

ethics IN ACTION

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Confessions of a Pre-Med Pre-Law Major

Until I came to college I was socially and educationally engineered by my parents. Throughout high school, I was a pure automaton, directly programmed to take the maximum number of Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses. My parents felt they had figured out the exact calculus for getting me into a top-tier college and then into a great medical school. Being totally apathetic to anything beyond my weekend curfew, even to my possible future career, I played along. I never questioned why I had to take certain courses and only did community service work at the hospital because my parents made me. Did I do these things because of an excessive trust in my parents? A concession to futility? Complete arrogance? Who knows?

My first semester of college was wasted worrying about grades and being homesick instead of experiencing Duke and Durham. I was complacent in my Duke bubble—in my mind anything

beyond campus was an evil, no-entry zone where bad things took place. Sounds bad doesn't it? Well welcome to the perception of most Duke students. Fortunately for me, my eyes were opened early on in spring 2007 when I took my first two classes in the Ethics Certificate Program.

The first course was Peter Euben's *Living an Ethical Life*. Professor Euben's class was a discussion seminar that challenged all of us to test the moral boundaries of our thinking. Drawing on a variety of authors, from Nietzsche to Hannah Arendt, we explored how mundane, thoughtless actions—or even inactions—can be heavily laden with ethical behavior. These explorations provided us with an opportunity to be socially, economically, and politically critical of ourselves.

Through a particular class discussion on genocide and its prevalence even today, Professor Euben helped me become aware of my global surroundings. Having explored past and current

atrocities on the highest scale, I was able to put all of my minuscule grievances into perspective. Life could be so much worse.

It was Professor Euben's discussion of Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* that shook me out of my complacency with the world. Eichmann was Hitler's right-hand man during the Nazi regime. When he was put on trial after World War II, Eichmann claimed that he was just following orders and had done nothing wrong. His inability to put himself in the shoes of the executed, or his lack of "moral imagination" (a term I continue to attribute to Professor Euben even though he won't take ownership of it) showed me how a complete ignorance or indifference to the "way things are" does not excuse inaction.

I realized that my own lack of moral imagination had prevented me from ever caring about anything or anyone beyond myself or my

Director's Note



From its inception, the Kenan Institute for Ethics has sought to combine experience and analysis so that each informs the other and both provide opportunities for intellectual and moral growth. This combination requires a diverse community of faculty, students, and practitioners who encounter each other in and out of the classroom.

For students, entry into this community can begin at one of many points—including before they have formally become Duke students. In collaboration with the Duke Women's Center, we are about to begin the second year of Project Change, an eight-day pre-matriculation program for incoming freshmen on ethical leadership. Last year, more than 300 students applied for 20 spots.

Another key opportunity for students to join our community is through the Ethics Certificate Program. We are pleased to have just graduated our first class of Certificate holders—7 in all—and we are on track to graduate 23 next year. Total program enrollment is up 43% and our Gateway course, *Living an Ethical Life*, has seen a 200% increase in enrollment. In short, there is a real hunger on the part of our students for rigorous courses and for a community that links passion and purpose.

There is also a hunger for teachers who care deeply about the minds and spirits of our students, and none has done more in this regard than Peter Euben, the Kenan Distinguished Faculty Fellow. Euben created the Certificate Program's Gateway course and manages to both profoundly unsettle and inspire students. Poorav Rohatgi, an Ethics Certificate Program student, describes his experience with Peter Euben in the cover story.

Ethical issues are, of course, global in nature, and our students tackle thorny issues such as those at the intersection of

immigration, race, and nationhood by working with the youth refugee community in Dublin through our DukeEngage Dublin program. We also recently offered an Alternative Spring Break program that sent students to the historic leper colony on the barren island of Molokai to explore difficult issues in context.

Some students elect to try out one of these programs; many participate in several of them and go on to launch their own initiatives. In this way we are creating a real community of Institute-affiliated students to complement our ongoing efforts to infuse ethics across the campus, from film series and speakers to work with the Honor Council and Athletics.

