Building a Culture of Honor and Integrity in a Business School

Jennifer L. Eury[1] (iD) and Linda Klebe Treviño[1]

Abstract

We describe a unique co-curricular honor and integrity program at a large, research university's business school. We discuss the evolution of the program as well as the array of stakeholders who were involved in its early development and sustenance. We use an ethical culture template to highlight the formal and informal systems, and we discuss ongoing efforts to assess its effectiveness. We also reveal multiple challenges associated with building and sustaining a culture of honor and integrity for students, faculty, and staff. This program overview provides members of any business school community with a theory-based, but practical, roadmap for moving beyond finding a space in the academic curriculum to promote ethical behavior to developing and implementing a co-curricular honor and integrity program.

Keywords

As scandals persist, business schools are exhorted to attend more to business ethics and social responsibility (e.g., Anteby, 2013; O'Connor, 2013). We certainly agree with these exhortations. Most of us usually think about courses as the means to convey the message. Typical questions ask whether we should teach separate courses in ethics and social

[1]The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, USA

Corresponding Author:
Jennifer L. Eury, Smeal College of Business, The Pennsylvania State University, 452 Business Building, University Park, PA 16802, USA.
Email: jld345@psu.edu

responsibility or integrate the content throughout the curriculum. To that age-old debate, we respond, yes! Ideally, we should do both, although achieving that goal is rare in today's business schools. Even in the few schools that manage to do both, it may still be easy to label these courses as just "nice to do" when the mainstream assumptions about business (and the messages students receive) are first and foremost, about profit maximization (Ghoshal, 2005).

We would like to start a different conversation—one that focuses on how business schools can contribute to student learning about ethics and social responsibility by also focusing attention outside the traditional curriculum—by giving students the opportunity to experience what it is like to live and breathe a culture of integrity while in business school (Treviño & McCabe, 1994). We do this by studying the challenges associated with developing a culture of honor and integrity in a large business school that is part of an even larger research university, the Smeal College of Business at The Pennsylvania State University. Others have written about related topics such as the honor code and character development at the United States Military Academy at West Point (Dufresne & Offstein, 2012). But West Point is a relatively closed system where those in charge of character development and the honor code have a great deal of control that is uncommon in most other schools. Dufresne (2004) studied the adoption of an academic honor code in a large public university where the entire university adopted the honor code. And, the focus was on an *academic* honor code only. The setting we studied is unique in that it is a much more open system. For example, the university has an academic integrity policy but no university-wide honor code. Building a culture of honor and integrity in the business school within this larger university context presented unique challenges that are likely to be faced by other business schools that aim to develop their own culture of honor and integrity apart from the larger university.

For more than 10 years, the Smeal College has been developing and implementing a comprehensive honor and integrity program that is designed to instill learning about integrity and ethical behavior beyond formal classroom experiences. The college requires an ethics and social responsibility course for every undergraduate and MBA student as well as for some other master's programs. But we will focus here on the unique co-curricular honor and integrity program that complements the classroom. We will explain its evolution and current state by discussing the array of stakeholders who were involved in its early development and sustenance, by explaining how it fits within an ethical culture template (Treviño & Nelson, 2017), and by discussing ongoing assessment efforts and challenges.

Business School and the Historical Context

The college is one of the largest business schools in the country, with more than 6,000 students (primarily undergraduates) and more than 85,000 alumni (Smeal College of Business, 2019). Prior to the creation of the Honor Code, the college followed the university's academic integrity policy (discussed in more detail below) which provided broad guidance regarding the process for addressing academic dishonesty. However, despite this policy, many stakeholders perceived that student awareness of the policy was low and that cheating was rampant particularly in the many large introductory classes. The creation of the honor code, and consequently the launch of the college's honor and integrity program, initially served to address three primary aims. First, the code highlighted the importance of honor and integrity in the college. It also provided a means for encouraging and promoting accountability in the classroom, both between students and students, and between students and faculty. Finally, the code provided students with an ethical foundation for thinking about and preparing for the professional workplace where ethical codes of conduct are common.

Stakeholder Involvement

The idea of introducing an honor code was spurred by multiple vocal stakeholders for whom a then recent cheating scandal at the University of Virginia was particularly salient. Some faculty members were also familiar with research findings that graduate business students cheat more than nonbusiness graduate students and that the perceived ethical environment (e.g., perceptions of peer behavior) matters (McCabe, Butterfield, & Treviño, 2006). Members of the Dean's Board of Visitors (the advisory board) had a strong interest in creating an honor code; one of the board members' daughter attended a small private institution with a college-wide honor code and this member was passionate about its importance. This board member had also interviewed a Smeal student and asked what the student would do if he observed cheating. The student replied that he would take no action, a response that just increased the board member's resolve to advocate for an honor code. Several other board members concurred and raised the issue with the Dean regularly at advisory board meetings. At the same time, student leaders within both the MBA and undergraduate communities were discussing and advocating for an honor code to increase accountability in the classroom. Multiple stakeholder involvement and support was key to the successful launch of the honor and integrity program and the cultivation of such support is likely to be essential to any successful effort of this kind.

Establishing an academic honor code in the college also required working with university stakeholders who had responsibility for the existing university-wide academic integrity system. These stakeholders supported the business school's goal to develop an honor code, but it had to fit within the university's academic integrity framework. This was particularly important at the undergraduate level because students also take classes outside of the business school.

The multiple stakeholder groups came together, along with a supportive new Dean (who had been lobbied by board members even before joining the school), to develop, implement, and promote the initial academic honor code, piloting it first in the smaller MBA program (with less than 200 students). The new Dean had previously been the college's senior associate dean before leaving the business school to become the founding dean of the university's College of Information Sciences and Technology. On his return to the business school as Dean several years later, he worked with the advisory board and other stakeholders to make the honor code a key strategic goal and launched a pilot program in the MBA program.

