

Running Head: SHOULD BEHAVIOR REQUIREMENTS APPLY TO ONLINE

Should Behavior Requirements Apply to Online Instructors and Students?

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Abstract

Ethics (moral philosophy) consists of systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior, personal well-being, and the well-being of society, and balancing duties to God, self, and others. Christian universities grapple with balancing biblical standards with behavioral policies. Attaining the proper balance requires consideration of institutional mission, purpose of behavioral standards, and potential impacts on opportunities to engage learners while increasing their capacity to exercise moral judgment. In general, behavioral standards that apply on campus should apply to online learners and faculty. Occasionally the online environment provides unique opportunities to accommodate learners and faculty who may be incapable of or unwilling to adhere to rigid behavioral policies, thereby increasing diversity and opportunities for sharing divergent views.

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Introduction

Leaders in the Sacramento-Roseville area of California want to establish a nondenominational liberal arts institution, tentatively named Sacramento Valley University (SVU). Initially SVU will deliver programs via the Internet, later establishing a local campus to support face-to-face learning. Organizers want to provide a safe learning environment on the local campus and are discussing possible adoption of a behavior code. Several related questions are examined herein:

1. Is it ethical to adopt a behavior code?
2. If adopted, should the code apply only to students, only to faculty, or to faculty and students?
3. If adopted, should the code apply to online learners, online faculty, or both?

I explore these questions through a series of vignettes, concluding that the ethics of the situation requires examination of and relates to the institution's mission and purpose. In essence, I believe that it may be unethical to not require a behavior code for some limited programs, whether they are offered face-to-face or online. However, literature suggests that requiring learners to adhere to such a code may actually limit educational opportunities, hinder character development and, therefore, be unethical. The vignettes also suggest that a different set of criteria or code may be appropriate to require of college faculty, but that, in some circumstances, doing so might limit educational opportunities and be ethically questionable.

The first section presents an example of a behavioral code and briefly discusses some known variations. The second section summarizes related available literature. The third section discusses potential application in various program settings, including bible colleges and Christian

liberal arts colleges. The final section summarizes the findings and conclusions and presents recommendations for further research.

Sample Behavior Code

Patten University is a private, coeducational, interdenominational Christian college that provides undergraduate and graduate education. Patten's mission is to provide an excellent education to motivated and committed students from a broad diversity of (a) ethnic, (b) geographic, and (c) socioeconomic backgrounds. Patten's program emphasizes three core values: (a) learning, (b) faith, and (c) community (Patten College, 2002, p. 8). Dr. Leroy Lawson (2003) notes that unlike some colleges which focus on educating just the top 5 or 10 percent of high school graduates, Patten affords opportunity to students who would otherwise be overlooked. President Gary Moncher (2003) states that "This institution wants to make a difference," not just in the lives of students, but also to the local and worldwide communities.

Located in Oakland, California, Patten was founded by Dr. Bebe Patten in 1944 as Oakland Bible Institute, offering individual courses and certificate programs. In 1960, the school (a) moved to a new location, (b) expanded its programs, and (c) became Patten Bible College. The first four-year degrees were awarded in 1969. In 1976, the college (a) expanded its programs to include liberal arts and (b) was renamed Patten College. In 1998, Patten became an affiliate college of the Church of God; Patten currently houses the denomination's Theological Seminary West (Patten 2002, p. 9; Moncher, 2003). Since that time, Patten has established extension sites or cooperative programs in (a) California (Fresno, Fullerton, and two near Sacramento), (b) Oregon, (c) New Mexico, (d) Taiwan, (e) Hong Kong, and (f) Sri Lanka. In March 2003, because of the international scope of its programs and prevalent overseas use of the Spanish

word *collegio* to describe high school-level programs, the institution's name was officially changed to Patten University (Gary Moncher, personal communication).

Patten's behavior code is typical of those used in some Christian colleges. The full agreement, extracted from Patten's (n.d.) Application for Admission, is presented in the Appendix. In signing the agreement, prospective students agree to:

1. Attend Chapels when required by course schedule.
2. Maintain biblical standards of sexual conduct including abstinence from sexual relations outside of marriage and abstinence from homosexual activity.
3. Refrain from smoking and other use of tobacco products on campus, in student housing or at any college sponsored event or activity.
4. Abstain from the use of alcohol or illegal drugs at all times.
5. Comply with the Campus Attire Standard.
6. Participate in Christian/Community Service activities to explore the giving of oneself in service to others and experience rewards of that service.
7. Attend a church of the student's choice regularly.

Although the introductory sections of the code stress that the college accepts non-Christian students and asks students to (a) voluntarily commit to the Judeo-Christian ethic and (b) "live in accordance with the values of a Christian academic community," the agreement acknowledges that, should the student violate Patten's policies or regulations, the school may, at its discretion, confront, counsel, discipline, or expel the student.

Note that codes may address other types of behaviors. For example, Concordia University (n.d.) covers topics such as academic honesty, care of property, explosives and weapons, motor vehicles, and harassment (in addition to alcohol, drugs, sexual conduct, and smoking). Sizemore

and Spilka (1973) reviewed codes at four conservative institutions and found 13 topics addressed: use of tobacco, drugs, liquor, profanity; participation in dancing, gambling, sexual misbehavior, stealing cheating, lying; attendance at chapel and class; and dress regulations (p. 12).

The analysis that follows generally addresses issues such as items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 above. Clearly, item 1 of Patten's requirements—chapel attendance—would be impractical to require of online students, unless those students are located near the campus.

Literature Review

Three themes are pertinent to this discussion. First, what are morals, ethics, laws, and values and how do they relate to one another? Second, should institutions of higher education play a role in developing moral and ethical character? Third, what impact do behavior codes have on development of moral behavior?

