The Ethics Center: Tenth Anniversary

WMU Center for the Study of Ethics in Society

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The Ethics Center: Tenth Anniversary

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and

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The purpose of WMU's Center for the Study of Ethics is to encourage and support research, teaching, and service to the university and community in areas of applied and professional ethics. These areas include, but are not restricted to: business, education, engineering, government, health and human services, law, media, medicine, science, and technology.

Founded 1985

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THE ETHICS CENTER: TENTH ANNIVERSARY

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Presented to the WMU Center for the Study of Ethics in Society

September 28, 1995
The First Ten Years
Michael Pritchard
Director, WMU Center for the Study of Ethics in Society

It has been my privilege to serve as director of the Center for the Study of Ethics in Society during its first 10 years on our campus. Having been here from the beginning, I should be in a good position to say something about the center’s origins and development.

I begin with origins. For me, a pivotal moment was when I received a phone call in 1984 from Jim Peterson in our Department of Sociology. He said he had learned from Vivian Weil at the Illinois Institute for Technology’s Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions that I had an interest in whistleblowing and that we might benefit from talking with each other. Dan Farrell (Management) and Jim were working on a monograph on whistleblowing for a series of publications on ethics in engineering that the IIT center was developing. Vivian Weil was the general editor of this series and someone I had met a few years earlier at an IIT workshop on engineering ethics. How ironic, I thought, that Jim
and I would learn of our mutual interest in whistleblowing via a Chicago connection, even though for several years our offices had been only several hundred yards apart! This is perhaps an extreme example of how chancy it was learning that faculty outside my own department had serious academic interests in ethics. But most of these initial encounters were fortuitous rather than planned. Jim Jaksa (Communication) and I began our conversations of ethics on the tennis courts as we disputed each other's judgment about whether the ball landed in or out. We learned through casual conversation with Ron Kramer (Sociology) that Ron had file drawers full of information about the Ford Pinto controversy of the late 1970's and early 1980's—a case study Jim and I regularly used in a class we began teaching together. Shirley Bach (then in General Studies, now in Philosophy) and I had worked together on the Ethics Committee for WMU's Science for Citizens Center, I succeeded her as chair of our Institutional Review Board, we team-taught a course on the idea of acceptable risk, and we organized a few public programs on medical ethics. And so on.

It is clear that much was going on in the
ethics arena at WMU prior to the existence of the ethics center. But whether anyone in one discipline knew about the interests in ethics of those in other disciplines was, it seemed, happenstance. It occurred to several of us that establishing an ethics center might better enable those interested in the study of ethics to learn from each other and contribute to public discussion of societal issues in ethics. So, in the summer of 1985 Shirley Bach, Jim Jaksa, and I decided to convene a conference of WMU faculty we suspected shared our interest in ethics to see if it made sense to form an ethics center. Invitations were sent to 20 faculty across the curriculum to attend a 2 day conference on campus (not at an exotic resort!) to talk about ethics. Held during the month of August—with the promise of no more than good conversation, coffee, lemonade, and cookies—this conference was an enormous success. Of the 20 invites, 19 took a break from their vacation time to attend. Fortified by the promise of a small sum of start-up money from the Office of Academic Affairs, our proposal to form a center was enthusiastically endorsed by the group. So, we were off and running.

During the 1985-6 academic year we had

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public presentations by 9 visitors to our campus, 9 WMU faculty, 3 members of the professional community, and President Diether Haenicke. Thus, our very first year set the precedent for the 15-20 public programs we offer each year. Soon we formed study groups of faculty and members of the community on topics such as ethics in organizations and journalistic ethics. In the ensuing years we have received grants to conduct workshops for faculty on teaching ethics, to offer lecture series on medical ethics, business ethics, ethical issues in science and technology, and to conduct research on ethics in engineering. We have co-sponsored 4 national conferences on communication ethics. Faculty have collaborated in publishing articles, books, and educational resources. We have worked closely with other ethics centers at Wayne State University, Indiana University, and the Illinois Institute of Technology, as well as with the recently formed national Association for Practical and Professional Ethics. With the generous support of the Winnie Veenstra Endowment, we offer annual presentations on topics related to peace. With Joseph Ellin’s expert editorship, we publish several outstanding center presentations each year. We
have sent a team of undergraduate students to the first and second Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl competitions held at IIT. (A team will be sent to Washington, D.C. in spring 1997 to participate in the Ethics Bowl.)

