

## **Award Title**

Ethics Awareness Week: An educational event to engage students in discussions of ethical issues in the University and the Work Place

## **Awards Categories**

Housing, Residence Life, Contracted Services, Judicial and related

## **Executive Summary**

Ethics Awareness Week (EAW) at California State University, Bakersfield, comprises a week-long series of presentations provided by faculty and community members, was introduced in Spring, 2010 to demonstrate an ethical framework to students, increase dialogue among students and faculty on ethical issues outside of the classroom, and engage the Bakersfield community to discuss ethical issues occurring within the community and globally.

Ethics Awareness Week (EAW) contributes to the University's goal of: students will possess and demonstrate an ethical framework. This program partners with Academic Affairs and the community to provide students a holistic ethical experience.

While OSSR is the primary beneficiary of EAW, the program also has a positive impact on fostering collaborations among units within Student Affairs as well as having positive benefits on the operations of these units. For example, the incidence of violations related to electronic media has dropped significantly in our residence halls since the inception of EAW. ASi, Student Involvement & Leadership, Food Service, and CECE also contribute to the success of the program and, in turn, receive positive public relations among students. The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Student Union, ASi, Office of Housing and Residential Life, and CECE all collaborate on EAW.

EAW has been successful in partnering with Academic Affairs, engaging faculty from various disciplines, the First Year Experience Program, the Kegley Institute of Ethics, the College Assistance and Migrant Program, and the Library. The planning committee identifies potential topics of interest to students and faculty members are then invited to participate based on their expertise. Faculty members recognize the value of this event and have contacted OSSR to determine if there are opportunities to participate in the event.

A few campuses within the CSU system have introduced the concept of Academic Integrity. At CSUB, we broadened the concept to look beyond Academic Integrity to encompass Ethics as a whole. This affords students the opportunity to learn about ethics outside the classroom and understand ethical challenges, dilemmas, or choices faced in professional settings.

Ethics Awareness Week is supported by funding from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs for future events. Interest has also been expressed by local hospitals to present on the topic of Health Care Ethics during Fall, 2011. Acquiring grant funding from external sources has become a top priority for the EAW planning committee.

## **Award Description**

### Program Description and Outline:

Positive impact of student learning, transitions, retention, and/or success. Ethics Awareness Week (EAW) at California State University, Bakersfield, was introduced by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) last year. Historically, the role of the OSRR had been case management of judicial incidents. However, in dealing with millennial students and the increased use of technology (e.g., illegal file sharing), moving beyond case management to proactive and creative approaches for students to understand ethical decision-making was crucial. Thus, the EAW, which comprises a week-long series of presentations provided by faculty and community members, was introduced in Spring, 2010 to:

- Demonstrate an ethical framework to students
- Increase dialogue among students and faculty on ethical issues outside of the classroom, and
- Engage the Bakersfield community to discuss ethical issues occurring within the community and globally.

Students are central to the success of this event and can volunteer to be a session host, volunteering to staff information tables to publicize the EAW, and passing out surveys at the beginning of the workshops and announce housekeeping information.

Relevance to Institutional Mission. Ethics Awareness Week (EAW) contributes to the University's goal of: students will possess and demonstrate an ethical framework. This program partners with Academic Affairs and the community to provide students a holistic ethical experience. EAW collaborated with the Center for Community Engagement and Career Education (CECE), resulting in successful partnerships with employers from the community. Companies such as Aera Energy LLC, one of California's largest oil and gas producers headquartered in Bakersfield, and Jim Burke Ford participated to talk to students about building an ethical framework and its transformation to the workforce.

Demonstration of success in addressing student needs and/or critical campus issues. An EAW planning committee has been formed to understand campus and student needs. The committee is made up of the Interim Vice President for Student Affairs, Director of the First year Experience Program (faculty), Director of the Kegley Institute of Ethics (faculty), Director of CECE, Director of the College Assistance and Migrant Program, First-Year Experience Librarian, Director of OSSR, and a representative from ASi. The committee has been crucial in identifying the needs of the campus and students in light of recent issues affecting the University and the larger community.

Importance to one or more program areas included in this category. While OSSR is the primary beneficiary of EAW, the program also has a positive impact on fostering collaborations among units within Student Affairs as well as having positive benefits on the operations of these units. For example, the incidence of violations related to electronic media has dropped significantly in

our residence halls since the inception of EAW. ASi, Student Involvement & Leadership, Food Service, and CECE also contribute to the success of the program and, in turn, receive positive public relations among students. The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Student Union, ASi, Office of Housing and Residential Life, and CECE all collaborate on EAW. For the past two events, the Student Union has waived its fees for renting the room where all the presentations are hosted as a contributor to the success of this event. In sum, EAW helps build cooperation among Student Affairs' units and provides a high level of visibility for OSSR and Student Affairs among students, faculty, staff, and administration.