The pilot went quite well and, a year later, the code was extended to the larger undergraduate program (nearly 5,000 students). The undergraduates who had been advocating for the code very much wanted to see it in force before their graduation and the board wanted it to be extended to the larger undergraduate population as well. We believe that heavy student involvement and advocacy contributed to the generally positive reception the code initially received from both undergraduate and graduate students. As an example, one undergraduate student had been advocating for a code since arriving in the business school. When the code was extended to undergraduates, he began volunteering his time to talk with large classes and other student groups about the code and its importance. After a while, the Dean could not help but recognize how much time the student had been devoting and began paying him for his efforts. Eventually, this student also won recognition in the business school as well as a university-wide ethics award for his work.

MBA students took the lead on writing the code (with input from the undergraduates) and it read (and still reads today):

> We aspire to the highest ethical standards and will hold each other accountable to them. We will not engage in any action that is improper or that creates the appearance of impropriety in our academic lives, and we intend to hold to this standard in our future careers.

Although the code reads the same for both sets of students, the processes for adjudication of violations were designed to differ somewhat because of

program size. In the smaller (more closed) MBA community, students and faculty were given more power and responsibility to investigate and hear cases, serve on review panels, and recommend sanctions. In the larger undergraduate community, the process of adjudication involved students, but faculty and administrators outnumbered students and therefore had more influence in making sanctioning decisions. Interestingly, after some time and positive experience with the workings of the honor code, MBA faculty began to entertain and generally support the idea of unproctored exams. It seemed like a logical next step. But, one accounting faculty member refused to go along, insisting that unproctored exams would be anathema to what he was supposed to be teaching his students—about control systems! When other faculty adopted unproctored exams, and this faculty member did not, he paid the price in student evaluations. He eventually left the college, in part because of the values misfit between the developing academic integrity culture and his strongly held beliefs about the importance of monitoring.

As the honor and integrity program developed, its reach expanded beyond academic integrity to include professional integrity, and beyond students, to include faculty and staff as well as alumni and recruiters. We took these expansions to signal a measure of the program's success. Members of the community had begun asking questions such as, "if honor and integrity are important here, shouldn't they apply outside of the classroom too?" We will discuss the expansions below as we describe how various components of the program fit into the ongoing development of a larger ethical culture at the school.

Ethical Culture at a Business School

We think of the ethical culture in the college as "how we do things around here" in relation to integrity and ethical behavior. Those who were involved in early and ongoing development of the program borrowed from the multisystem ethical culture framework initially developed by Treviño (1990) and updated by Treviño and Nelson (2017) in their text, *Managing Business Ethics* (see Figure 1). This idea of an ethical culture in an organization relies on earlier and broader research on organizational cultures by Schein (1985) and Deal and Kennedy (1982); the ethical culture framework is applicable to any organization or academic institution—business school, medical school, military academy, and of course, other organizations of all kinds. McCabe, Butterfield, and Treviño (2012) also talked about the ethical culture model's application to academic integrity more generally. Other higher education authors have similarly identified the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to improving academic integrity in a business school, health
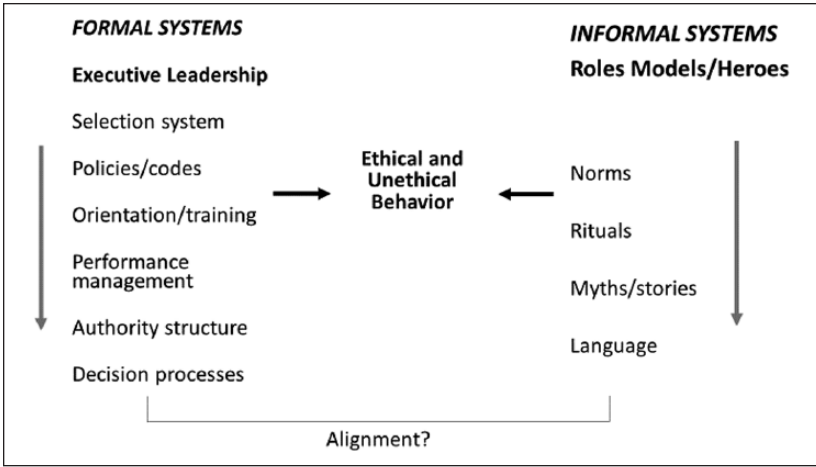
Figure 1. A multisystem ethical culture framework.
Note. Granted permission to reproduce from Treviño, L. K. & Nelson, K. A. (2017). *Managing business ethics: Straight talk about how to do it right* (7th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

sciences school, or on a college campus (e.g., Bertram-Gallant, 2008; Caldwell, 2010; Scanlan, 2006). But, here, we will describe in much more detail how one business school has applied this systematic theory-based cultural framework to guide the development and sustenance of an ethical culture that extends beyond academic integrity to professional integrity for students and honor and integrity among faculty and staff, and even alumni and recruiters.

The multisystem ethical culture framework we invoke identifies multiple formal and informal culture components that must work together (and, importantly, not at cross purposes) to support ethical conduct in the organization. More specifically, the formal ethical culture components include executive leadership, selection systems, policies and codes, orientation and training programs, performance management systems, the organization's authority structure, and decision processes. The informal ethical culture components include role models and heroes, norms, rituals, stories, and language. The formal and informal components, together, contribute to an organization's ethical or unethical culture. The systems can be aligned to support ethical behavior (or unethical behavior), and the systems can be misaligned in a way that sends mixed messages, for instance, the organization's code of conduct promotes one set of behaviors, but the organization's norms encourage another set of behaviors (Treviño & Nelson, 2017). For example, McCabe

and Treviño (1993) found that students' perceptions of their peers' behavior were very important in predicting cheating. The student perception that cheating is commonplace creates the norm that everyone is doing it and that it is not being reported. With regard to faculty, McKay, Kidwell, and Kling's (2007) research provides fertile ground to consider faculty behavior outside of the classroom, that is, going beyond their role in the classroom. Below, we explain how this works within the cultural context at the business school (see Table 1).