Equally important, we are extending our community of faculty through a series of joint appointments (see the interview with Kieran Healy on page 4), a network of senior fellows, and a robust array of seminars and conferences. For instance, Senior Fellow Dan Ariely led a seminar on moral decision-making this year called "Almost Honest," which drew faculty from law, medicine, business, psychology, sociology, history, public policy, and philosophy; and Senior Fellow Ruth Grant convened a conference on "In Search of Goodness" in preparation for a forthcoming book. Read her reflections on goodness on page 3.

As these and other faculty and student programs grow, they will need a space where communities of inquiry can settle and cross-pollinate. Happily, even amidst the economic downturn, we are physically expanding to include new work, conference, and gathering spaces. To borrow from one definition of the Greek word for "ethos," we seek to make the Institute an "accustomed place" in which faculty, students, and practitioners can thrive. I invite you to visit us as we grow and to join us in creating this community.

— Noah Pickus

Confessions of a Pre-Med Pre-Law Major

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immediate circle of family and friends. Professor Euben had kindled my creative spirit, and I knew I wanted to do something. Now, how could I get involved in such a big project?

At the time, a fellow classmate was leading Duke's chapter of Amnesty International. I decided to join. After helping out with a film festival, I knew that human rights work was my second calling. The graphic documentaries on human sex trafficking and torture aroused in me empathy for others that I had never previously experienced. I never knew I was capable of expressing so much emotion for other suffering human beings with whom I held no prior relationship. Ever since, I have been deeply involved in many of Amnesty's campaigns, including *Stop*

Torture, and I am currently leading the chapter on campus.

The second course was Rom Coles' *Left, Right, and Center*. It explored the works of a number of philosophers from Burke to Locke, and really stretched our creative capacities to find the best mechanisms for an effective and inclusive local government. Professor Coles helped me become aware of my local surroundings in Durham. And he showed me that while debate and discussion are essential parts of a democracy, the most important component is engaged and reflective listening.

After a discussion on "receptivity," Professor Coles extended invitations to the class to attend a monthly meeting of Durham CAN (Congre-

gations, Associations, and Neighborhoods), a community organizing group and chapter of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). Mildly curious, I decided to attend.

I had only read about the highly valued principles of democracy—free speech, civic engagement, "one person, one vote," accountability, etc. To me, they meant nothing. I was certain that only the elites controlled the world, that power was only produced from money, and that in reality, the "one person, one vote" propaganda perpetuated inequality rather than equality. But as I observed the assembly, goose bumps ran down my body; I was experiencing democracy first hand.

Durham CAN was holding a pledge session

In Search of Goodness



What is “goodness?” Webster’s Dictionary defines it as a state of “moral excellence” or “virtue,” but fails to capture the elusive quality of the word. Is something that’s good always good? Can something or someone be mostly but not completely good? Can bad things become good?

In the end, it seems that while we can’t say exactly what goodness is, we believe we know it when we see it, and Professor Ruth Grant wants to know exactly why that is.

“The idea of ‘goodness’ is an elusive one,” says Grant, Professor of Political Science and Philosophy and Senior Fellow in the Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University. She has convened a group of faculty from a variety of disciplines, including philosophy, political science, psychology, theology, and classical studies, to study this indefinable state and to determine what and how we think about goodness.

The group is investigating such topics as whether or not there is a universal concept of goodness; the relationships between goodness and innocence, friendship, and altruism; goodness in the context of global crises; and how our emotions and consciousness impact our concepts of goodness and morality.

Egoism and Altruism

Grant herself tackles the topic of altruism. This selfless concern for the welfare of others is not difficult to identify as a “good” quality, especially when it is presented in opposition to egoism.

“To act egoistically—to benefit oneself—comes naturally to human beings,” says Grant. “It requires no particular education and deserves no special praise.” In contrast, altruism is seen as a highly revered practice that often exemplifies goodness.

But is altruism always good?

Grant doesn’t think so, and she offers the example of the Shel Silverstein book *The Giving Tree* to explain why. In it, a boy and a tree have a special relationship. The boy plays in the tree’s branches, rests in her shade, and enjoys her fruit. The tree gets great joy out of the boy’s company and his enjoyment of her gifts, and the two share a solid friendship and mutual love. As the boy grows older he neglects the tree, except when he needs her resources. The tree gives all of herself to the boy, until she is nothing but a stump, at which point she is “happy...but not really.” When the boy returns to the tree as an old man

needing a place to rest, she offers her stump as a seat and she is happy once again.