Collaboration with academic affairs and other departments. EAW has been successful in partnering with Academic Affairs, engaging faculty from various disciplines, the First Year Experience Program, the Kegley Institute of Ethics, the College Assistance and Migrant Program, and the Library. The planning committee identifies potential topics of interest to students and faculty members are then invited to participate based on their expertise. Faculty members recognize the value of this event and have contacted OSSR to determine if there are opportunities to participate in the event.

In Fall of 2010, the theme for the event was "Understanding Ethics In Your Discipline" and 9 faculty members from Criminal Justice, Business and Public administration, Religious Studies and Philosophy, and Child, Adolescent, and Family studies participated by presenting workshops during this event.

In Fall, 2010, the EAW collaborated with the First-Year Experience program to attract freshman students to the workshops. To ensure that freshmen take advantage of this opportunity, a Passport was introduced by the First-Year program in which students have their individual passport stamped for attending educational events for a chance to win a prize. According to student surveys, in Fall, 2010, 46 freshman students attended one or more of the EAW workshops compared to Spring, 2010 in which only 14 freshman students attended one or more workshops.

Originality and Creativity. A few campuses within the CSU system have introduced the concept of Academic Integrity. At CSUB, we broadened the concept to look beyond Academic Integrity to encompass Ethics as a whole. This affords students the opportunity to learn about ethics outside the classroom and understand ethical challenges, dilemmas, or choices faced in professional settings. An example of an opportunity to understand ethical challenges in a professional setting was a panel on "Ethics in Early Child Care" from the Child, Adolescent and Family studies program. The panel included graduate students, faculty, and employers.

Effective use of technology and other resources. Fall 2011 will be the third year of EAW, which will include a panel on Social Media and Ethics. One creative use of technology will be to allow students to use social media such as Facebook to ask questions during this event. This panel will inform students about the appropriate uses of social media in an educational institution.

Innovative practical use of research and/or assessment and linking to learning outcome. One of the goals of Ethics Awareness Week is to achieve the University's Learning Outcome which states: The student will possess and demonstrate an ethical framework. The theme for the first

year of this event was titled “Carrying Ethics from College to your Workplace.” Prior to this event, CSUB invited employers to participate in discussing this theme and potential topics. Employers such as Jim Burke Ford of Bakersfield, State Farm Insurance, and Aera Energy attended the meeting and volunteered to present workshops during the week. Some of the workshops presented during this event included The Transition of Ethics from School to the Workplace, Laying the Ethical ground work...what is your degree worth?, and Community Leaders and Ethics: Q & A Panel. In the second event, the theme was “Understanding Ethics in your discipline” as surveys from the first event indicated that students wanted to hear discussions related to ethics in various disciplines. This event brought together CSUB faculty, graduate students, and employers to provide a framework to understanding the dilemmas of professional ethics. Some of the workshops presented during this event included Then and Now: Ethical Dilemmas in Criminal Justice, Ethics of Journalism: and Ethics in Early Child Care: In both the first and second event, the University’s Learning Outcome centered on an ethical framework has been the primary consideration in developing topics and content for EAW programs.

Evidence of sustainability.Ethics Awareness Week is supported by funding from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs for future events. Interest has also been expressed by local hospitals to present on the topic of Health Care Ethics during Fall, 2011. Acquiring grant funding from external sources has become a top priority for the committee.

### **Assessment Data**

In 2010, CSUB’s Office of Student Conduct was renamed the Office of Student Rights & Responsibilities (OSRR). This change was reflective of the University’s desire to emphasize programs, services, and approaches to student conduct issues that are less punitive and more preventive and educational. One such program aimed at educating students about ethical behavior in college and professional settings is Ethics Awareness Week (EAW). Assessment is an important component of this event and data collected from surveys of students who participated in EAW events were used to measure student learning outcomes and to improve subsequent events. University’s Learning Outcome Goal:

Students will possess and demonstrate an ethical framework.

Ethics Awareness Week Goals:

- Demonstrate an ethical framework to students,
- Increase dialogue among students and faculty on ethical issues outside of the classroom, and • Engage the Bakersfield community to discuss ethical issues occurring within the community and globally.

Assessment data from Fall, 2010 are utilized for the purpose of this assessment. The following were the topics presented by faculty and various community members:

- Ethical Dilemmas in Criminal Justice

- Ethics of Journalism
- Beyond Understanding: Embracing Ethics in your Discipline
- Professional Ethics Forum
- Ethics in Early Child Care

There were 83 students who completed the surveys during Fall 2010. Of these, 27.7% were male and 69.9% were females (CSUB's student body is approximately 65% female). The students ranged in age from under 20 to over 35 years with 65% of the students being under 20. Regarding class standing, 54 (55%) of the students were freshman, 8 (9.6%) were sophomores, 11 (13.3%) were juniors, 16 (19.3%) were seniors, and 1 (1.2%) was post-baccalaureate.