A remarkable feature of our first 10 years is that virtually all of the work of the center has been done by volunteers. None of the Executive Board positions are salaried. The Board is composed of faculty from across the university who are otherwise fully employed in their disciplines. Equally remarkable is the fact that, of the original 8 member board, 4 remain on the board and 3 others served until their retirement. As new members have been added, it has been important to retain the board’s interdisciplinary composition. The Center for the Study of Ethics in Society is committed to the notion that the serious study of ethics has a place across the curriculum. That those who volunteer to serve on the board tend to stay testifies, I think, to the broadly interdisciplinary appeal of ethics.

Years ago a Doonesbury comic strip suggested that ethics in higher education, like streaking, is just another passing fad. We believe the track record of our center suggests quite the
opposite; and we look forward to our next 10 years of encouraging and supporting research, teaching, and service to the university and community in areas of applied and professional ethics. The essays that follow provide some idea of the promise and challenges that lie ahead.
I am humbled to be on this retrospective program with so many of the founders of the Center for the Study of Ethics in Society and among people who make the teaching and research of ethical issues such a central aspect of their professional careers as educators.

Indeed, I am suffering a bit, quite a bit, from the Imposter Syndrome--the sense that I, having no expertise in ethics centers, am an imposter among this panel of experts--all the more so if I dare to address the lofty topic of "The Place of Ethics Centers in Higher Education." After all, I have no formal training in ethics nor have I ever been a participant in an ethics center in higher education.

But there are two or three reasons why I do not, having confirmed my lowly status, now simply take my seat (which I will do relatively quickly ever mindful that I am the only speaker

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1Dean Ferraro is currently serving as Provost at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.
that separates us from a reception for the Ethics Center). The first reason I suppose is that deans, particularly deans of Arts and Sciences who must move amongst 20 disciplines in which they are not trained, are somewhat practiced at handling the anxiety that the Imposter Syndrome engenders so that I have formed some tolerance for being an imposter in this sense.

Since I now place myself firmly into my decanal role let me exercise the privilege of speaking on behalf of the College of Arts and Sciences to acknowledge and thank the founders of the Center for the Study of Ethics in Society, to acknowledge the many contributions that we have heard about today and to praise in particular the associate directors, Shirley Bach and Jim Jaksa. Needless to say, Jim’s announced retirement will create an unfillable void in the College’s expertise in Communications Ethics.

While in this mode, I need to dwell some on the seminal and continuing contributions of the Center’s director, Michael Pritchard. It seems always in an organization that there are those who sow the seeds for the organization, those who nurture the development and growth of the seeds, and those who productively harvest the mature
growth. Michael Pritchard has done it all. From seed to harvest he has farmed the Ethics Center and it is largely because of him that we are having this 10th birthday party for the Center today. I take a great measure of pride in having Mike as a College colleague and am thrilled that the University has seen fit to acknowledge his research in ethics by giving him the University’s highest award as this year’s University’s Research Scholar.

A second reason that I share my thoughts with you today is that, as one who previously engaged in an active professional practice of forensic clinical psychology and psychopharmacology, I have lived intimately with professional ethical issues in applied settings, often, in my case, involving decisions of life and death. From these experiences I have developed a keen interest in knowing how people learn to make responsible decisions about what is right, good or moral.