Morals, Ethics, Laws, Values, and Social Policy

Fieser (2003) states, "The field of ethics, also called moral philosophy, involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior" (§ 1). McDonnell (1999) quotes Dr. Albert Schweitzer: "In a general sense, ethics is the name that we give to our concern for good behavior. We feel an obligation to consider not only our personal well-being but also that of others and of human society as a whole" (p. 250). Wolfe (2001) says that "Moral thinking involves applying concepts derived from sources loftier than human beings—Platonic ideals, God's commandments, natural law, the categorical imperative—to the actual behavior of real people" (p. 4). Turbeville (1976) opines that mere existence is not enough—"the purpose of life is to achieve morality" (p. 122).

The study of ethics involves three areas: metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Metaethics examines the origins and meanings of ethical principles, attempting to focus attention on issues related to "universal truths, the will of God, the role of reason in ethical judgments, and the meaning of ethical terms themselves" (Fieser, ¶ 1). Does morality exist independent of mankind? Normative ethics attempts to "arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct" (¶ 1), a search for proper behavior. Normative theories consider virtues—good character habits (e.g., wisdom, temperance, justice), duty, and consequentialism—that actions are morally right if consequences are more favorable than unfavorable (¶¶ 11, 21). Applied ethics examines controversial issues (e.g., abortion, animal rights, capital punishment, or euthanasia; ¶ 1) and occupational ethics. Individuals trying to resolve controversial issues use conceptual tools of metaethics and normative ethics (¶ 1).

Social policy consists of conventions that attempt to help society function more efficiently. Social policy sometimes influences adoption of laws (e.g., prohibitions of public nudity, traffic laws, zoning ordinances). "Moral issues, by contrast, concern more universally obligatory practices, such as our duty to avoid lying, and are not confined to individual societies" (Fieser, ¶ 29).

Fieser indicates that philosopher Samuel von Pufendorf (1682) theorized that we have three types of duties: (a) to God, (b) to self, and (c) to others. Pufendorf recognized duties (a) to know of the existence and nature of God and (b) to worship God, both inwardly and outwardly (Ch. 4, ¶¶ 1 and 7). Thus, based on Pufendorf, items 1 and 7 of Patten's behavior requirements fall in the realm of moral duty. Pufendorf also recognized two types of duties towards others: (a) absolute and (b) conditional. Absolute duties include (a) avoid wronging others (Ch. 6), (b) treat others as equals (Ch. 7), and (c) promote the good of others (Ch. 8). Fieser cites W. D. Ross

(1930) as including beneficence—the duty to improve the conditions of others—as a moral conviction (Fieser, ¶ 24). Thus, item 6 of Patten's behavior requirements probably recognizes our moral duty towards others.

Pufendorf recognizes that a man has a moral obligation to himself—to educate himself, care for his own body and soul, to avoid drunkenness, gluttony, and "excess in love" (Ch. 5, ¶ 3). Were Pufendorf to pen his theories today, after many scientific investigations and years of widespread publicity, he might include smoking and illegal drugs in his list of things that we all should avoid because they harm the body. Also, note the difference between Pufendorf's "avoid drunkenness" and Patten's "abstain from alcohol." The fact is that there is no universal agreement regarding smoking, use of alcohol, and which drugs are illegal. Thus, items 3 (prohibiting smoking) and 4 (abstaining from alcohol and illegal drugs), along with item 5 (adhering to the campus dress code) all address social behaviors, not universally recognized moral standards.

Although the Bible sets standards for sexual conduct (e.g., The Bible is clear on sexual fidelity (e.g. Hebrews 13:4, Ephesians 5:1-3, and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 address sexual fidelity) and prohibits homosexual relationships (Romans 1:26-27) these standards are not universally accepted (some societies and religions have different standards). Therefore, philosophers, including Fieser (¶ 24), regard such standards as standards for social behavior rather than universal moral obligations.

Laws are sets of instructions and prohibitions, adopted by a given authority and imposed on citizens or entities therein to guide or limit behavior and frequently are linked to stipulated penalties. While governments adopt most laws, corporate policy statements may perform a similar function. Patten's behavior code certainly qualifies as a legal instrument of this type. In

Patten's case, as in the case of many corporations, individuals conditionally agree to (a) become part of the community of learners or workers and (b) abide by the stated corporate policy.

Human values and ideals underlie and influence our concept of right and wrong, morals, ethics, social policies, and laws. Rokeach (1973) defines value as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence." Umek, Musek, and Meško (1996) indicate that values are not static, but undergo change when political, economic, or social systems change, and are often expressed by the media in discussions that use terms like "value crisis, moral crisis, changing of value systems, value vacuum, [and] lack of values" (§ 2). As these changes occur, "Some values are [losing] their importance . . . and some other, new values are growing in their significance" (§ 3).

Role of Character Development in Higher Education

Should colleges and universities attempt to foster character development? Is it ethical for colleges and universities to attempt to influence the character development of their students?

What is the relationship between knowledge education and character development?

McDonnell (1999) states:

"Character without knowledge is weak and feeble, but knowledge without character is dangerous and a potential menace to society. Today's America won't achieve the goodness celebrated by de Tocqueville [1835] if we graduate young people from our schools who are brilliant but dishonest, who have great intellectual knowledge but don't really care about others, who are great thinkers but are irresponsible" (p. 251).

Turbeville (1976) echoes this sentiment, noting, "the ultimate justification for any institution is its stress on the responsibility that knowledge brings. Our scientists produced the atomic bomb,

for example, but failed to give us a morality to control it" (p. 122). So, if we listen to McDonnell and Turbeville, character must develop along with knowledge if our society is to remain safe.

