efforts to enhance excellence in teaching
- To promote opportunities for students and faculty to engage in conversations regarding moral values and living ethically both within and outside of the broader Christian community
- To help students, faculty, staff, the church, and others in our world find ways to apply Christian moral values to the struggles of daily life