As a sidebar here, it is my guess that the American Psychological Association’s Code of Ethics for the Practice of Psychology is among the most detailed and comprehensive of any professional code of ethics. Despite this, my sense
is that the code evolves in a reactive sense rather than in a proactive sense. For example, when it was determined that the primary reason underlying malpractice suits against psychologists by patients was sexual relations among therapists and clients, the APA Code of Ethics was revised to prescribe acceptable behavior in this context but did nothing to help psychologists think through, to reflect about, the ethical issues involved. (For the curious among you, a therapist is considered to be behaving ethically if the therapist has sex with a previous client six or more years after the termination of therapy with that client.)

My point here, I suppose, is that as I observe the behavior of professionals they do not seem to deduce solutions to new ethical dilemmas simply by having behaved in accordance with a codified prescription for ethical behavior. People seem to need to learn how to think ethically just as they seem to need to learn to think critically.

This latter thought provides a segue to my next rumination and that has to do with my conviction that a responsible institution of high learning will provide the opportunity for its membership, students, staff and faculty alike, to learn the processes of thinking critically about
ethical issues. There is no need to assert this to this audience, of course, since you all operate daily on this premise. But it probably does us well to remember occasionally that there is a cogent argument that the study of morality is not proper in a public state institution such as ours if for no other reason that those that would teach may instead preach about the appropriateness of a particular ethical position.

And while those of you who teach ethics as a cognitive process or an awareness or perspective may understandably take umbrage at the notion that you might propagandize instead, I remind you that there does not seem to be a well articulated code of professional ethics in higher education to guide our behavior as teachers. Put otherwise, one is not imbued necessarily with the subject that one teaches; one is not ethical because he teaches ethics.

Our President, Diether Haenicke, in a previous talk to the Center for the Study of Ethics in Society, lamented the absence of a set of ethical guidelines in higher education, noting that few other professions were devoid of such a code. This absence, speaking again as a dean, seems particularly noticeable to administrators who are
tasked with making disciplinary judgements about colleagues. The absence of an ethical code leaves one to default ethical and professional judgements to rule of law which is often framed in nonacademic contexts. Take as but one example, more real than hypothetical, the instance where a male professor has sex with a female graduate student working under his direct supervision. Can this behavior be considered professionally ethical in higher education? Under the law that governs sexual harassment in the workplace, this behavior can be considered lawful if the sex was consensual. But how do we in higher education arbitrate the question of whether in a student-faculty power differential relationship it is possible ever to have an uncoerced consensus or an informed consent in this situation? Drawing a parallel to the psychology code of ethics, should we in higher education not codify ethical behavior and say, perhaps, that having sex with an ex-student is only ethical if it occurs six years or more after the student graduates?

But what now of the place of ethics centers in higher education? I do not know precisely how many institutions of higher learning have an ethics center. The Association for Practical and
Professional Ethics has over 70 institutional members as of this year, one of which is our own Ethics Center thanks to Mike Pritchard being a charter member of the Association. A review of these centers for practical and professional ethics yields more similarities than differences among them. The principal difference is the breadth of the professions that are of concern. Some are restricted to health professions or to business professions and so on, but most have the magnitude of interdisciplinary breadth that ours does. The principal similarity is that each center serves as a resource for information to the broader academic community about applied ethical issues.

As I see it, there are three factors in higher education that demand the presence of an ethics center; that make an ethics center essential rather than a pleasant nicety. These factors are the extant Liberal Education Reform Movement; the seeming past failure of interdisciplinary studies; and the immediate attack on the humanities. Having earlier disavowed my expertise to address these issues let me be brief in explicating each of these.

1. Liberal Education Movement: Over the past 5 years almost every institution of higher education has moved to reform liberal education--
the College of Arts and Sciences at WMU being no exception. The principal drivers for this were that our curricula did not seem adequately to reflect cultural pluralism, diversity and internationalization as a content matter and did not adequately engender "habits of mind" in our students. The specific latter criticism was that our curricula were not preparing students to think critically or ethically in complex situations. Employers called for cognitive processors not content knowers. The fit to centers of practical and applied ethics with their support for preparing ethical thinkers in professional settings was perfect with the liberal education reform emphasis on thinking, writing and ethics across the curriculum. The place of ethics centers in higher education was elevated as a result.