Fisher (1995) presents an example that is somewhat similar to Turbeville's:

In considering the role of universities in Western democracies, Sir Walter Moberly concluded: "If you want a bomb the chemistry department will teach you how to make it, if you want a cathedral the department of architecture will teach you how to build it, if you want a healthy body the departments of physiology and medicine will teach you how to tend it. But when you ask whether and why you should want bombs or cathedrals or healthy bodies, the university must be content to be dumb and impotent. It can give help and guidance in all things subsidiary but not in the attainment of the one thing needful. But for an educator this is an abdication" (p. 35).

McDonnell (1999) notes, "For many reasons, formal character education has been largely removed from the public schools" (p. 250). Turbeville (1976) provides some insight regarding some of the reasons, stating,

Over the years science has adopted an amoral stance in its approach to knowledge, and this has been necessary to protect us from the narrow sectarianism which fought such ideas as the minor position of earth in the universe, the circulation of blood, the existence of bacteria, and the theory of evolution (p. 122).

Recently, there has been a significant push to ensure that religion is not taught in public schools, epitomized by the attempt to remove "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance, arguing that it constitutes an unconstitutional governmental endorsement of religion (CNN, 2002).

Turbeville notes:

We must always remain alert to those who would deny us truth in the name of religion, but surely we can agree on certain basic and universal moral values to inculcate into our students. Examples would be: love, forgiveness, compassion, honesty, sobriety, cleanliness, considerateness, tolerance, and generosity (p. 122).

McDonnell states, "While we can't teach religion in the public schools anymore, we can teach the universal values common to our great religions" (p. 250).

The problem is that some values, including some of those listed by Turbeville, are not universally valued or practiced. Inglehart and Baker (2000) report that "Industrialization produces pervasive social and cultural consequences, from rising educational levels to changing gender roles" (p. 20):

Although the full range of "traditions" is diverse, a mainstream version of pre-industrial society having a number of common characteristics can be identified. All of the pre-industrial societies for which we have data show relatively low levels of tolerance for abortion, divorce, and homosexuality; tend to emphasize male dominance in economic and political life, deference to parental authority, and the importance of family life, and are relatively authoritarian; most of them place strong emphasis on religion. Advanced industrial societies tend to have the opposite characteristics. (p. 24).

Inglehart and Baker note that societies where greater focus is given to survival than to self-expression tend to emphasize male dominance, religious taboos, and be less tolerant of those who are different from themselves (e.g., criminals, people with AIDS, homosexuals, foreigners; pp. 26-28):

When survival is uncertain, cultural diversity seems threatening. When there isn't "enough to go around," foreigners are seen as dangerous outsiders who may take away one's sustenance. People cling to traditional gender roles and sexual norms, and emphasize absolute rules and familiar norms in an attempt to maximize predictability in an uncertain world. Conversely, when survival begins to be taken for granted, ethnic and cultural diversity become increasingly acceptable—indeed, beyond a certain point, diversity is not only tolerated, it may be positively valued because it is interesting and stimulating

Polarization over new gender roles is strikingly evident in the survival/self-expression dimension: One of its highest-loading issues involves whether men make better political leaders than women. In the world as a whole, a majority still accepts the idea that men make better political leaders than women, but this view is rejected by growing majorities in advanced industrial societies and is overwhelmingly rejected by the younger generation within these societies. Equal rights for women, gays and lesbians, foreigners, and other outgroups tend to be rejected in societies where survival seems uncertain and increasingly accepted in societies that emphasize self-expression values. (p. 28)

Norris and Inglehart (2002) note that Islamic and Western societies, for example, have similar views regarding democracy ideals (both societies generally approve), but have radically different views when it comes to (a) abortion, (b) divorce, (c) gender equity, and (d) homosexuality.

Thus, universities face questions of whose ideals and values to promulgate. For a Christian university, the answer may seem clearer in that there usually is no requirement to avoid mixing education and traditional religious values. However, in reality religious institutions might promote rigid traditional views (e.g., 6-day creation of a 6,000-year-old earth, absolute prohibition of some acts), an extremely liberal, tolerant view (e.g., homosexuality is okay; all faiths worship the same god), or any view in between. Similarly, some Christian denominations are decidedly male-centered (only men can be pastors, women can only teach children) while others are fully gender egalitarian. For an online university, even a Christian one, the issue of whose ideals and values to promulgate adds an international dimension. Which nations' values should be promulgated? Even within a single denomination, controversies arise over values. For example, after U.S. Anglicans consecrated a gay bishop, Kenyan Anglicans indicated they were opposed to such consecrations "now and in the future" (Gmax, 2003, ¶ 6).

Given that few students will ever be given an assignment to develop a nuclear bomb or other weapon of mass destruction, one might ask whether character development programs really are needed in our colleges? McDonnell (1999) notes, "[We] have a crisis of character all across America that is threatening to destroy the goodness which . . . is the very foundation of [America's] greatness" (p. 250). Recent events suggest that an ethical crisis still grips much of our nation. Stock brokers and mutual fund managers are being accused of breaking the public trust (Waggoner, 2003). Judges appear to have violated basic ethical principles, issuing rulings in cases that involve companies in which they have invested (Stephens, 1998). Cummings,

Maddux, et al (2002) surveyed 145 teacher education students and found that 75 percent "have a propensity to engage in academic misconduct" (§ 37). Pfeffer (2003) notes that a national survey reported that 75% of 2,100 students admit to having cheated at least once (§ 6). He states that ► cheating is more prevalent today than 20 years ago because (a) students feel more pressure to get grades that will get them the best jobs, (b) the Internet has made it easier to copy material, and (c) students are responding to an "everybody's doing it" attitude (§ 7). Also, within corporate America there's more pressure to cheat (investor expectations, budgets) and cheating is easier to pull off. "Banks and accounting firms are only too ready to show companies, for a fee, how to bend accounting regulations and tax laws. Then there's the presumption that everybody is doing it" (§ 8).