Critical response to this story shows a wide range of extremely strong and opposing reactions. Some critics see the tree’s willingness to give everything of herself as an ideal form of goodness. Others consider her selflessness to be masochistic and self-destructive in that it does significant damage to her physical and mental state while encouraging the boy’s selfishness. So is there a point when being good, at least in the altruistic sense, is actually bad?

Grant believes there is. “Nothing can be good that is destructive of psychic health or what we might call ‘flourishing.’ This is the point that divides two conceptions of goodness,” she says. “The altruistic view says goodness is a concern for others that necessitates self-sacrifice. The alternative view says that goodness is caring for oneself as a means to be able to thrive as a human being, which includes caring relationships with others.”

Moral Conversions

But it is not only the *definition* of goodness that remains a significant question. Grant’s faculty group is also examining the *nature* of goodness—how it comes and goes, how it responds to circumstance, and how it surfaces in those who were previously considered bad or evil.

David Wong, Susan Fox Beischer and George D. Beischer Professor of Philosophy at Duke, is studying moral conversions, including whether or not it is possible for someone with a poor moral record to become good.

“The hopeful among us would like to believe in the possibility of moral conversion,” Wong says. “I do believe such hope is warranted.”

He offers an example in the case of Oscar Schindler, whose story became widely known through the Thomas Keneally novel *Schindler’s Ark* and later through the movie *Schindler’s List*. Schindler was a factory owner and war profiteer with a reputation for being a “swindler” who relied on charm and bribery to get what he wanted. He was also a womanizer who not only cheated on his wife but often did so with little concern for concealing his unfaithfulness.

In the early 1940s, this selfish rogue experienced an about-face and risked his fortune and his life to save more than 1,000 of his Jewish factory workers during the Nazi occupation of Poland, using whatever means necessary.

Most would readily agree that Schindler was “a good man” based on his willingness to sacrifice for the sake of others. But what was the nature of his change? Was he a bad man who did a good deed, or in saving the lives of so many did he become good? Does it matter if the means he used to accomplish that good deed were morally questionable? If he never again did a good deed, would we still consider him a good man?

Wong argues that despite Schindler’s less than moral methods, including his willingness to bribe and deceive others, his change “remains wondrous enough that I am still inclined to call it a conversion.”

Beyond defining what counts as a moral conversion, Wong is also investigating the question of exactly how moral conversions happen. If it is indeed possible for someone’s moral compass to change dramatically for the better, perhaps it’s also possible to find and even create these miraculous opportunities for “becoming good.”

Beyond Goodness

Ultimately the group’s work will result in a forthcoming book on goodness edited by Grant. The project is sponsored by the Kenan Institute for Ethics, and the new book, *In Search of Goodness*, will serve as a complement to Grant’s 2006 title, *Naming Evil, Judging Evil*.

Grant sees the book as a way to expand and deepen the discussion of goodness while addressing a growing attention to the subject. “There has been an increase in the emphasis on ethics, and particularly on goodness, in both the academy and general culture,” she says.

She points to work in neuroscience, where scientists are mapping the brain to determine which structures are associated with good behavior. Trends within higher education show that colleges and universities are reassessing their role in the moral development of their students. Even foundations are funding studies to determine whether being good will make a person happy, she says.

Ultimately she hopes the completed book will stimulate further conversation and reflection beyond our usual ways of thinking about goodness.

“I would like to see us move beyond some of our familiar conceptual dichotomies to reach a better understanding of goodness,” she says. “We tend to take for granted that we know what it means and how it operates.” ■

— Aimee Rodriguez

Confessions of a Pre-Med Pre-Law Major

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with all the mayoral and city council candidates, requesting promises for possible future action in office in the presence of the media. I realized that money doesn't beget power; people beget power. My pessimistic view of the world and complacent apathy was changing, and I wanted more. I approached Professor Coles to see how I could get involved:

"What would you like to do?" he asked ecstatically.

"I want to help people out."

He sighed, "Don't you think that's a little arrogant—to think that you are so above someone that you need to help them, that they need your help? Community organizing is not about handouts or temporary help-outs. You help others help themselves."