2. Failure of Interdisciplinary Studies: An earlier higher education reform force, you may recall, was the movement toward interdisciplinary studies. Despite the face validity of the arguments for interdisciplinary pursuits, most of which we would all embrace, as a practical matter interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary studies have not survived in higher education. Indeed, disciplinary restricted studies seem to be even
more secure these days than ever before. It is easy to speculate about the reasons for this failure. What seems more pertinent for today is to note where some successes are. Basically, the few successes there have been occur where there has been an overwhelmingly strong, unifying conceptual scheme with real life application to glue the disciplines together. Thus, while interdisciplinary approaches to artificial intelligence have faltered, environmental studies have flourished. And while sociobiology has ebbed, ethics centers have sustained. Again, as a bastion of interdisciplinary success, the place of ethics center in higher education is secure. (Aside-think how unusual the stability of our center has been across all of our colleges-something that is not elsewise truly duplicated on our campus.)

3. **Attack on the Humanities**: Once upon a time to be learned meant to be knowledgeable about philosophy, religion, music, mathematics, language, letters, and literatures. The polymath was gifted in what we now refer to as the humanities. These days the humanities are under direct frontal assault. Being perhaps postmodern, deconstructive, or politically correct (read feminist, ethnocentric) in nature, the humanities
have been eschewed as not useful, not applicable, not worthy of support. Our U.S. Congress, struggle as it will with ethical issues in its own glass house, has stripped the lifeblood from the NEH and NEA to the extent that the infrastructure and context for the humanities has been dismantled. In this context, ethics centers stand tall in higher education as a beacon for the humanities. They demonstrate that the humanities have an applied importance in professional settings that functionally rivals that of science and technology. Again, the place for ethics centers in higher education is front and center.

Close

I need to bring this to a close. I have already said more than I know to say. But I would feel remiss if I did not pose the question of what next for ethics centers, indeed what next for the Center for the Study of Ethics in Society? When we reconvene in 10 years for the Center’s 20th birthday party will forces at play on higher education still determine a central place for ethics centers? Will it be enough that ethics centers support discussion and scholarship about professional ethics or will they need to be more affirmative in generating ethical codes of conduct?
Could we challenge our Ethics Center, for example, to draft a detailed code of ethics for professors and administrators at WMU?

These are interesting questions to ponder but not dwell upon today. Instead today we should say happy 10th birthday to the Center for the Study of Ethics in Society and let the celebration begin.
Ethics at the End of the Century: A Mosaic form Genesis to Genetics
David H. Smith
Director, The Poynter Center
Indiana University

In the past quarter century we have seen a surprising revival in the study of ethics in American higher education. I want to make several points about that revival. First, I want to suggest why the revival occurred. Then I want to discuss its intellectual trajectory; finally, I will say something about the institutionalization of the study of ethics in higher education.

Let's begin with some attempted explanations. Why a renewed interest in the study of ethics? This question is of historical interest; it is also relevant to future planning. We must know how we got to where we are to understand where we may go-- or to chart our course for the future.

I call one part of the explanation cultural. There is a widely held perception of a decline in professional probity in medicine and law. Many Americans are cynical about big business or government or both. Trust in the media is at an all
time low. Personal character and behavior seem to be unreliable and/or hypocritical. In this situation many people are looking for ways to mend the world, repair the social fabric. Ethics is appealed to in this connection and although higher education is seen as part of the problem, it also strikes people as a likely tool for its remediation.

These cultural forces are reinforced by intellectual developments in the academy. Higher education in this country started out attached to a moral vision, and that continued through the work of John Dewey and the Social Gospel in this century. But the dominant mood of higher education at midcentury was positivistic. *Science* was identified with serious intellectual work; there was enormous pressure to model all forms of intellectual inquiry on the sciences. The main agenda of philosophers who were concerned with ethics was seen to be to explain how there could be an intellectual respectable field with that name. This was the task of *metaethics*.