Why should this crisis concern us? McDonnell states:

Throughout most of our [U.S.] history, certain basic, ethical values were considered fundamental to the character of the nation. These values were passed on from generation to generation, in the home, the school and the religious institution—each one undergirding and reinforcing the others. We had a consensus not only on values, but on the importance of those values; and from that consensus, we knew who we were as a people and where we were going as a nation (p. 250).

He cites de Montesquieu (1748) as describing a free republic as the most desirable form of government, but also the most fragile:

because it depends on a virtuous people. What did [Montesquieu] mean by a 'virtuous' people? Virtuous means living with high ethical values Montesquieu meant, therefore, that in a free republic the leaders and a majority of the people are committed to doing what's best for the nation as a whole. When that commitment breaks down, when the people consider only their own personal well-being (sic), they can no longer be depended upon to behave in the best interests of their nation. The result is laws, regulations, red tape and controls—things designed to enforce people to be trustworthy. And these are instruments of bondage, not freedom" (McDonnell, 1999, p. 250).

So, if we are to survive as a free nation, it appears that our character crisis must be solved.

McDonnell suggests, "Character education is one of the most important, if not the most

important, answer to our national crisis of character and it is absolutely essential to any truly effective education reform movement" (p. 251).

Impact of Behavior Codes on Development of Moral Judgment

This section examines the following questions:

1. Are character development programs worthwhile?
2. What does an effective character development program look like?

Are Character Development Programs Worthwhile?

In describing the impact of a character education program in St. Louis schools, McDonnell states that wherever properly implemented "it has produced very encouraging results. Not only have behavior problems gone down, but one of the most exciting results is that academic performance has gone up" (p. 250). This suggests that character education somehow benefits academic performance. Finger, Borduin, and Baumstark (1992) report that "Rest and Thoma (1985) found that the years in college accounted for 14% of the variance in the development of moral judgment in young adults" (p. 221).

What Does an Effective Character Development Program Look Like?

The literature suggests that institutions of higher education have moral programs that generally rely on three principal methods: (a) moral restrictions, (b) moral models, and (c) cognitive development.

Moral restrictions involve codes of conduct—laws and policies that describe wrong choices and prescribe penalties. Pfeffer (2003) argues that "Universities can influence how people behave, but they do that mostly through the subtle messages they convey about appropriate and inappropriate behavior and its consequences—not by what's taught in class" (¶ 4). He suggests that "If business schools were serious about instructing students in ethics, they

could start by enforcing their own codes of conduct" (§ 1). Some authors argue that university faculty and staff should model moral character and that, somehow, students will follow their lead. Willimon (2002) suggests that "People don't live by values. They live by examples, models, and mentors" (p. 30). He argues that simply discussing the thoughts of a few "dead thinkers" (p. 30) and then leaving students to make up their own minds regarding morals and ethics might appear to be modest and reflect humility, but it is also irresponsible (p. 30).

"You and I, in the modern university, are heirs to the moral tradition that acts as if it were possible to have ethics without a tradition. Ethics is what we make up, on our own, as we go. This is surely the end result of the Kantian project to democratize ethics, to make moral living available for everyone, regardless of a person's abilities, parents, environment, or commitment to the ethical task" (p. 31).

Willimon concludes that such approaches have led to a procedural society, wherein we approach ethical decision making as a set of procedures that can be followed by anyone to achieve good deeds, "regardless of a person's character, community, or tradition" (p. 31). Willimon suggests that students need role models, but that instead we are:

moving away from the classical vision of a college as a collection of colleagues, faculty, and students, in close proximity to one another, eating together, living together, in an environment where there is maximum opportunity for observation, argument, interaction, and just hanging out. We are moving toward a model in which there is minimal faculty-student interaction—contact primarily limited to class—and in which students are mostly left to their own devices outside of the classroom, abandoned to their peers, who do not know much more about adulthood than they do (p. 31).

Pfeffer notes that some programs offer rewards for altruism and other specific behaviors.

However, he notes that:

"The lesson a child learns . . . is that the point of being good is to get rewards. No wonder researchers have found that children who are frequently rewarded—or, in another study, children who receive positive reinforcement for caring, sharing, and helping—are less likely than other children to keep doing those things (§ 14) . . . When some children are singled out as "winners," the central message that every child learns is this: "Other people are potential obstacles to my success" (§ 15).

Kohn (1997) notes that teacher and schools tend to mistake good behavior for good character:

What goes by the name of character education nowadays is, for the most part, a collection of exhortations and extrinsic inducements designed to make children work harder and do what they're told. Even when other values are also promoted - caring or fairness, say - the preferred method of instruction is tantamount to indoctrination. The point is to drill students in specific behaviors rather than to engage them in deep, critical reflection about certain ways of being (§ 6).

Zakaria (2001) says that "We . . . place enormous emphasis on achievement but are tongue-tied when it comes to what makes a virtuous life . . . "[Institutions] today guide and regulate young people's lives in every way imaginable—no smoking, study smart, play safely—except in the realm of moral instruction" (§§ 5-6). Turbeville (1976) echoes:

Unfortunately, when morality is discussed we immediately start thinking in terms of certain negative prohibitions, a sort of 100 commandments on things we should not do if we are going to be moral. From such a viewpoint, a rock would be more moral than a person because it does not choose to do evil. On the other hand, it does not opt to do good either. I maintain that morality consists largely of positive acts rather than of not doing certain things (p. 122).