The results of the survey follow (NOTE: Some students did not respond to all questions and, accordingly, not all percentages total 100%):

The Workshop enhanced my skills or developed new skills in the content area. How?

Responses to this question indicated that 34 students (41%) strongly agreed that the workshop enhanced their skills or helped them develop new skills in the content area, 44 students (53%) agreed that the workshop enhanced their skills or helped them develop new skills in the content area, and 2 students (2.4%) disagreed. Below are some open-ended statements from students attending the various presentations:

“Clarified the importance of ethics,” “Defined ethics in media well,” “I did not know much of ethics in the CJ (Criminal Justice) system,” “Good information on many areas of children,” “Know consequences in journalism in the field of plagiarism,” “Showed how ethics plays a major role in everyday life,” “How valuable and important trust is,” “It's given me a new perspective.”

The information provided will be useful to me in: (a) school (b) workplace, and (c) everyday decision making Responses to this question indicated that for the category of school, 39 students (43%) strongly agreed that the information will be useful to them, 30 students (36.1%) agreed that the information will be useful to them, and 2 students (2.4%) disagreed that the information will be useful to them.

For the category of workplace, 42 students (51%) strongly agreed that the information presented will be useful, 21 students (25.3%) agreed that the information presented will be useful, and 2 students (2.4%) disagreed.

For the category of everyday decision-making, 38 students (46%) strongly agreed that the information will be useful, 23 students (28%) agreed that the information will be useful, 5 students (6%) disagreed, and 1 student (1.2%) strongly disagreed. The presenter(s) was engaging and connected with the audience. Responses to this question indicated that 44 students (53%) strongly agreed that the presenters were engaging and connected with the audience, 31 students

(37%) agreed, 2 students (2.4%) disagreed and 3 students (2.6%) strongly disagreed. The presenter(s) was knowledgeable on the subject: Responses to this question indicated that 59 students (71%) strongly agreed that the presenters were knowledgeable, 19 students (23%) agreed, and 1 student (1.2%) strongly disagreed.

This topic should be presented at the next Ethics Awareness Week events:

**Ethical Dilemmas in Criminal Justice:** Responses to this question indicated that 19 students (23%) strongly agreed that this topic should be presented again, 8 students (10%) agreed, and 1 student (1.2%) strongly disagreed.

**Ethics of Journalism:** Responses to this question indicated that 7 students (8.4%) strongly agreed that this topic should be presented again and 5 students (6%) agreed.

**Beyond Understanding: Embracing Ethics in your Discipline:** Responses to this question indicated that 2 students (2.4%) strongly agreed that this information should be presented again, 2 students (2.4%) agreed, and 3 students (3.6%) disagreed.

**Professional Ethics Forum:** Responses to this question indicated that 5 students (6%) strongly agreed that this topic should be presented again, and 4 students (4.9%) agreed

**Ethics in Early Child Care:** Responses to this question indicated that 11 students (13%) strongly agreed that this topic should be presented again, 4 students (4.9%) agreed, and 1 student (1.2%) strongly disagreed.

How did you find out about the Ethics Awareness Week event?

**Website:** 20%. An Ethics Awareness Week website is developed in which the program agenda for the week and prize giveaways are posted.

**Faculty:** 58%. Faculty are an integral component to the success of this event. Extra credit opportunities are provided by the faculty for students to attend the various presentations.

**Informational tables around campus:** 17%. Tables are set up and run by students during the entire week to provide information about the event.

**Flyers:** 16%. Flyers are posted around campus to create awareness.

**FYE Passport:** 45%. First-Year Experience passports have been a great promotional tool for students to attend the various presentations.

What other topics would you like to see for the next Ethics Awareness Week events? The information is verbatim from the survey.

- Ethics in Sports

- Ethics in Nursing
- Medical Practitioner: Ethical duties on and off duty
- Ethics in Parenting and Marriage
- Ethics in Teaching

#### Use of assessment data

As noted above, assessment is critical to evaluating outcomes of EAW and to improve subsequent events. The data indicate that, in general, students have reacted positively to the information and perspectives presented during EAW. Moreover, EAW has become the focal point for achieving the University's Learning Outcome of "Students will possess and demonstrate an ethical framework."

Survey data from EAW participants also inform decision-making regarding topics of interest to students for the planning committee to consider in developing the program for subsequent events. For example, feedback from last year's EAW resulted in topics for 2011 including Ethics in Sports, Social Media and Ethics, and Health Care Ethics as well as broader topics such as The Ethics of Justice and Choices and Relationships as the Context for Ethics.