At the end of the century the intellectual climate has changed. Zealous partisan advocacy is defined in some quarters as the only honest form of intellectual exchange. Pluralism has replaced positivism as the central descriptor of academic
orthodoxy. Morality is so pronounced that intellectual communication threatens to break down over moral intolerance. Few members of the academic community want to go back to the chilly winds of high-positivism; fewer are satisfied with the isolation and stagnation that occur when serious discussion about moral disagreement is removed from the university. Morality used to be silly to talk about; now it's too important.

Furthermore, colleges and universities, as others in the knowledge business, must be concerned for ethics because knowledge effects character. Changing the way someone understands the world changes the person. If we are effective teachers, we are going to have an effect on character and the important question is what kind of effect.

For example, colleges and universities must stand for honesty because without it the intellectual enterprise is impossible. And for respect. If truth were fully known there would be no need for universities as we know them. To be a member of a university community is to commit oneself to living with disagreement. But the only thing that makes this tolerable is respect. Furthermore, I contend that standing for these
rigorous values is impossible without the existence of a viable and supportive community.

Thus there is a complex set of reasons that higher education has increasingly found itself in the ethics business. Huge gifts have been made to some of our national flagship institutions. A lot has gone on at universities like Western Michigan and Indiana. A new professional association-- the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics-- has come into existence; readers of the Journal of the American Medical Association of the New England Journal of Medicine couldn't avoid ethics if they wanted to; national commissions are formed by professional associations or by governments, companies, or communities.

II

This brings me to what I called the "intellectual trajectory" of the field of ethics. By the phrase "intellectual trajectory" I mean to refer to the forms of academic work that the field of ethics itself values and needs. I will start with an attempt at a descriptive report, segueing into my own recommendations about the direction the field should take.

The ethics renaissance in the United States began with the work of philosophically literate
social critics, some of whom were theologians, some lawyers, some activities, some journalists, some professionals. It received timely philosophical legitimation in the work first of John Rawls and then from others. By the mid-70s philosophers and philosophical lawyers had largely taken over the movement, but we have seen another swing of the pendulum. Literary, narrative, biographical, and case study methods have been most recently featured. I for one celebrate this diversity, but I want to urge special attention to two main topics.

First a caveat. I do not think that any other method can entirely substitute for philosophical reflection. In particular, taken as I am with casuistry--as will come out--I think it important to bear in mind that viable casuistry must take place in a normative context. Situations become morally interesting cases because of a set of moral spectacles through which we see events. These spectacles may need to be changed or cleaned; when they are, the problem may go away or may be made worse. Principles may need to be revised. But we never really face the choice of cases or principles--situations or spectacles. We deal with complex set of circumstances and some
of those circumstances are the moral commitments of players and the larger moral context in which they play their parts.

For this reason I think it is essential that persons who have invested their intellectual lives in the study of "spectacles"-- of visions of the world, moral arguments, moral sensitivity-- play a central role in the study of the ethics. Some of these persons will be philosophers-- in the narrow sense of someone who holds the Ph.D. in Philosophy. Others will be theologians, or students of religion, or lawyers. Specialized study of ethics is not a sufficient component of a process of moral deliberation or perception, but it is a necessary one.

With this in mind I offer two general suggestions. First, ethics must work more closely with science in the years ahead. I mean this assertion in two rather different senses.

The first and perhaps the least controversial of these I can illustrate with reference to genetics. The fact is that genetics research is creating some new problems. I mention only two.

For one thing we now have the ability to know the fate of some individuals far in advance of
the time anything tangible or visible happens. We can read the book of fate. The news may be good or bad. For example, the child of someone with Huntington Disease [HD] can be told at birth whether she or he carries the HD gene, although in all probability the effects won't show up for decades. This knowledge may have large ramifications for siblings, parents, possible spouse— all of whom will perceive this future as part of the child's present.

Generally, our increasing genetics knowledge makes human interdependence obvious; it raises questions of what should we know and when should we know it, and of what we owe to each other.