My jaw dropped because he was absolutely right. What appalled me even more was how much I abhorred pretentious people and here I was exhibiting the same behavior. Ever since that conversation, I have been active in Durham CAN and have taken up the position of junior community organizer.

One important tool I have gained from my experience with Durham CAN is the "relational meeting." A relational meeting consists of a one-on-one, face-to-face conversation where you engage the other person in a deep discussion on self-interest: What passion or motivation drives the other person in doing what he or she does? I've learned that relational meetings can develop

powerful connections between people regardless of their political and economic positions if you simply listen and reflect—what Professor Coles calls receptivity.

After that semester, my new idealistic mindset served me well for quite some time. I was putting everything in perspective and having the time of my life organizing in Durham and fighting for basic human rights. Everything was going smoothly until Gerald Taylor, the Southeast IAF Director, paid Durham CAN a visit and challenged me with a mock scenario in which he played the mayor and I played the community organizer:

"I have allocated \$100,000 to distribute in any way to the county. The Latino community badly needs a public servant post whose job is to educate the community about immigrant rights—a projected \$55,000 cost. The African American community wishes to improve the bus system—a projected \$40,000 cost. The Caucasian community wishes for more police officers—a projected \$70,000 cost. What do you do?"

As the community organizer (and still very much the typical idealist), I requested additional funds to be able to satisfy everyone's needs. The "mayor" rejected the proposal, and infuriated, decided to send all the money towards the production of a new football stadium. Instead of having someone benefit, everyone lost.

This lesson of balancing pragmatism with idealism became even more evident in Suzanne

Shanahan's *Organizations in Crisis* seminar, the capstone course for the Ethics Certificate Program. We were presented with example after example of idealistic individuals wishing to reform their organizations when nothing was broken in the first place, not only exacerbating a crisis but also losing their jobs in the process. I realized that sometimes it is important to learn to work with what you have and play within the system's rules. Sometimes consistently taking up the role of the white knight will kill your energy and passion and destroy your endeavors.

The Ethics Certificate Program has created so many opportunities for me—including a community organizing internship this summer in Dublin, Ireland, with Professor Shanahan—and it has connected me with wonderful departments and people, such as my political science theory major advisor, Ruth Grant. (That's right, I'm pre-law, not pre-med.)

As my junior year comes to an end, I can really see how I've matured throughout my time at Duke and as part of the Ethics Certificate Program. The program has challenged and developed my core beliefs, both in the classroom and at related events and discussions. I've gone from being a totally apathetic automaton, to an overly idealistic white knight, to a pragmatic and balanced leader. For the moment, I'm happy where I am. ■

— Poorav K. Rohatgi, '10

Doing Ethics: Kieran Healy

Kieran Healy will join Duke in fall 2009 as Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and the Kenan Institute for Ethics. He is the author of *Last Best Gifts* (2006), a book about the social organization of blood and organ donation in the United States and Europe. Other published work has focused on the relationship between information technology and cultural policy, wage growth, and unemployment in labor markets; debates about structure and agency in social theory; and the moral order of market society. *Ethics in Action* editor Aimee Rodriguez talked with Healy from his current home in California.

You call yourself an economic sociologist. So what exactly do you study?

I study economic exchange from the point of view of sociology. My research interests are at the intersection of economic sociology, the sociology of culture, and the sociology of organizations.

I got into it in part because I'm fascinated by goods that are hard to put a cash value on—like blood or human organs or genetic material—and by the way the exchange of these goods is organized. I don't have a personal story about donating a kidney or anything like that to

directly explain my interest, but the stories of the people I've met since working in this area have been more than compelling.

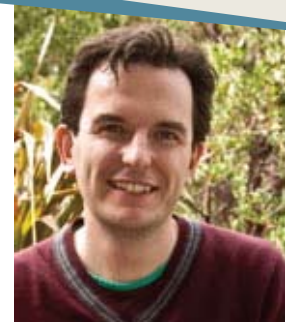
One of your major areas of work is on "the moral order of market society." Can you talk about that?

It's basically trying to take a fresh perspective on what are really some very old questions in social science: What sort of moral effect does capitalist society have on people and institutions? What kind of moral order does capitalism rest on? For

some scholars, markets are civilizing institutions, while for others they are terribly destructive. A third group argues that markets can be unexpectedly fragile. You don't have to look too hard to find people arguing for each of these views in the middle of the present crisis.