Turbeville's example helps frame the concept of moral character. Obviously, a person who chooses to do evil has an immoral character and should be regarded as unethical. Inanimate objects, however, are amoral—neither moral nor immoral, incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong. Ergo, someone who consistently makes right choices and avoids choices that cause harm exhibits a moral trait and has some level of moral character. As McDonnell (1999) notes, "[Virtues] are not mere thoughts but habits we develop by performing virtuous actions" (p. 251). Turbeville adds, "In the last analysis we are going to be held responsible for what we ourselves do. It is only in striving that we grow, it is only by overcoming temptation that character is built, and frequently it is only by suffering that we get values in perspective" (p. 122). So, it appears that morality is not avoiding a host of transgressions, but accomplishing positive acts. Turbeville states:

[If] our college is not going to [merely] exist but to thrive as an alive, alert, and concerned institution of higher learning . . . , it must stress moral values [In] our classes, no matter what the subject taught, . . . a moral way of life should be emphasized and given witness to.

Any institution is as strong as the functions it performs; any institution that serves a unique and necessary purpose will endure; and any institution that achieves a sense of community and morality will thrive Getting the proper mix of the physical and the spiritual is what life is about and our colleges must accept the responsibility of helping their communities get values in perspective (p. 123).

Hester (1973) notes:

Our universities have been very successful in the development of knowledge. But their accomplishments are less noteworthy in the elevation of human consciousness, especially in the matter of morals and ethics. In our determination to be non-sectarian and in the glorification of pragmatism, we have found it convenient to avoid moral questions, and that is a major weakness of modern education. This failure is reflected in the moral flabbiness of the entire society (p. 692).

Turbeville notes, "actions speak louder than words [The] only effective way of sermonizing is to give witness to our beliefs by the type of life we lead" (p. 122). We make our colleges moral schools primarily "by living the kinds of lives we say we believe in" (p. 122).

McDonnell (1999) says of his firm, "We had a code of conduct as all organizations have, a 'thou shalt not' code; but we didn't have a positive 'thou shalt' code of ethics" (p. 249).

Community service is a method of modeling that is employed in some institutions (including Patten) and certainly attempts to model a "thou shalt" code. Is such an approach effective? Boss (1994) reports that a study of the effect of community service work found that such work, when coupled with discussion of relevant moral issues, "is an effective means of moving students into the post-conventional stage of principled moral reasoning" (¶ 1). Gorman, Duffy, and Heffernan (1994) cite Exum (1980) as finding that such experiences "without a seminar for reflection had no noticeable effect" (p. 422) on the development of moral judgment. They (Gorman et al) compared two groups of students and found that students who participated

in a program that combined service experience and reflection showed significantly greater growth in principled thinking than did students who participated in a reflection only program (p. 429).

Thoma (2002) provides a historical overview of the background of the Defining Issues Test (DIT) developed by Rest, Cooper, et al (1974)—an attempt to measure in an orderly fashion how study participants make and apply moral judgments. The DIT consists of six moral dilemmas (see http://cstl-hcb.semo.edu/cherry/Research/DIT_Four_Scenario2.htm) and a series of questions. Results are presented in terms of stages of development (Table 1). Good and Cartwright (1998) indicates that individuals outgrow one stage of development once it becomes too simplistic and inadequate. "Moral judgment development, therefore, is a transformation of one's reasoning, expanding one's perspectives to include criteria that were not considered previously" (§ 4).

The DIT and attempts to measure moral judgment has its critics. For example, Cummings, Maddux, et al (2002) state "[There] is no evidence that participants' levels of principled moral reasoning is associated with academic misconduct. Education students with higher moral reasoning scores reported engaging in academic misconduct as frequently as those with lower scores" (§§ 37-38). Thus, regardless of the level or stage, simply being able to make moral judgments may not yield actions that reflect good moral character. Still, the approach may yield some useful insights.

For example, Wahrman (1981) studied college students of different religious affiliations and found that the degree of dogmatism was related (a "weak but statistically significant relationship) to their moral judgment (p. 151). Wahrman suggests that there may be a link between lower moral judgment development and "the adherence to a dogmatic mode of thinking"

Table 1

Stages of Development of Moral Judgment

Level	Stage
Preconventional level: Individuals primarily are concerned with egocentric understanding of fairness with an emphasis on how decisions will affect them.	Stage 1: Goodness and badness are determined by physical consequences of an act.
	Stage 2: Right action consists of that which satisfies one's own needs.
Conventional level: This level emphasizes maintenance and support of the present social system.	Stage 3: Good behavior is equated with whatever pleases or helps others.
	Stage 4: Right behavior consists of doing one's duty, showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order for its own sake.
Principle level: Individuals move to autonomous positions where efforts are made to define moral values and principles that have validity and application apart from the surrounding community.	Stage 5: Providing a rationale for choosing among alternate social systems with right action being defined in terms of societal consensus.
	Stage 6: Right resulting from self-chosen ethical principles that apply to all humankind with an emphasis on human rights and the dignity of every person.

Modified after Good and Cartwright (1998, ¶ 3).

(p. 151). He also suggests that "individuals with greater dogmatism will tend to be more conventional than principled in their moral judgment since an individual who generally thinks in a dogmatic fashion may also tend to make moral judgments on the basis of conventions, rather than in principles independently arrived at" (p. 152).

Good and Cartwright administered the Defining Issues Test to 300 students attending state, Christian liberal arts, and Bible universities. They found that there were significant freshman to senior gains in principled thinking among students at the state and Christian liberal arts universities, but no significant gains among students attending the Bible university. They note that educational experiences "provide a cognitive disequilibrium which leads to growth in moral judgment" (¶ 5). Good and Cartwright report that Rest (1990) found that as long as formal

education continues, moral judgment scores continue to rise, but when an individual ceases formal education, moral judgment scores tend to plateau (§ 6).