At the same time, most of this knowledge will increasingly be knowledge of probabilities. Huntington disease is untypical in this respect as the gene is virtually 100% penetrant. If you get the gene you get the disease. Much more typical is the situation with the genetics of breast cancer. People carrying the BRAC1 gene will not be told that they will certainly get breast cancer, but that they have an increased probability, e.g., 78% chance of getting it by age 50. Thus we can expect to know many more probabilities about
ourselves, those we love, those with whom we work, those on whom we are dependent.

I believe the economic pressures, natural human needs for security and happiness, as well as intolerance for imperfection and finitude will push application and development of this genetic knowledge at a rapid rate. I do not fear a new eugenics movement in the sense of the first half of the century; I do foresee large issues of discrimination, inequality, confusion and unhappiness. These are issues that call for clear-headed thought, to be sure, but they call for more than that: for compassion and patience and loyalty. Ethics must be engaged with the analytical and normative issues to be sure, but it must also include problems of community and sensibility and be prepared to have its agenda broadened.

Ethics also needs to work with the social sciences, in particular with anthropology and sociology, but explaining this will take a little longer.

I begin with what I take to be incontrovertible fact that good and effective as much of the work in practical ethics has been it has often completely failed to engage professional workers to whom the writing is meant to be
relevant, even professionals who see the need for reform in professional life. Part of this is an issue of jargon and inability effectively to write for a nonacademic audience. That is easily remediable—at least on principle. But another part arises when moralists approach a life-context with a preconceived agenda, an overly crisp sense of what "the issues" must be. Too much professional ethics writing betrays the fact that the author in some very important ways doesn't know what he or she is talking about.

This takes on methodological bite if we recognize that professional groups usually see themselves to be morally legitimate communities serving high moral purposes. Obviously they often default on this; there is always a gap between profession and behavior. But professional ethics, as an academic field, has not given much time to study of the operative ethic within professional groups, or the extent to which those ethics can serve as a basis for serious criticism.

I became very aware if this last year when I spent three months working in laboratories and attending seminars in a major university's biology department. I was struck by the interplay between ambition and the quest for security, on the one
hand, and intellectual self-discipline, a complex conceptual scheme and the excitement of discovery on the other. The moral world of a biologist ranges from routine to the flash of insight; the moral community is complex, filled with disappointment and death as well as achievement. I was embarrassed to realize how off target many of my prior conclusions or "insights" had been.

I spent that time because I believed, and increasingly I do believe that ethics must rediscover ethnography, that persons hoping to do moral criticism must spend some time immersed in the world about which they hope to write. Moreover this must be done in an interrogative mode--questioning the world one sees, and questioning oneself. There are professional risks for moralists investing themselves in this kind of work, but I don't see how it can be avoided if the study of ethics is to hope to deliver on even part of its promise.

This brings me to the second main trajectory of work that I think needs to be done in practical ethics: work that deals with religion and ethics.

Although theologians and philosophers of
religion have made major contributions to professional ethics over the years, this work is often ignored by philosophical writers. And the neglect may, unfortunately, sometimes be reciprocated. There may be many reasons for this, but one of them is the fact that philosophers have sought a universal foundation for morality and dismissed religious commitments as a troubling form of particularism, rather like preference in food or music.

This dismissal is harder to sustain if one begins by immersing oneself in the real world of professional practice, and that for two reasons.

First, more than one or two actual professionals are religious in a traditional sense of being members of some ongoing religious community. I make no claims about the numbers of theists in these foxholes except to say that there are more than most philosophers or fellow-professionals suppose. Religion is one of those things seldom discussed in the workplace, but it is a serious mistake to infer its absence or irrelevance. Members of traditional religious communities may have special difficulties relating their identities as religious persons to their professional roles; if they take those religious
identities seriously, they will be the sort of morally serious professionals to whom writing in professional ethics should appeal.