Formal Systems

The "formal systems" represent formal organizational communications, policies, and processes. These are the more easily observable aspects of culture.

Executive Leadership. Leadership at all levels is critically important to promoting an organization's values (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Treviño & Brown, 2014). At the business school, the Office of the Dean (through two deans since the program began) has been strongly committed to promoting a culture of integrity and ethical behavior and communicates that in a variety of ways. Perhaps most importantly, the Dean created a leadership position in the Office of the Dean to champion the college's day-to-day efforts to promote integrity. This position—the honor and integrity director—is responsible for the college's honor and integrity initiatives, including marketing and communications for internal and external communities, training and orientation, and policy execution and implementation. Essentially, the job is to create and sustain a culture of honor and integrity in the college (including students, faculty, and staff). In our view, having someone devoted (at least half time) to developing and sustaining an ethical culture is crucial to the success of the effort. In creating this new position, hiring a half-time administrative support position as well as establishing an honor and integrity operating budget, the Dean demonstrated the college's commitment. He also incorporated that commitment into the college's strategic plan. Finally, the Dean frequently mentions the importance of honor and integrity in public remarks to stakeholder groups.

In addition, a wide range of other stakeholders—faculty, staff, administrators, students, and even alumni and recruiters—support the ongoing development of the college's culture of integrity. For example, the former honor and integrity director created three committees dedicated to promoting integrity. The Honor and Integrity Steering Committee, composed of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni, reviewed and provided feedback on the college's progress toward fostering a culture of integrity and ethical behavior

Table 1. Examples of Formal and Informal Culture Components.

Formal systems	Examples of components
Executive leadership	• Dean • Honor and Integrity Director • Academic Integrity Officer
Selection system	• Recruitment process • Admissions application • Hiring process
Policies/codes	• University Values • College Honor Code • Academic Integrity Pledge
Orientation/ training	• Orientation programs • Discussion sessions • Courses (for credit)
Performance management	• Academic integrity process for violations • Teaching evaluations • Annual review process
Authority structure	• Instructors and teaching assistants • Program coordinators • University Hotline
Decision processes	• University Ethical Decision-Making Model • The Dean Is In information table • Office of Ethics and Compliance

Informal systems	Examples of Components
Role models/ heroes	• Award recipients • Faculty, students, and alumni featured on posters in the building • Students, faculty, and alumni involved in the development of the Honor Code
Norms	• Faculty set academic integrity expectations on the first day of class • Students wear business attire to special events • Alumni serve as guest speakers on ethics topics
Rituals	• Honor Code signing • Awards program • Case competitions
Myths/stories	• Honor Code story itself • Guests share stories about ethical and unethical behavior • MBA program declined admission to nearly 50 applicants for plagiarism (true story!)
Language	• Human Resources' monthly e-newsletter to faculty and staff • Signage throughout the building • Honor and Integrity program website

(more on this later); the Integrity Action Committee for Faculty and Staff, composed of faculty and staff, worked to strengthen faculty and staff commitment to integrity and ethical behavior; and the Integrity Action Committee for Students, comprised entirely of students, worked to strengthen students' commitment to integrity and ethical behavior. The Board of Visitors also formed an Honor and Integrity Sub-Committee, comprised of members of the college's Board of Visitors, and they provided suggestions for addressing challenges relating to promoting honor and integrity. The first three committees led by the honor and integrity director, and the latter committee was led by a member of the Board of Visitors (the honor and integrity director served as the college liaison to that committee). In addition to these committees, a small group of undergraduate volunteers called Integrity Advocates, proactively seek opportunities to support the initiatives of the honor and integrity program. Currently, the student champions for honor and integrity attend and staff special events, interact with alumni on behalf of the undergraduate community, and assist the local business community with interviewing award nominees; a relatively new partnership between the college and the local community to recognize a local business for their ethical practices.

Each academic degree program has also sought to promote ethical behavior by upholding academic integrity in the classroom. The college's academic integrity officer or a named program representative serves as a resource for students and faculty and addresses academic integrity violations. Although the academic integrity officer and honor and integrity director work closely together, the honor and integrity director focuses primarily on the "aspirational" side of honor and integrity and building a culture of integrity across the business school. The academic integrity officer (a role that is discussed more below) is responsible for student "accountability," that is, addressing academic integrity violations.

Like the role of managers in organizations, faculty are leaders who are on the front line of academic integrity issues. Therefore, their buy-in is essential and both roles discussed in the preceding paragraph support and encourage faculty to make academic integrity a priority. For example, faculty are encouraged to address how academic integrity applies to each academic deliverable and to explain their reasoning (for why students are expected to work independently, for example). As noted earlier, under the university academic integrity system, faculty are given substantial power to handle academic integrity violations in their classes and they are encouraged to take violations seriously. Also, the university offers a set of sanctioning guidelines for academic integrity violations to assist faculty in the sanctioning process and to support sanctioning consistency. We will explain more about how the university academic integrity system works below. In

addition, the honor and integrity program has sponsored gatherings for faculty to discuss their experiences with academic integrity and how they have successfully tackled problems. Finally, faculty who engage the system, specifically at the undergraduate level, have been recognized for their efforts with a message to the community listing individual faculty (by name) who participated in the academic integrity process during the past semester or academic year. Students also regularly share their appreciation for faculty members who set an ethical tone in the classroom and ensure the classroom playing field is fair.

Selection Systems. Members of the business school community communicate the college's commitment to integrity during the recruitment and admissions process for students, and during the interview process for some staff positions. With this anticipatory socialization, students (in particular) know, in advance, that if they attend the business school, honor and integrity are important to the culture. Prospective students receive a copy of the honor code; and for many degree programs, the students respond to one or more integrity questions on their program application. Accepted undergraduate students again receive a copy of the honor code; they (and their parents) learn more about the code and the college's commitment to integrity during New Student Orientation. The Human Resources Office maintains a list of integrity questions, provided by the honor and integrity director, for use in the interview process for staff.