"Civilizing" because it's within one's best interest to act ethically within the marketplace?

Yes—the positive view follows the idea that trade brings peace between both people and countries,



that it essentially serves as a much better alternative to theft or war. There's a society-wide version of the argument that talks about how trade between nations is pacifying. And then there's an individual-level version which claims that the virtues promoted by trade and market behavior are civilizing virtues of respect and prudence and so on.

Then you have the counterpart view, which is that markets are destructive and morally corrosive—that they are fundamentally based on exploitation and encourage envy.

Recently economic sociologists have been reassessing these arguments. It might seem odd to have sociologists talking about the economy, but the idea that economic life is intensely social is right there in Adam Smith's work, in big and small ways. For instance, he has this idea that offering money to someone is like having a kind of conversation with them. You are trying to persuade them to part with something, and either they're convinced or they're not. Cash transactions, even really abstract ones, are ultimately social exchanges.

So sociologists look at the market—whether they see it as a positive or negative force—as a series of social exchanges?

While a philosopher or an ethicist will look at the explicitly moral questions first—Is this transaction good or bad? Are there some goods that are always morally wrong to exchange?—a sociologist is interested in how people themselves make sense of the exchanges that they engage in, how economic life is organized and categorized in general, and how those two things are related.

Sociologists don't make the ethical questions go away by not focusing on them immediately—if nothing else, people are constantly moralizing about markets—but you start from a different place. Take the case of blood or organ donation. Why is this sort of exchange classified as a gift here and not there? Why do some countries have many donors and others much fewer? Where do different ideas about the moral obligation to donate come from? What is it about a society—its institutional organization, history, or culture—that would explain all this variation?

Even though you're a sociologist, it sounds like an interdisciplinary approach is very much a part of your work.

These are big and complicated questions, so you need to know a reasonable amount about perspectives beyond your own. With blood and organ donation, psychologists ask what makes individual donors special or different: What are their motivations? Do they have a different view of morality? Ethicists worry about whether organ sales are morally right or wrong. Economists want to know how an ideal market for organs would work. And so on. You can't just ignore that stuff, even if you believe your own perspective has something pretty useful to offer.

You'll be teaching a course on the morality of the market here at Duke. What will be your approach?

After the first few weeks, when I've offered a number of different frameworks for thinking about the topic, I want to leave the door open for people to react based on their own interests. There's a lot of exciting work being done on the moral order of markets right now. I'd like to spark students' interest by getting them to think about these ethical questions as also empirical problems—problems they can investigate through observation and experiment in addition to reflection. These issues play out in everyday life and they are also very important to social theory. Whether you care about the growth of intellectual property or the cash value of care work or the moral dimension of credit rating, there's an awful lot you can do in this area.

Will this be your first time living in North Carolina?

Yes, and my first time living in the South. I grew up in Ireland and came to the United States for graduate school. I've lived in New Jersey, Connecticut, and Arizona so far, and now I've just spent a year in California, so I've been getting a pretty good tour of the country.

I'm looking forward to being in North Carolina—both at Duke and as part of the Kenan Institute for Ethics as well. There'll be some challenges—my wife is a philosopher teaching at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, so we'll have to decide which basketball religion to bring the children up in. That's a serious moral problem in itself.

Tell me about your contributions to the Crooked Timber blog.

Crooked Timber [crookedtimber.org] has been in existence for over five years now, having grown out of a group of people who were following each other's online writing. We have ten or so regular contributors living all over the place. Most but not all of us are academics, so there's some coherence from that side, but we also have our own interests and various bees in our various bonnets.

When we started out, we didn't know if anyone would pay attention, but now we get about 10,000 readers a day, and we have a group of regular commenters on the site and interlocutors on other blogs. It's not an academic seminar, and it's not just trivia—although it can tend toward either of those things. It's turned out to be a forum where interesting ideas get batted around a lot. More than once, journalists reading about topics we've been arguing about have picked up an idea for a story.

Yes, I saw that your post about male academics thanking their wives for typing their manuscripts was picked up in *The New York Times*.