Second, professional communities may function as religious communities for the professionals who work in them. The profession may determine a professional's view of the world, establish the calendar around which she organizes her life, set her political agenda, and provide the best support group a professional has. Professional commitments tend to become total all-encompassing commitments, and they can become what Western theists would call idolatrous. Seeing them in this light makes clear how important it is to study the internal morality of a professional community, how relevant it is to open professional practices and institutions to theological as well as moral critique.

I do not mean to be calling for a religious conversion of professionals, only to be claiming that understanding their religion(s), engaging in serious discussion about the role of religious morality in the workplace, and contrasting professional life with the standards of some traditional religious communities are important parts of the study of practical ethics in the next
This brings me to the last point, which concerns institutionalization of the study of ethics. A common model in the past decade has been the creation of an "ethics center" to serve as a focal point of campus work in ethics. These centers are incredibly diverse, ranging from one started with a 20 million dollar endowment at Princeton to ad hoc groups of faculty on campuses large and small, with places like Western's Center and the Poynter Center somewhere in between. We need to think about the strengths and weaknesses of this model and about its long range viability.

Again I begin with a caveat. The study of ethics in a practical mode requires more support than can be provided by on-campus entities. Indeed the Centers at Harvard and Princeton, to say nothing of the Hastings Center, have major national constituencies. The new APPE, with which faculty here and I have been closely allied, provides another viable form of support. But I want to focus on local development.

And I begin with the observation that in the vast majority of cases campuses have gotten very good deals out of the ethics centers that they
have created. Not only have they led to good public relations, they have reinvigorated teaching, renewed mid-career faculty, brought in external funding, bridged gaps between the university and external communities, and taken a substantial first step in the direction of reestablishing campuses as genuine communities of conversation. This is no small achievement! It has come at a time when higher education budgets are tight and-- I can say as one who is grateful for significant support-- it has come about with comparatively modest reallocation of campus resources.

The question that has to be faced is: how viable is this Center model over the long term? The core of most centers is a group of one to three people who are leading the center at the same time they are attempting to be good citizens of their departments and sustain an independent professional agenda. This can only go so long, and in any case these individuals will eventually die, retire, or move on. Then what happens to the campus ethics initiative? The natural university solution to this problem is to turn the Center into a department with its own faculty lines, courses-- and vested interests. My ambivalence about this possibility is hard to exaggerate.
On the one hand, the genius of what has happened at good ethics centers is identified with their interdisciplinary character. And practical ethics is not a discipline in the same sense as, say, biology or philosophy understand themselves to be disciplines. One comes into the dialogue at the ethics center as a philosopher, theologian, journalist or lawyer. These professional identities are not checked at the door. Moreover, there is a practical political advantage to non-departmental status, as it somewhat lifts the center above the fray of the departmental competition for funds. And finally, one has a happily deescalated relationship with faculty when one is not responsible directly for their tenure, salary, course load and the like.

On the other hand, not all departments are made up of coherent disciplines, e.g., political science, music, religious studies, nor is it clear that methodological diversity is one of their weaknesses. Faculty working practical ethics have diverse foci of interest; they are also commonly concerned with an identifiable body of issues and literature. Indeed they may have more in common than many academic units. Nor are they really above the fray of the budget competition.
Most particularly, departments have remarkable staying power. They are means of perpetuating campus concern with a given topic or subject matter. Thus if we think ethics is a subject of ongoing concern to campuses, and we want that concern to be addressed over an extended period of time, we need to think about the question of departmentalization including the creation of special courses and a designated cluster of faculty.

This is scarcely an exiting point at which to end. I have tried to say that the study of ethics has, as the old commercial had it, come a long way baby. Some of us have enjoyed the ride. I wanted to claim that future work in ethics should involve ethicist getting their hands dirty and be willing to muck around with particularity, including the particularity of religion. And finally I shared some of my worries about the long term institutional support for our field, support that will be essential in the next 10 or 20 years. It was an honor to be asked to share these reflections at this place which has been such a model for what can and should be done.
The publication you are reading ends the ninth year of the Ethics Center's publication series. I have had the good fortune to be the editor from the beginning, except for the year I was on sabbatical, when Paul Farber took over.