Values, Policies, and Codes. The university has adopted six values: integrity, respect, responsibility, community, excellence, and discovery. One of the ways that the business school "lives" the university values is through its honor code's commitment to integrity. The college requires faculty to include the code in syllabi. Faculty are also encouraged to require students to sign an Academic Integrity Pledge on all graded deliverables. In addition to a focus on upholding academic integrity, the MBA program maintains and enforces a set of policies for professional conduct such as in the job search process. As noted above, this extension of the honor code beyond academic integrity began several years after the honor code was established. Several community members noted that if they truly believed in honor and integrity, it should apply to conduct beyond the classroom. This expansion beyond academic integrity remains a work in progress and requires involvement of stakeholders such as staff who work with students on internship and job placement. But it demonstrates the power of an honor and integrity message to expand beyond academic integrity to other domains. The students themselves raised this issue.

Orientation and Training Programs. To introduce new community members to the college's commitment to integrity the business school incorporates the "integrity message" into orientation programs. First, for students, the honor and integrity director and academic integrity officer speak at orientation programs for undergraduate and graduate students. The honor and integrity director may also conduct workshops at multiple orientation programs. The honor and integrity program, in partnership with the academic departments, has also offered teaching assistants a twice-yearly workshop on best practices for planning, grading, and interacting with students, as well as navigating some of the ethical dilemmas that may surface while serving as a teaching assistant. Undergraduate international students have been encouraged to attend specialized workshops that cover a range of topics related to integrity and ethical behavior, offered through the college or the university. Some undergraduate student organizations request specialized workshops for their members, to practice navigating ethical dilemmas in the classroom and the workplace. All second-year doctoral students are required to complete research integrity training, and all doctoral students complete a teaching boot camp, with a portion of the training dedicated to promoting academic integrity in the classroom. Several Fortune 500 companies have hosted discussion sessions called Donuts & Dilemmas, for interested students in which managers share ethical dilemmas that they have experienced in the workplace. Alumni who are current or former executives have also hosted similar discussion sessions for interested students. In keeping with the career preparation and training resources, the career services office incorporates question(s) related to integrity into the mock interview process so that students are prepared to answer ethics questions in an internship/job interview. The career services office also encourages corporate recruiters to ask ethics-related questions during interviews. Finally, some degree programs, such as the undergraduate management major, require students to complete an ethics-related course in addition to the all-college course, providing students with the knowledge and skills to successfully navigate ethical dilemmas in their specific field.

New employees—faculty, staff, and administrators—receive information about the honor code, and the college's commitment to promoting a culture of integrity. The honor and integrity director may also meet individually with new employees, as requested by units planning an individualized-orientation program for their new hires. The honor and integrity director and the academic integrity officer make presentations at the new faculty orientation program, and the Dean, along with the honor and integrity director and human resources representative often speak at most academic department meetings in the fall semester. Throughout the year, the honor and integrity

program may host workshops for faculty and staff supervisors. Other informal sessions also provide faculty (and PhD students), staff, and supervisors with the opportunity to discuss and navigate examples of ethical dilemmas around a topic or theme (e.g., classroom management, hiring process, performance reviews). The honor and integrity program has offered a professional development opportunity, centered around Giving Voice to Values (www.givingvoicetovaluesthebook.com), developed by Dr. Mary Gentile, to further empower staff (as well as student leaders in the residential MBA program) to act on their values in the workplace and in their academic program, respectively.

Performance Management Systems. The program goal is to support honor and integrity and its aspirational message. But, breaches do occur and accountability for them is important. Breaches of academic integrity (in the undergraduate program) are addressed initially by the faculty member in accordance with the university system. Faculty members can seek guidance from the academic integrity officer before talking with the student and proposing an academic sanction (e.g., zero on an exam if a student cheated). If the student accepts the academic sanction, both the faculty member and the student sign a form that gets submitted to the business school's records coordinator and is then filed with the University's Office of Student Conduct. Or, the student may appeal to the college's academic integrity officer who chairs a committee that then investigates and rules. This system empowers faculty to handle routine instances of academic integrity violations with academic sanctions. Egregious violations are referred to the University's Office of Student Conduct.

The smaller MBA program evolved a slightly different system to handle violations. Where the university process only involves the individual student and faculty member (unless the student contests the faculty member's proposed sanction), the MBA process involves two other students and another faculty member who serve on a review board to evaluate the violation and determine the appropriate sanction. Collectively, the MBA students believe that if a member of their community engages in an academic integrity violation, it affects the entire community; therefore, they wanted to be more involved in the process. Furthermore, given the design of the program, where students work in teams and cohorts, the MBA process provides consistency in how violations are addressed across the program (Carrie Marcinkevage, personal communication, February 21, 2018). This process is now also used in the Executive MBA program, online MBA program, and master of professional studies in management and organizational leadership program.

A unique component of the evaluation process for faculty and staff is also related to promoting a culture of integrity. For example, each semester, students complete a teaching effectiveness evaluation for each course; the business school added a question specifically related to the instructor's commitment to academic integrity: "Rate the instructor's standards of academic integrity." Students' responses to these questions are considered in each faculty member's annual review. Furthermore, the performance review process for staff provides supervisors with the opportunity to discuss the university values during the annual review period. And, both faculty and staff, are encouraged to report involvement in activities in support of the college's culture of honor and integrity (e.g., attending a professional development workshop, speaking to a student organization, judging a business ethics case competition) in their annual review materials.