Good and Cartwright note that while Christian liberal arts universities emphasize humanities and science, Bible universities emphasize Bible, communication, and courses that prepare students for church vocations. They state:

Hickerson and Laramee (1976) found the traditional curriculum in many church-related universities as being limited to the imparting of a set of external values to the learner. When students are exposed to policies, officials, and faculty who use moralizing, modeling, and reward and punishment as modes for imparting moral values to students the possibility exists that students may adopt the content (what is valued) without developing the structural (how and why values are acquired). Hickerson and Laramee (1976) hypothesized that . . . restrictions on student behavior for moralistic reasons beyond those necessary for social order or the normal functioning of the institution [among other things, might inhibit a learner's moral judgment development] (§ 8).

On the DIT, Good and Cartwright found that evangelical students tend to choose items that involve familiar doctrinal statements instead of using reflective application of biblical principles. “They may be capable of moral reasoning at a higher level, however, they deliberately set aside their own notions of fairness and endorse lower stage level DIT items out of conformity to their religious beliefs” (§ 12). However, they also note that some DIT items may have different meaning for conservative religious students than to secular students.

The Christian liberal arts colleges exhibit some significant differences. Fisher (1995) analyzed curricula at three groups of colleges—Presbyterian, Christian College Coalition schools, and unaffiliated (secular) institutions. He found that Christian College Coalition schools placed the heaviest emphasis on values courses, unaffiliated schools the least, and Presbyterian schools are in the middle (p. 38). He also found sharp differences among Presbyterian schools that required at least one religion course and those that did not—all of the former had at least one values course but only 35% of the latter have any required values courses. When examining the

curricula for courses that examine moral implications of contemporary issues, he found that 31% of unaffiliated colleges and 31% of Presbyterian colleges required at least one such course.

However, 79% of evangelical colleges required such a course (p. 39). He states:

Many of [the values courses at Christian College Coalition schools] appeared to be serious efforts to confront students from evangelical backgrounds with intellectually powerful challenges to Christian faith and not just defenses of it. Moreover, the contemporary values courses were often serious efforts by evangelicals to engage with—and speak to—urgent moral issues—to apply their faith to the rest of the world Evangelical colleges are often accused of being insular, of separating themselves from the world, and of being preoccupied with individual salvation at the expense of social and political engagement. Yet, if their curricula accurately reflect what they are doing, these colleges appear to be turned 'outward' as well as 'inward;' their efforts are not focused exclusively on Bible study, doctrine, and 'soul-winning.' Rather, they appear to be far more explicitly concerned than either the Presbyterian or the unaffiliated colleges about awakening their students to moral and social issues in the contemporary world.

On the other hand, many of the Presbyterian colleges, in their eagerness to throw out the bathwater of rigidly prescribed and enforced religiosity (statements of faith, required chapel) and behavioral taboos (for example, on the use of alcohol), appear to have thrown out the twin babies of religious and moral education (pp. 44-45).

Nucci (1997) found that moral development is fostered by eight different educational practices or findings:

1. The focus of moral education should be on students' concerns for and conceptions of fairness and the welfare of others.
2. Educational practices should be coordinated with student development.
3. Educational practices should take into account the fact that morality and convention develop out of qualitatively differing types of social experiences.
4. Moral discussion and moral problem solving foster moral development.
5. Moral discussion may also make use of moral exemplars.
6. Opportunities for self-reflection can be used to foster moral character.
7. Moral discussion is most effective when it concerns actual student behavior or issues.

8. Moral concerns are often embedded within conventionalized practices (¶¶ 37-44; note that Nucci presented this information as an unnumbered list).

Item 4, merits elaboration. Moral reasoning develops when students recognize inconsistencies and inadequacies in their moral positions. Small group discussions are one of the most effective ways to bring this about, especially discussions of moral dilemmas wherein students must listen to divergent views and must come to terms with those who hold other positions.

While the above discussion centers on methods of fostering character development among learners, Fisch (1996) suggests that the same principles and similar practices may help faculty consider, test, and refine their own character:

In order to develop in faculty (individually and collectively) the awareness, understanding, perspectives, commitment, behavior that precludes problems, and skill in resolving problems . . . , it is necessary for them to work with each other steadily and consistently in trying to deal with ethical issues, whether real or hypothetical. Only through an honest and open exchange of ideas will faculty members be able to comprehend the many perspectives that may have validity in considering ethical issues. Only by testing ideas with each other will faculty members come to recognize, reconsider, and perhaps even refine their own positions—reaching new commitments or renewing those already held (pp. 90-91).

Discussion of Application of Behavioral Standards

Application in Bible College and Seminary Programs

As previously noted, Bible colleges focus on educating students for church-related vocations. Some individual colleges are affiliated with a specific denomination, while others are nondenominational. Some of the former focus on preparing pastors and other workers solely for their own denomination.

In exploring the ethics of behavioral codes, let's examine the requirements of specific denominations. For example, the Catholic Church generally requires priests and nuns to be unmarried and live celibate lives (however, recently the denomination has allowed some married Anglican priests to become Catholic priests). The Assemblies of God regards divorce and remarriage as adultery (Assemblies of God, 1973, ¶ 13). Pastor Rick Bazacos (personal communication) indicates that the Assemblies do not permit divorced pastors to serve as senior pastor of a church; some denominations do not permit women, homosexuals, divorcees, and/or people who have married divorcees to serve as pastors. Some institutions hold very rigid beliefs. For example, Baptist Bible College and Seminary (n. d.) is very clear that it seeks to exclude individuals profess to speak in tongues, seek that gift, or encourage others to seek that gift because it does not believe that the modern charismatic movement is biblical (¶ 7).