How did the series begin? After the programs of public lectures had run for a while, the Directors of the Center began to realize that we were sponsoring some pretty good work. Alas, the spoken word is less than the grass, disappearing into memory and eventual oblivion as soon as it leaves the mouth. We directors thought there should be a record of the best of the Center's programs, and being academics, that implied to us that they be published. This of course required an editor, resources, decisions to be made, time to be spent reading manuscripts and proofs, delicate judgments about editorial matters and negotiations with authors, negotiations with printing services about price and quantity, trips to printing services to deliver the goods, more trips to pick up the
finished product etc etc. No one could have foreseen exactly what and how much would have to be done; certainly if I had foreseen it, someone else might have had the honor of service.

Why me? Very simple. Mike Pritchard has always had the principle that if you think something ought to be done, you ought to be willing to do it yourself. I think that principle may have gotten him into trouble from time to time, but I know he's used it pretty effectively to teach ethics lessons to some people. Anyway, I was one who strongly expressed the view that our programs were good enough to immortalize in print. And so I became editor.

Not everything has gone smoothly. Some of the lectures we hoped to publish were not available. Some authors had second thoughts. Not all authors proved adept at meeting deadlines. Some manuscripts turned out to be less exciting in cold type than they appeared to be in spoken lecture. Typos and devilish errors crept in, even after material had been carefully proofread. (One of the most horrendous occurred in our very second publication, a lecture on academic ethics given to the Center by none other than President
Haenicke. His title, so stated on the cover, was "Ethics in Academia." But the title page boldly proclaimed the visionary message, "Ethics Is Academia.")

We have been most fortunate in our authors. Our very first publication in Oct. 1987 was by Rachelle Hollander of the National Science Foundation. Subsequent authors, to name only a few, have included philosophers Richard DeGeorge, Bernard Gert, James Nickel, Laurence Mordekhai Thomas, Martin Benjamin, Adrienne Piper, Harriet Baber, Jan Narveson; religionist David Smith; sociologist Gilbert Geis; political theorists John Baker and Ann Saxenhouse; educationist Nona Lyons; lawyers Paul Denenfeld and Lucille Taylor.

Some notable local authors have been included, among them anthropologist Erika Loeffler Friedl, sociologist Sylvie Tourigny, Dr. John Hartline, philosopher Mike Pritchard, and myself. (A complete list of the series is printed in the back of every publication, including this one.)

Our publications are distributed free with membership, thanks to the generous support of a succession of Provosts and the former and present
Deans, Laurel Grotzinger of the Graduate School and Douglas Ferraro and Elise Jorgens of Arts and Sciences. All our authors are asked to include a bibliography for those readers who want to pursue the subject further. We hope those of you who receive these documents find them sometimes provocative, generally instructive, and always worth careful consideration.

I'd especially like to thank the graduate students, most but not all from philosophy, who have not only done all of the computer work and much of the leg work, but have contributed much patients, skill, and good sense as well:

Sue Coffey
Peggy Vandenberg
Charlie Marsh
Sharen Campbell
Lynn Osborn
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Indiana University
and
Douglas Ferraro
Western Michigan University
Michael Pritchard
Western Michigan University
Joseph Ellin
Western Michigan University

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George Washington University Medical Center
"Illusions of Individual Decision Making and Equity"
"The Challenge for Physicians in End of Life Care"

September 19
Nicholas Dixon, Ph.D. Prof. of Philosophy, Alma College
"The Morality of Intimate Faculty-Student Relationships"

September 20
Nicholas Dixon
"The Adversary Method in Law and Philosophy"

October 8
Joseph Ellin, Ph.D. Prof. of Philosophy, Western Michigan University
"Is Racial Preference Naked? Affirmative Action as Self-Imposed Moral Principle"
October 17

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Boston
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Winnie Veenstra Peace Lecture

November 4

Dianne Vaughan, Ph.D., Prof. of Sociology, Boston College
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November 8

Arthur Kohrman, M.D., University of Chicago
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