Organizational Authority Structure and Reporting Problems. The honor and integrity director reports to the senior associate dean of the college, who then reports to the Dean. Not only can students, faculty, and staff raise concerns with the honor and integrity director, but students are encouraged to discuss academic integrity concerns with their instructor or other trusted instructors, teaching assistant(s), program coordinator, or associate dean. Faculty and staff are encouraged to discuss workplace concerns with their department chair/unit manager or human resources representative. Students, faculty, and staff may also raise concerns outside of the college, via the university hotline, a reporting system monitored by a third-party entity. These reports may be made anonymously and are addressed by the University's Ethics and Compliance Office. The university's 2013 and 2017 values and culture surveys showed that faculty and staff tend to report observed misconduct to their supervisors; however, there is also evidence of distrust of some reporting processes as well as a fear of potential retaliation (The Pennsylvania State University, 2018). Therefore, the multiple points of contact offer the community options for reporting misconduct. These reporting options are especially important in a university culture and business school community where "speaking up" is not yet the norm.

Decision-Making Processes. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to use the university ethical decision-making model, which is designed to provide community members with a process for considering the implications and consequences of difficult decisions (Penn State News, 2016). Monthly, the Dean of the college also hosts "The Dean Is In" information table, located in the atrium of the Business Building, to provide students with the opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns, and share feedback. Also, the honor and

integrity director may engage with the University's Office of Ethics and Compliance for decision-making consultation, especially related to the university's policies and procedures.

Informal Systems

The formal systems just described are extremely important. But, often, it is the "informal systems" that convey the message about how we "really" do things around here in relation to ethics. These informal systems include role models and heroes, the norms of daily behavior, the rituals we engage in, the stories we tell, and the language we use.

Role Models and Heroes. The honor and integrity program has created awards that relate explicitly to integrity to recognize those who stand out and also to create role models of those who go above and beyond. Each year select students (or student groups), faculty, and staff, receive an award for their commitment to advancing the college's integrity goals. The recipients of these awards have been highlighted in electronic communications sent to the college community. Similarly, the faculty, students, and alumni featured on posters hanging in the business building, especially those with quotes related to ethical behavior, serve as community role models. MBA students created a "Values" bulletin board, where they take turns giving kudos to classmates who demonstrated one of the university's values (e.g., recognizing a classmate for his efforts to welcome back a class of alumni, illustrating his commitment to "community"). Furthermore, the students, faculty, and alumni who were involved in the development of the honor code in 2006 serve as heroes for their foundational efforts.

Norms. Many norms within the college support a culture of integrity. For example, faculty are encouraged to discuss the honor code on the first day of class (information about it is included in the syllabus) and they are encouraged to revisit it as relevant throughout the semester. Students also tend to associate "professionalism" with the college; for example, students dress in business attire to attend special events held in the business building as well as to attend etiquette dinners and mock career fairs. Also, students talk about the honor code, and reference its importance during the internship and job search process (e.g., many students have learned that they should not renege on a job offer). Alumni and recruiters also volunteer to serve as guest speakers and mentors to students on ethics topics.

But norms also exist that detract from the ethical culture. For example, students may ask a friend to take their iClicker remote to class and to "click

in" for them; we have learned that this is considered by many students to be a "small cheat." If students are caught doing this, there are serious consequences, of course. But, some faculty and staff, and most students remain reluctant to speak up should they observe an integrity violation in the classroom or the workplace. Perhaps, they do not want to get involved, or they fear some form of retaliation from peers or superiors. In fact, some students have been known to say, "I'm not going to squeal for Smeal (Smeal College of Business)!" Obviously, this mind-set is inconsistent with the school's efforts to create a culture of integrity. So, this cultural area needs ongoing attention. It is getting attention in the MBA program where some team contracts now stipulate the norm, "When in doubt, give a shout," meaning that teams should contact their professor if they have a question about the expectations for a deliverable.

Rituals. The major honor and integrity-related ritual is the electronic honor code signing. Each semester, the honor and integrity program organizes a college-wide public honor code signing event in the building's large atrium. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to regularly reaffirm their commitment to integrity and ethical behavior. Students, including representatives from the MBA program (recall the honor and integrity initiative started in the MBA program) as well as some faculty and staff also wear their honor and integrity program T-shirt and help at the signing kiosk. The college also continues to improve the interface for signing, with efforts to encourage the community to see the signing process as something other than compliance-based. In fact, signers may also opt to receive an e-certificate to add to their LinkedIn profile. Typically, the college community has also celebrated Corporate Compliance and Ethics Week; students, faculty, and staff, engage in a week-long celebration with guest speakers, workshops, and contests, to highlight the importance of ethics and compliance in the workplace. Furthermore, the awards program mentioned earlier, is another important college ritual.

In addition to a variety of college-wide rituals, the college also focuses on rituals specifically for the student community. For example, during finals week, the honor and integrity program organizes Honor Code Coffee Breaks to remind students of the college's commitment to integrity and their responsibility to the honor code; complimentary coffee is served. In addition to the honor and integrity awards program, one or more seniors are also eligible to receive an academic integrity award; the award recognizes someone who demonstrates leadership in academic integrity. Furthermore, students participate in ethics case competitions. The competitions provide undergraduate students with an opportunity to apply ethical decision-making skills and knowledge to an organizational ethics decision challenge and recommend a

course of action for the organization; one of these competitions is supported by a corporate sponsor, and the other competition is embedded in the college's first-year seminar course. Furthermore, the honor and integrity program has established a standing college team that regularly meets to prepare for and compete at international business ethics and social responsibility case competitions. MBA students also typically participate in one or two coffee gatherings each semester; the gatherings, sponsored by the honor and integrity program and the college's endowed program in business ethics, have featured MBA students and alumni who share personal ethical dilemma experiences.