Given that some denominations have strict requirements that must be met as a condition of employment, is it ethical for their seminaries and Bible colleges to accept students who do not meet those requirements? I assert that it is not. If, for example, a college exists solely to prepare students for future employment as pastors of a specific denomination, whether the instruction is offered face-to-face or online, then it should not permit obviously unqualified students (e.g., women, divorcees, practicing homosexuals, charismatic Christians) to enroll in such programs. Doing otherwise in essence amounts to telling the student, "Yes, we will accept your money and allow you to invest years in our institution to prepare for a job that you can never hold."

However, if the college is not affiliated with a specific denomination and has a broader mission—for example, preparing future pastors, missionaries, and church workers—highly restrictive admission policies are not so easily justified. Although some or all faculty and students might believe that women should not be pastors, some denominations permit women

pastors. Precluding women from attending the institution is, therefore, unwarranted, constitutes gender discrimination and may, therefore, be illegal. Having so stated, I acknowledge that women who attend such institutions may experience comments from other learners who hold such beliefs. As long as the comments occur in the context of group discussions of divergent views and moves towards an equitable consensus, such comments may help foster moral development, helping students recognize inconsistencies and inadequacies in their moral positions (ala Nucci, 1997). However, it is improper and unethical to permit such discussions to devolve into opportunities for continued assault or harassment, either in a face-to-face or online setting.

Whether or not to admit homosexuals to a pastor preparation program presents a moral dilemma. While some denominations permit practicing homosexuals to be pastors and priests, many do not. Many civil rights laws exempt privately funded religious institutions like churches and religious schools (American Civil Liberties Union, n. d., ¶ 7). As noted in the Appendix, Patten's behavior code requires "abstinence from sexual relations outside of marriage and abstinence from homosexual activity." Thus, Patten's code appears to permit persons who are homosexually oriented to attend the institution as long as they abstain from homosexual activity. Similarly, unmarried heterosexuals are permitted to attend the institution as long as they refrain from sexual relations. Thus, the Patten's code, based on religious beliefs, seems to provide an equitable basis for excluding certain individuals based on exhibited behaviors.

Enforcement of this provision of Patten's code presents some difficulty. If, for example, an unmarried female student engages in sexual activity and becomes pregnant, the evidence may become obvious (barring a miscarriage or abortion) and penalties may be imposed. However, if a male student or homosexuals engage in sexual activity, no such obvious evidence exists. Thus,

there is the possibility that the sexual provisions of Patten's code may be applied in equitably. In an online setting, pregnancy (or other sexual activity) is not evident unless the student chooses to disclose it. Again, this presents the possibility for inequitable application of the behavior code. In essence, whether in a face to face or online setting, most students are on their honor to abide by the sexual abstinence provisions of Patten's code.

Application in Christian Liberal Arts Institutions

Many Christian liberal arts institutions evolved from roles as Bible colleges and pastoral training programs or seminaries. Some of these institutions, including Patten, continue to require learners to adhere to a behavior code. However, other institutions, such as Fresno Pacific University, simply encourage students to strive to achieve a desired standard of behavior, generally without threat of expulsion or other penalty (Fresno Pacific University [FPU], 2003; C. Smith, personal communication). [FPU (a) does prohibit possession of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs on campus and (b) threatens unspecified disciplinary action if students are under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on campus (§ 9).]

As FPU notes, tobacco products present a danger to personal health (§ 9). As written, FPU's standard does not preclude use tobacco while off campus. Thus, although discouraged, online learners could use tobacco while sitting at their home computer without violating FPU's behavior standard. Patten also requires students to refrain from smoking and other use of tobacco products on campus and in student housing. However, Patten requires students to refrain from using tobacco "at any college sponsored event or activity." The question is, does online learning constitute a "college sponsored activity?" I suggest that it does; however, unlike an athletic event or social gathering which may be college sponsored although it occurs off campus, use of tobacco does not expose fellow learners to second-hand smoke and related health effects. Thus, it

may be best for Patten to modify this behavioral standard as it potentially creates a moral dilemma for learners who choose not to disclose that they smoke while learning online.

Use of alcohol also presents a dilemma. As noted, FPU focuses on students who are “under the influence of alcohol” whereas Patten prohibits use of alcohol “at all times.” Patten’s code potentially presents moral dilemmas for students whose culture and religious beliefs (e.g., Catholics and Episcopalians) do not prohibit use of alcohol. Does one glass of wine with a meal violate Patten’s code? It does [but it does not violate FPU’s]. Enforcement of this provision of Patten’s code is difficult to detect and enforce, absent witnesses or evidence that students are under the influence of alcohol (ala FPU’s standards). Should alcohol-related provisions apply to online learners? I contend that if such provisions apply to on-campus learners, they should also apply to off-campus learners because that is an equitable approach. However, once again, Patten’s alcohol-related code is as or more difficult to detect and enforce. In contrast, FPU’s alcohol-related code implies a potential impact on behavior. While it may be more difficult to detect an inebriated online learner (e.g., one who cannot walk a straight line or has slurred speech), alcohol might result in increased belligerence or uncivil discussion that is detectable and merits counseling or disciplinary action.

There is a downside to rigid codes of behavior in that such codes generally exclude learners who hold divergent views. Thus, there are fewer opportunities to (a) discuss differences in behavior and (b) engage in moral problem solving and self reflection ala Nucci (1997), especially moral discussions that concern actual student behavior or issues.

Should provisions of behavior codes apply to online learners? I contend that the purpose of the code should play a role in determining whether or not it should be applied to online learners. For example, if the standards exist simply to encourage learners to seek a virtuous life

(ala FPU), then it is entirely appropriate to apply to online learners. However, if the code exists solely to provide a safe learning environment, excluding learners who engage in specific activities that might threaten fellow learners (e.g., smoking) should not apply to online learners.

