

E.T.H.I.C.S. (Engaging in Thought about Individual & Community Standards)

The primary mission of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities is to uphold the non-academic, behavioral standards of the University community as described in the Student Conduct Code. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities at Florida State seeks to enhance the educational mission of the University by promoting and investing in students' ethical development and personal growth. Research indicates that students make significant strides in their moral development during their college years and that learning occurs best when placed within the context of the student experience (Chickering & Gamson, 1987, Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). In an effort to uphold the mission of the office and enhance student learning, E.T.H.I.C.S. was established and offered as a sanction for students in violation of the Student Conduct Code. The goal of the Student Rights and Responsibilities E.T.H.I.C.S. Course is to engage students in intentional conversations about values that guide their behavior, to examine their process of ethical decision-making and their role as a student in the Florida State University community.

Listed below are the learning outcomes for E.T.H.I.C.S.:

- Students will have increased self-awareness of ethical concepts and how they impact their decision making.
- Students will have increased self-awareness of how their decision making impacts the FSU community.
- Students will learn to consider the outcomes of their choices prior to acting upon them.
- Students will have increased self-awareness of their role in the FSU community and greater community.

Structure of course:

E.T.H.I.C.S. is set up as a 2 hour, 2 day workshop. Typically, the course has under ten students at a time to provide a more intimate, comfortable environment for all students to engage in conversation. The first day of the course focuses on clarification of ethical terms and challenges students to define their own values. On the second day, the concept of individual ethics is connected to University and community expectations and challenges students to reflect on their role in the community. The course utilizes a workbook which includes definitions and multiple exercises for participation. Facilitators follow a power point presentation created by the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, but typically the course will follow the conversation students create. Also, the course makes use of a media clip concerning ethical decision making. The media clip is followed by a discussion designed to engage students in examining the connections between decision- making in the media clip to situations today's students are facing.

Assessment information:

- Participants receive an assessment survey at the completion of the course. (see attached)

- Participants are also asked to complete a pre- test at the beginning of the first day and a post- test at the completion of the course.
- Facilitators and observers are also asked to complete an assessment survey. (see attached)
- Participants are tracked through an excel spreadsheet monitoring sanctioned students, when they were contacted, when they register and when they complete the course.

Since E.T.H.I.C.S. began in 2005, approximately 200 students have completed the course. In Fall 2008, E.T.H.I.C.S. was conducted for a Greek Life executive board. E.T.H.I.C.S. has recently been expanded to include student organizations. The facilitators for the course were comprised of a representative from the Dean of Students Leadership team, Student Rights and Responsibilities and Greek Life. Student Rights and Responsibilities is looking forward to expanding the course to a greater number of student organizations and offering the course as a workshop for promoting ethical discussion and leadership among the University community. Currently, the office is working on establishing the course not only as a University sanction, but having E.T.H.I.C.S. emerge as a positive, proactive tool for leadership and personal development among the student body.

Currently, there are 19 professional and graduate staff trained as facilitators who teach the course in two- person instructional teams. Each facilitator receives training and observes a course prior to facilitating. Training is scheduled for the end of fall semester. The training is a 4 hour commitment, divided over 2 days, one day at the end of fall semester and one day during early spring semester. This structure allows new facilitators to teach during spring semester. Facilitators represent the following offices within Florida State: Dean of Students (Dean of Students leadership, Student Rights and Responsibilities, Greek Life, New Student and Family Programs), University Housing, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Career Center, Women in Math, Science and Engineering Living- Learning Community, and Center for Civic Leadership and Education.

Summaries

- In May of 2007, a survey was sent to students who had completed the course one to nine months prior, an excerpt of the results are below:
- 62.5% of students are more aware of FSU community standards as a result of the attending the course
- 52.2% of students are more aware of their legal accountability as a result of taking the course
- 37.5% of students have thought about the Seminole Creed or Kitchener's principles in ethical situations since the course.
- When faced with an ethical decision now, over half of the students feel more aware of personal and community ethics, values, and standards.
- Over 40% of students are more likely to choose an ethical behavior following participation in the course.

- Over half of the students feel that the course helped them become more ethical in their decisions and behaviors.

Narratives from past assessments:

- “Ethics are essential for a responsible society to function”
- “I didn’t realize to what extent my values were conflicting with one another”
- “[The class] allowed me to hear other people’s opinions and see where they stood in comparison [to me].”
- “Great course, everyone should take it. Especially teachers and administrators.”
- “I learned to identify my values”
- “I know more about how ethics are personal and have a greater effect on my integrity”
- “I learned about the standards of Florida State.”
- “This course has taught me how to assess my values and how each of my decisions can affect my goals.”
- “I learned about FSU’s stance on community standards and values. This was the first time that I really learned about Responsible Freedom and the Seminole Creed.”
- “Really made me think about how my decisions impact others and how I should take that into account at all times.”
- “The most effective [aspect] was the reflective part where I was able to come clean with myself through help with the questions.”
- [My least favorite part was] “that we only had 4 hours. I feel like we had the potential to go much more in depth with our conversation since everyone was willing to participate”
- “I really evaluated my judgment of others decisions and understand that my judgment and lack of respect creates a mutual lack of respect which is not beneficial to anyone.”