Myths and Stories. Many stories support the college's focus on promoting a culture of integrity and provide a perspective on the reasons for the community-wide commitment to ethical behavior. First, the honor code story itself emphasizes the fact that its development was largely a student-driven initiative, with a lot of support from alumni. Shortly after the honor code was established, the college created a position—leadership integrity director—to support the college's honor code initiatives, including adherence to the university's academic integrity policy. Later, the position evolved into the honor and integrity director, with a primary focus on promoting an aspirational culture of integrity and ethical behavior across the college. In addition to the honor and integrity program, the Office of the Dean and several faculty members invite alumni and guests to return to campus to share stories about ethical and unethical decisions and actions. More specifically, the college's executive speaker series program called Executive Insights, features high-profile business leaders from a wide range of organizations, and typically includes a discussion about ethical decision making and organizational values or culture. The college's endowed program in business ethics has also brought in guests who have shared their experience with unethical behavior, stories that resonate with students. For example, Aaron Beam, founding CFO at HealthSouth Corp (see aaronbeam.net) and Mark Whitacre, "The Informant"—he uncovered the ADM price-fixing scandal (see markwhitacre.com), are former felons who have visited. Some may argue that ex-felons should not be extended such invitations. But students consistently say that these are memorable and important educational experiences. Members of the college community also tell a powerful story about a time when the college's MBA program (post honor code) declined admission to nearly 50 applicants for plagiarism (on their leadership integrity essay!). It became one of the first business schools to use plagiarism detection software in its admissions program. The program makes it clear to applicants now that honor and integrity are key to the culture and that it uses the plagiarism software. The MBA

program also devotes several hours of its week-long orientation program to academic integrity and professionalism. Finally, at the undergraduate level, there is a myth that anyone who cheats will be "kicked out" of the business school; although this is not necessarily true, the myth's message suggests to students that academic integrity is taken seriously.

Ethical Language. The communications strategy for promoting honor and integrity has varied from director to director and will continue to do so. At one time, the honor and integrity program sent an e-newsletter to students, faculty, and staff; the communications served as a continual reminder of opportunities for involvement, as well as the resources for reporting wrong-doing. The Dean also typically sends periodic messages, particularly at the beginning and conclusion of each semester, reminding the community of the university values and the college's commitment to promoting a culture of integrity and ethical behavior. Messages related to the university values, the honor code, and the college's commitment to integrity are also visible else-where including Human Resources' monthly e-newsletter to faculty and staff (where the honor and integrity director includes a regular message), handouts at special events hosted by the college, occasional online discussion posts in the college's LinkedIn community for alumni, and signage throughout the business building (including at one time, the restrooms' "stall stories" were used to raise ethical issues commonly faced by students "while we have your attention"). The building signage not only includes messages from students, faculty, and alumni, but most, if not all departments display a copy of the honor code and the university's hotline number in their office space. These messages must constantly be refreshed, and new ideas hatched to keep the program alive.

The honor and integrity program also maintains an integrity website (www.smeal.psu.edu/integrity). Outside of these communications, students also "talk" about making the right choices, particularly in the context of the internship or job search process, and faculty also "talk" about the importance of academic integrity in their classes.

Alignment of Ethical Culture Systems

The above description makes it easy to think about the ethical culture as a series of unrelated systems. But ethical culture is complex and much of that complexity arises from the need for these systems to be aligned to support honor and integrity. An example of misalignment is a professor (leader) mak-ing it clear that having a friend bring an iClicker remote to class is an aca-demic integrity violation (honor code violation) but having norms of daily

behavior suggesting that lots of students do it and that it is not a big deal. Students then get mixed messages and may need to learn that this professor will deal with violations seriously, making it into a big deal after all. Even at West Point, where the honor code includes a nontoleration clause—"a cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do" (Offstein, Dufresne, & Childers, 2012, p. 635)—there is an on-going tension between "loyalty" and "honor." In fact, the nontoleration clause tends to be a frequent point of violation (Offstein et al., 2012). An even knottier misalignment is the formal support for speaking up about integrity violations but learning that community members remain reluctant to do so. This is a problem most organizations face (Mayer, Nurmohamed, Treviño, Shapiro, & Schminke, 2013; Miceli, Near, & Dworkin, 2008) and it takes a concerted effort over time to create an environment that supports speaking up and reporting (and this is challenging when the community changes every year as students graduate, and the larger university community lacks an honor code). These are just a few examples. But, while building and sustaining a culture of integrity, one needs to always attempt to find and address such examples of misalignment.

Measurement and Reporting

In general, the college's honor and integrity program has achieved its three initial aims. More than 10 years later, the code still provides a formal means for promoting accountability in the classroom, for both students and faculty; and the code continues to provide students with an ethical foundation for thinking about and preparing for the professional workplace. As time has passed, however, the college's honor and integrity program has increasingly focused on this notion of creating and promoting a broader culture of honor and integrity. Therefore, although culture change is slow, it is essential to take the temperature of the college's ethical culture via regular and ongoing assessment.

The university conducted its first ever values and culture survey in fall, 2013 (repeated in fall, 2017) among students, faculty, and staff. Most notably, the 2017 survey, for example, showed that in comparison to the 2013 survey, survey participants observed fewer instances of misconduct within the last year and reported misconduct at higher rates, but for those who did report, the rate of perceived retaliation remained consistent between the two surveys (The Pennsylvania State University, 2018), meaning that the university has more work to do.

Shortly after the launch of the honor code in 2006 and 2007, the business school also began to conduct its own regular survey of MBAs, undergraduates, and faculty, asking students in classes to complete a paper survey and

distributing paper surveys to faculty mailboxes. The questions on the survey focused on perceptions of academic integrity, for example, observations of academic integrity, willingness to report a classmate/student who violated academic integrity standards. Typically, the response rates were average to above average and the results of the surveys highlighted students' reluctance to report an academic integrity violation, particularly among the undergraduate community, and faculty members' commitment to holding students accountable to academic integrity standards.

Starting in spring 2014, at the same time the former honor and integrity director was hired, the business school launched a somewhat revised survey. Unlike previous years, the survey did not only focus on academic integrity, the college-wide e-survey (vs. paper survey) to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and recruiters gauged community members' perceptions of the college's ethical culture and the extent to which it supports honor and integrity. For example, for the first time, staff were asked about their willingness to confront or report their supervisor or another employee for violating an issue related to integrity and ethical behavior. The survey also asked all participants to offer recommendations for promoting integrity and ethical behavior across the college community. The last two rounds of surveys, now including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and recruiters, produced a less than ideal response rate (likely because of moving from paper to electronic survey format), but nevertheless indicated a need for raising awareness around confronting others who are violating integrity standards, and the reporting process. Based on this knowledge, the honor and integrity program implemented a series of professional development workshops (voluntary) for students, faculty, and staff, centered on navigating ethical dilemmas and educating the community on the reporting processes. It is important to note that the surveys also highlighted the fact that alumni and recruiters are taking note of the honor and integrity program, recognizing that the students demonstrate integrity and ethical behavior.