I guess that's on the trivia side! But yes, often the post or thread that generates the biggest reaction isn't what you think will get picked up. You write up something you think is particularly serious or really funny and it gets no reaction, but then something else that you thought of offhandedly elicits a huge response. It's not that different from leading a discussion in a classroom. You try to generate a few sparks but you never quite know what's going to catch. ■

Kieran Healy's articles have appeared in numerous journals including the American Sociological Review, the Journal of Political Philosophy, and the American Journal of Sociology. He has taught at the University of Arizona and was a research fellow at Australian National University. He was awarded a Residential Fellowship with the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University in 2008. Healy earned an undergraduate degree in sociology and geography at the National University of Ireland (Cork) and a PhD in sociology from Princeton University.

Moral Development

What, How, and Why?

Character education programs—those seeking to influence students’ ethical sensibilities—are typically seen as a positive component of any K-12 curriculum. They look to promote honesty, integrity, ethical thought, reflection, and a host of other attributes that fall under the category of moral development. But what constitutes “character education,” and how do we know if such programs are successful?

Rebecca Dunning admits that the answers to these questions are not readily apparent. Dunning is Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Duke University and coauthor of new research from the Kenan Institute for Ethics on moral development in schools and communities.

“The terms ‘character education’ and ‘moral development’ are ambiguous and used interchangeably, and there are all kinds of different programs that fall under the umbrella of one or the other,” she says.

Dunning, along with Institute Director Noah Pickus and Associate Director Suzanne Shanahan, recently completed a study that found that while there are hundreds if not thousands of character education programs in existence, it’s difficult to identify exactly how or if they make a difference. The study was based on a review of the Institute’s own middle school character education program piloted in North Carolina between 2005 and 2008.

The Institute’s program was designed to positively influence middle school environments by instilling a sense of individual personal responsibility and reflection and by encouraging civic engagement. The review found that the program met with high anecdotal success. Yet it also revealed the difficulty of determining the effect of not only the Institute’s program but of character education in schools overall, since even the largest programs with significant funding find it hard to measure impact quantitatively.



Such challenges are common for character education programs across the board, says Dunning. “Character education is truly a wonderful area of work and it involves so many great programs,” says Dunning, “but the field is still a mystery in terms of what programs work and exactly how they work.”

The study identifies three key challenges to the field and the areas in which significant questions remain: defining character education, program implementation, and determining and measuring program success.

Announcements



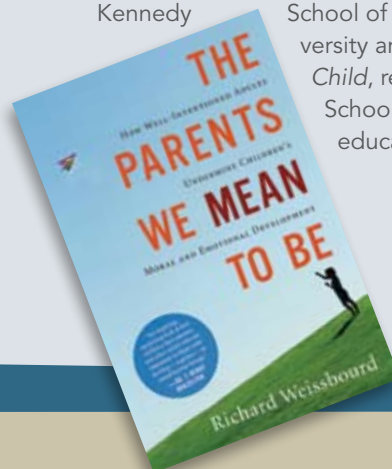
2009 Kenan Lecture in Ethics

Ian Buruma will deliver the 2009 Kenan Distinguished Lecture in Ethics on Thursday, October 15. Buruma is Henry R. Luce Professor of Democracy, Human Rights, and Journalism at Bard College and was voted one of the Top 100 Public Intellectuals by the *Foreign Policy/Prospect* magazines. He writes for a number of major publications, including *The New York Review of Books*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, and *The Guardian*.

Kids Shape Parents’ Morals

Institute Advisory Board member Richard Weissbourd’s new book, *The Parents We Mean To Be: How Well-Intentioned Adults Undermine Children’s Moral and Emotional Development*, describes how the intense, crisis-filled, and profoundly joyous process of raising a child can be a powerful force for parents’ own moral development. Weissbourd is Lecturer on Education at the Graduate School of Education and at the Kennedy

School of Government at Harvard University and the author of *The Vulnerable Child*, recently named by the American School Board Journal one of the top ten education books of all time.



Visit dukeethics.org for more information.

