Practical Ethics Tools
Analyzing Cases in
Engineering Ethics

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Principles

- Integrity – Act with honesty in all situations
- Trust – Build trust in all stakeholder relationships
- Accountability – Accept responsibility for all decisions
- Transparency – Maintain open and truthful communications
Daniels Fund Principles

- **Fairness** – Engage in fair competition and create equitable and just relationships
- **Respect** Honor the rights, freedoms, views and property of others
- **Rule of Law** – Comply with the spirit and intent of laws and regulations
- **Viability** – Create long-term value for all relevant stakeholders
Aims in Teaching Ethics

- Stimulate moral imagination
- Recognizing moral problems
- Analyzing key concepts & principles
- Stimulate sense of responsibility
- Deal with ambiguity & disagreement

(Hastings Center consensus aims, 1980)
Factual issues

- Relevant facts?
- Known facts?
- Unknown facts?
- Agreement/disagreement about facts?
Conceptual issues

- Meaning of ‘bribe,’ ‘conflict of interest,’ ‘responsibility’,
- Safety
Application issues

- Is this a bribe?
- Is this safe/unsafe?
- Who is responsible?
Paradigms of ‘bribery’/’not bribery’

Central features of each

Comparison of test case with paradigms
Creative middle-way

- Not necessarily just two choices.
- Middle way that settles for not satisfying all values completely
- Compromise without compromising integrity
Common morality

- Shared virtues (e.g., honesty, benevolence, gratitude, ...)
- Shared principles, rules (e.g., keeping promises, not harming, fairness, not lying, not cheating, doing your duty, ...)
- Not a complete system of morality
Modeling common morality

- Utilitarian thinking
- Respect for persons thinking
- Problems with these ways of thinking
Convergence & Divergence of Models

- Case of David Parkinson of the Madison County Solid Waste Management Planning Committee.
- Should the new land fill go close to land destined to become a new golf course surrounded by high end homes?
- Should the new land fill be placed in a “poorer” area of the county.
Michael Davis 7 questions

- Harm test: does this option do less harm than any alternative?
- Publicity test: would I want my choice of this option published in the newspaper?
- Defensibility test: could I defend my choice of this option before a Congressional committee, a committee of my peers, or my parents?
- Reversibility test: would I still think the choice of this option good if I were one of those adversely affected by it?
Virtue test: what would I become if I choose this option often?

Professional test: what might my profession’s ethics committee say about this problem?

Colleague test: what do my colleagues say when I describe my problem and suggest this option as my solution?

Organization test: what does the organization’s ethics officer or legal counsel say about this?
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