In addition to these surveys, the honor and integrity program office conducted a series of focus groups. The focus groups asked students, faculty, and staff about their experience at the business school, and to help address some of the issues identified in the ethical culture survey. The last round of focus groups also highlighted the limited understanding of the reporting process among some students, faculty, and staff, and consequently feelings of distrust for the reporting systems and fear of retaliation for reporting.

After the last round of surveys, and during the timeframe that some of the last focus groups were conducted, the honor and integrity director, along with the human resources representative also met with most of the college's supervisors (and their respective teams), in large part to address some of the challenge

areas raised in the survey (and concurrently in the focus groups). The small-group meetings served to clarify and discuss the reporting resources (and processes) available to them through human resources and the honor and integrity program as well as the university's hotline (where reporters can be anonymous), and to empower those who want and need to speak up, to do so.

In addition to surveys and focus groups, and gauging members' perceptions of the culture, representatives from the college's academic programs also provide the community with an overview of the academic integrity violations that were referred and resolved during a specified period via disclosure notices. For a period, particularly at the time when communications increased and professional development workshops around speaking up were implemented, the number of reported violations increased. We do not have reason to believe that there were more academic integrity violations, but rather that the communications heightened awareness around accountability. However, it is difficult to gauge the meaning of these numbers. More reports could mean more violations, or they could mean a higher willingness to report. Therefore, the information about the number of violations, although important, must be combined with information gleaned from other sources to interpret its meaning.

Outside of these formal metrics, the honor and integrity program has maintained a dashboard to track types of initiatives, audience types, and number of attendees for each activity organized by the program office. The program has also administered short surveys after many events. Based on the findings from the surveys and focus groups as well as the feedback from event surveys, the honor and integrity program continues to change and develop its efforts to promote integrity and ethical behavior (e.g., shifting from general professional development workshops for faculty and staff, to workshops centered on specific topics geared toward staff with supervisory responsibilities or faculty in the classroom).

Finally, and over time, the honor and integrity director has increasingly become a resource and sounding board for students, faculty, staff, and administrators. For example, students seek advice with making ethical choices during the internship and job search process and navigating leadership challenges in their student organizations. Faculty, staff, and administrators often seek guidance with managing ethically challenging relationships with their peers, direct reports, and managers. In these latter situations, the honor and integrity director typically works in conjunction with the employee and human resources or another appropriate office, to formally resolve the matters. The honor and integrity director, however, provides a first point of contact for community members reluctant to talk with their managers or human resources directly.

Because of its commitment to promoting a culture of honor and integrity, the college has also served as a resource for other units and groups throughout the university. For example, the former honor and integrity director regularly conducted workshops for units and groups, consisting of students as well as staff, across campus. Furthermore, the college, in partnership with a financial services corporation, co-hosted the first ethics symposium designed to promote a dialogue between business schools and executives, in 2010. Since then, other business schools have hosted the symposium, bringing together corporations and business school deans to share ideas, challenges, and best practices in preparing young professionals to lead with integrity in today's workplace. The college hosted the symposium called "Partners in Business Ethics," once again in 2017, where the theme was creating a culture supportive of "speaking up."

Challenges of Sustaining a Culture

Sustaining a culture of honor and integrity is challenging, particularly in higher education. First, the immediate community consists of students, faculty, and staff; the student body, the largest sector of the business school, changes from semester to semester and year to year. Each time a class of students graduate, another class joins the community. Therefore, the college is continuously orienting and training new community members, and at the same time, encouraging current members to "live" honor and integrity. This is one reason the college organizes the honor code signing every semester and encourages all members of the community to sign it every semester (instead of one time or once a year).

Another challenge is the business school's size and diversity. It is a large business school with several programs in residency and online. Some of the undergraduate students start at a smaller university system campus, and then move to the business school for their remaining 2 years. Students are from the state, from other parts of the country, and from around the world. The college offers a wide range of degree programs, catering to different personal and professional interests. For example, undergraduate students, unlike the executive MBA students, have limited perspective and work experiences. Therefore, the honor and integrity program seeks to engage the perspectives of the students, faculty, and staff who serve on its committees to identify different communication tactics and to develop new activities that will promote the honor code and university's values and resonate with each community group.

Furthermore, another challenge is maintaining momentum in between leadership changes for the honor and integrity program. After the first leadership integrity director stepped down from her role, the college did not fill her

position for a few years in part because of a coming change in deans. Then, the new Dean hired the honor and integrity director, who served in her role for 3 ½ years. After accepting a new role in the college, the business school conducted a search for a new director, lasting close to 8 months. In between each of these leadership changes, the community continued to change and grow, and without someone constantly "tending to the ethical culture garden" (Treviño & Nelson, 2017), as we like to say, the "weeds" will begin to grow. Therefore, we would like to stress the importance of continuously having someone in the honor and integrity director role. Although some of the initiatives that we have described will surely change or evolve, having someone in this role makes an important symbolic statement about the college's commitment to tending the culture but it also makes a more substantive contribution to doing so.