Application to Faculty

Curiously, although Patten University requires potential students to sign and adhere to its behavior code, it does not require faculty to sign a similar statement. Presumably the university would interview candidates to determine whether their lifestyles are acceptable because faculty will serve as models and mentors for students. Should such codes, if applied on campus, also apply to online faculty?

Once again, the issue presents a dilemma between providing opportunities to discuss divergent views and encouraging a virtuous lifestyle. For example, suppose that Patten has an opportunity to hire a well-recognized and highly respected Catholic theologian or other educator. Also suppose that this individual is a priest and is expected to drink the Holy Communion wine, but that he otherwise refrains from drinking alcohol. In this instance, the priest's official church-related duties conflicts with Patten's standards; however, failing to hire him would deprive students of opportunities to be exposed a divergent view and valuable, presumably wholesome, ideas and ways of thinking.

Next consider an eminent scientist and faculty member who becomes ill with cancer. Assume that, while undergoing treatment his physician prescribes marijuana. It clearly would be inappropriate for the faculty person to use marijuana while on campus. However, there are benefits to permitting the scientist to teach online in that (a) students are not deprived of knowledge, (b) community can be maintained, and (c) the incident provides new and on-going opportunities to discuss the related moral dilemma and the validity of marijuana as medicine.

In contrast, suppose that a faculty member becomes involved in an extramarital affair. Such an act clearly falls outside the university's accepted Biblical standards and warrants discipline. Given that faculty functions include serving as models and mentors, it would be unethical to permit that member to continue to teach, either on campus or on line. [If the extramarital affair involves a student, the university risks a sexual harassment suit and should take immediate action to remedy the situation.]

Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Ethics (moral philosophy) consists of systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior, personal well-being, and the well-being of society, and balancing duties to God, self, and others. While some secular institutions are precluded from considering God or biblical restrictions, Christian universities often grapple with how to balance biblical standards and behavioral policies.

A review of the literature suggests that character development is a complex process that involves modeling, mentoring, discipline, and cooperative learning, especially discussion of divergent views during exploration of complex moral and ethical dilemmas. McDonnell (1999) states, "Developing character in [a] comprehensive sense requires a comprehensive educational approach—one that uses all aspects of schooling (academic subject matter, the instructional process, the management of the school environment) as opportunities for character development . . ." (p. 251).

Attaining the proper balance requires consideration of institutional mission, purpose of behavioral standards, and potential impacts on opportunities to engage learners while increasing their capacity to exercise moral judgment. In general, behavioral standards that apply on campus should apply to online learners and faculty. Occasionally the online environment may provide

unique opportunities to accommodate learners and faculty who may be incapable of or unwilling to adhere to rigid behavioral policies, thereby increasing diversity and opportunities for sharing divergent views. Such views may aid students and faculty by providing tangible, real life, dilemmas that enrich the educational process and aid in character development.

Regarding recommendations, future research should revisit the development of moral judgment in Bible colleges and pastor training programs. In particular, research should attempt to determine whether current educational practices, including strict codes of behavior, inhibit development of knowledge, skills, and abilities to exercise higher levels of moral judgment.

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Appendix

Text of Christian Environment Agreement for Admission to Patten College

Patten College seeks to relate the Judeo-Christian ethic to the whole of education, including the liberal arts, science and fine arts, co-curricular activities, one's personal life, and society in general. Hence, the College asks for commitment to this ethic, to Christ in particular, and also that students assume the responsibilities of membership in the college community. The basis of interaction at Patten College is the expectation that students, faculty and staff will live in accordance with the values of a Christian academic community. Choosing to join this community obligates each person to follow the code of behavior which is guided by the biblical values of love of God, neighbor and self. These values are reflected in an academic environment which seeks to cultivate critical habits of mind, creative and critical thinking, and the willingness to challenge one's own perspectives as well as to seriously consider opposing viewpoints. This critical habit of mind also involves an appreciation for diversity of ideas as well as diverse cultures and ethnic groups.

While Patten College strives to be distinctively Christian, this does not mean that only those from Christian backgrounds are admitted as students. It does mean, however, that every student is expected to accept and adhere to the basic policies of the College that relate to the spiritual and social character of the campus environment. Patten has long recognized the value of maintaining certain behavioral standards that contribute to the atmosphere of the campus, foster fellowship with Christians of various denominations, and strengthen our Christian testimony to our community. Members of the Patten community are expected to exercise discernment and avoid all activities that then to be morally degrading. Patten College expects tangible evidence of maturing Christian convictions and discerning judgment from its students. In this light, Patten

asks all students to conform to the spiritual and social character of the campus and the expressed behavioral standards listed below during enrollment:

- ▶ Attend Chapels when required by course schedule.
- ▶ Maintain biblical standards of sexual conduct including abstinence from sexual relations outside of marriage and abstinence from homosexual activity.
- ▶ Refrain from smoking and other use of tobacco products on campus, in student housing or at any college sponsored event or activity.
- ▶ Abstain from the use of alcohol or illegal drugs at all times.
- ▶ Comply with the Campus Attire Standard.
- ▶ Participate in Christian/Community Service activities to explore the giving of oneself in service to others and experience rewards of that service.
- ▶ Attend a church of the student's choice regularly.

Patten College reserves the right to dismiss any student, who, in the College's judgment, does not adhere to the stated regulations governing student conduct or fails to live within the expressed principles, policies, programs and expectations of the College.

I have read the above statement and understand the expectations that will be placed on me as a Patten College student. I commit myself to abiding by these policies and understand that the failure to do so may result in confrontation, counseling, discipline or expulsion.

Signature _____

Date _____

Source: Patten College (n.d.)