The first challenge is in determining which programs constitute character education. Should a program whose focus is on improving students' moral compass—looking at individual virtues like honesty or courage—fall under the same umbrella as one intent on correcting deviant behavior, such as drug use, teen pregnancy, or bullying? Dunning says that currently the field considers both types of programs—each with its own implementation practices and quantitative measurement possibilities—to be part of character education, making defining a successful approach that much more difficult.

The second challenge within the field of character education relates to the ways in which the actual programs are carried out. The majority of programs are targeted to individuals and are delivered via classroom lessons, Dunning says. This kind of implementation may be used because it's easier to gather evaluation measurements from individuals in the form of post-program surveys and interviews, or because it's easier to carry out this kind of program within the context of the K-12 curriculum.

Finally, defining success and determining how it's measured stands as the third significant challenge to character education programs. "It's easy

to measure teen pregnancy, for example, so the off-the-shelf, individual-based character education program in the school that had a reduction in teen pregnancy gets nominated as a successful, 'evidence-based' program, even if it is not really much about moral development at all," Dunning says.

When a program is termed as evidence-based and shows success based on narrowly defined objectives, whatever practices used in that particular program get written up as "best practices" for all character education programs, says Dunning. "We can't rely on those practices to necessarily teach us how to accomplish moral development in youth in a broad way."

The authors found, for example, that initiatives that are community- rather than individual-based may hold more promise in terms of helping students become good people. "We believe that character education programs should encourage students to build relationships within their own communities—their schools, their neighborhoods—as a way to show them that they can have a positive impact in the world," Dunning says. "This kind of community-based approach has a greater potential to promote academic achievement, civic engagement, and an

ethical sensibility that will travel with students beyond the bounds of the school."

While the authors argue that community-based measures offer better opportunities for helping students "become good by doing good," they acknowledge that such initiatives may still face the same challenges within the character education field. They may be difficult to design and implement since they require ongoing support from members of the community, and they may be just as challenging when it comes to measuring success as other, more individual-based programs.

"Ultimately we've learned that character education remains a worthwhile undertaking, but we still have much more to learn about exactly how to define, implement, and evaluate such programs so they have the desired effect," says Dunning. "As of yet, there are no easy answers for how to best engender a sense of collective responsibility and moral purpose in youth—objectives that we believe are at the heart of character education." ■

— Aimee Rodriguez

WEB EXTRA: Read Dunning, Pickus, and Shannah's full study, *Moral Development in Schools and Communities*, at dukeethics.org.

THE KENAN INSTITUTE FOR ETHICS
at Duke University

An interdisciplinary "think and do" tank committed to understanding and addressing real-world ethical challenges facing individuals, organizations and societies worldwide.

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Case Studies in Ethics

The Case Studies in Ethics align with the Institute's research and outreach interests. Currently our collection is focused in three areas:

Institutions in Crisis
The Institutions in Crisis case studies have emerged from a larger research project that explores how and why ethical crises arise across a range of institutions: religion, the military, higher education, and business.

QUICK LINKS

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HIGHLIGHT

Case Studies in Ethics

The Institute has launched its online archive of Case Studies in Ethics. The collection includes Institutions in Crisis cases that have emerged from a larger research project on how and why ethical crises arise across a range of institutions; Business Ethics cases that have been developed and tested in an introductory business ethics course for Duke undergraduate students; and Teaching Caseletters for situation-specific training needs. Visit dukeethics.org for more information.



In Brief

“We’ve had a tsunami of excuses, now we need a tsunami of honest.”

— William Cohan, author of *House of Cards: A Tale of Hubris and Wretched Excess on Wall Street*, at a discussion with Duke students, faculty, and staff about the culture of greed and excess on Wall Street that contributed significantly to the financial crisis

“As a school, we’ve done a lot of work with human rights. But you can’t have kids saving Darfur and isolating a peer in the lunchroom. It all has to go together.”

— Scarsdale Middle School Principle Michael McDermott, on a program within his school that teaches students empathy, part of a larger story in *The New York Times* on “grooming children to be better citizens and leaders”

“The ethical is in many ways about an engagement with the impossible. It is not about coming up with a set of rules or a set of values that we all agree upon.”

— Ranjana Khanna, Margaret Taylor Smith Director of Women’s Studies and Professor of English and Women’s Studies at Duke University, discussing the globalization of higher education at the Institute’s 2009 Public Ethics Symposium

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