Finally, we should say that building a culture of honor and integrity does not happen overnight. As other business schools consider how they may build a culture of honor and integrity, or further strengthen their existing integrity culture, we would like to offer some input on what can and should be prioritized. First, and foremost, the Dean must value creating and sustaining a culture of honor and integrity and communicate its importance and the role it has in the college, to all stakeholder groups (e.g., new students at orientation, faculty and staff at townhall meetings, alumni and donors at special events). The Dean might even send a monthly or quarterly "values-moment" e-mail to the faculty, staff, and student community, sharing a story about one of the school's values in action. If the Dean cannot yet hire a full-time "Honor and Integrity Director," the Dean could appoint an existing committed faculty member to serve as the Honor and Integrity Coordinator (offering the faculty member a stipend and/or course release). As committed as a Dean might be, because Deans are busy, we believe it is essential that it be someone else's job to be thinking about the culture of honor and integrity every day. The coordinator might begin by first focusing attention on orientation efforts and multiple culture-building events during the academic year. The Dean could also personally ask the business student council (or another similar student organization) to partner with the college to promote honor and integrity. The student organization could assist at orientation, present in first-year seminar classes, and host special events. Volunteers are a creative way to extend the available resources devoted to honor and integrity. Although not all of the components of an ethical culture may be in motion at first, it is critically important that any and all efforts relating to honor and integrity are still mutually reinforcing each other and the messages from the Dean. Over time, as the college moves past its "start-up" period, additional resources (human and

financial) should be allocated, so that a full multisystem approach to establishing and maintaining the honor and integrity culture may be established and sustained over time.

Conclusion

We have offered a theory-based multisystem ethical culture framework for introducing a co-curricular honor and integrity program at a business school. Through this program, the students, faculty, and staff can live and breathe a culture of honor and integrity. It is Smeal's hope that its students find it preferable to possible alternatives (corrupt cultures where cheating is rampant, and the financial bottom line is all that matters) and that it will help to guide their choices about companies to join and decisions to make. We hope that future research will corroborate this hope and expectation. Many of the businesses that recruit the school's students have strong ethics and compliance programs and they appear to be thrilled that the students are prepared to hit the ground running when it comes to understanding what will be expected of them at work. The college views this approach as an important way to support its students' development of ethical awareness and to support their preparation for the workplace while also fostering a workplace for faculty and staff that upholds the highest ethical standards.

ORCID iD

Jennifer L. Eury (iD) https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1311-1098

References

Anteby, M. (2013, October 22). Why business schools need business ethics. *The Guardian*.

Bertram-Gallant, T. (2008). *Academic integrity in the twenty-first century: A teaching and learning imperative*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brown, M., & Treviño, L. K. (2006). Ethical leadership: A review and future directions. *Leadership Quarterly*, *17*, 595-616.

Caldwell, C. (2010). A ten-step model for academic integrity: A positive approach for business schools. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *92*, 1-13.

Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). *Corporate cultures*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Dufresne, R. L. (2004). An action learning perspective on effective implementation of academic honor codes. *Group & Organization Management*, *29*, 201-218.

Dufresne, R. L., & Offstein, E. H. (2012). Holistic and intentional student character development process: Learning from West Point. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *11*, 570-590.

Ghoshal, S. (2005). Bad management theories are destroying good management practices. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *4*, 75-91.

Mayer, D. A., Nurmohamed, S., Treviño, L. K., Shapiro, D. L., & Schminke, M. (2013). Encouraging employees to report unethical conduct internally: It takes a village. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *121*, 89-103.

McCabe, D. L., Butterfield, K. D., & Treviño, L. K. (2006). Academic dishonesty in graduate business programs: Prevalence, causes, and proposed action. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *5*, 294-305.

McCabe, D. L., Butterfield, K. D., & Treviño, L. K. (2012). *Cheating in college: Why students do it and what educators can do about it*. Baltimore, MD. Johns Hopkins University Press.

McCabe, D. L., & Treviño, L. K. (1993). Academic dishonesty: Honor codes and other contextual influences. *Journal of Higher Education*, *64*, 522-538.

McKay, R. B., Kidwell, L. A., & Kling, J. A. (2007). Faculty ethics from the perspective of college of business administrators. *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues*, *10*, 105-124.

Miceli, M., Near, J., & Dworkin, T. (2008). Whistle-blowing in organizations. New York, NY: Routledge.

O'Connor, S. (2013, May 15). The responsibility of business schools in training ethical leaders. *Forbes*. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/shawnoconnor/2013/05/15/the-responsibility-of-business-schools-in-training-ethical-leaders-2/#7c307d2e60bd

Offstein, E. H., Dufresne, R. L., & Childers, J. S., Jr. (2012). Reconciling competing tensions in ethical systems: Lessons from the United States Military Academy at West Point. *Group & Organization Management*, *37*, 617-654.

Penn State News. (2016). *Model for ethical decision making part of the Penn State values*. Retrieved from https://news.psu.edu/story/389670/2016/01/27/model-ethical-decision-making-part-penn-state-values

Scanlan, C. L. (2006). Strategies to promote a climate of academic integrity and mini-
    mize student cheating and plagiarism. *Journal of Allied Health*, *35*, 179-185.

Schein, E. H. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco, CA:
    Jossey-Bass.

Smeal College of Business. (2019). *About Smeal*. Retrieved from https://www.smeal.
    psu.edu/about-smeal

The Pennsylvania State University. (2018). *The Pennsylvania State University Values
    & Culture Survey* (University-wide findings). University Park, PA. Retrieved
    from https://www.psu.edu/ur/newsdocuments/2017_Values_and_Culture_Survey
    _Executive_Summary.pdf

Treviño, L. K. (1990). A cultural perspective on changing and developing organiza-
    tional ethics. In R. Woodman & W. Passmore (Eds.), *Research in organizational
    change and development* (Vol. 4, pp. 195-230). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Treviño, L. K., & Brown, M. B. (2014). Ethical leadership. In D. V. Day (Ed.). *Oxford
    Handbook of Leadership and Organizations* (pp. 524-538). New York, NY:
    Oxford University Press.

Treviño, L. K., & McCabe, D. (1994). Meta-learning about business ethics: Creating
    honorable business school communities, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *13*, 405-416.

Treviño, L. K., & Nelson, K. A. (2017). *Managing business ethics: Straight talk about
    how to do it right* (7th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.