

A University Applied Ethics Center: The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University

Brian Patrick Green, David DeCosse, Kirk Hanson,
Don Heider, Margaret R. McLean, Irina Raicu,
and Ann Skeet

THE MARKKULA CENTER FOR Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University (hereafter abbreviated as the Ethics Center or the Markkula Center) is a multi-program, university-based, applied ethics center—the largest and most comprehensive one of its kind in the world. Many universities have ethics centers, and some are applied ethics centers, but the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics is distinctive in its breadth, covering multiple major areas in applied ethics, such as bioethics, business ethics, government ethics, journalism ethics, and so on.

Since its founding in 1986, the Markkula Center has worked to promote ethics both on and off campus. It has played a major role in promoting ethical discussion at the university, in the local region, and, increasingly, nationally and internationally. This paper provides not only a description of the Ethics Center, but also an examination of how an ethics center can serve as one locus of ethics on a university campus, thus providing us the opportunity to engage the field of university ethics, and in particular James Keenan's book *University Ethics: How Colleges Can Build and Benefit from a Culture of Ethics*.¹

This paper will describe the history and focus of the Markkula Center and its role on campus, including efforts to foster ethical norms, promote ethical practices, and build an ethical community. To this end, some of the Ethics Center's programs and resources will be examined, as well as some of the Center's successes and challenges. From experience, the Markkula Center can report that Keenan's prognosis is on target: there is a hunger for ethics across the university; there is an openness to engagement on all manner of applied ethics topics; and there are constant possibilities to provide contexts and

¹ James F. Keenan, *University Ethics: How Colleges Can Build and Benefit from a Culture of Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

practices to respond to this openness and help foster the creation of a stronger Santa Clara community.

HISTORY: HOW DID THE MARKKULA CENTER FOR APPLIED ETHICS COME TO BE?

The study of ethics and morals has, of course, long been a characteristic of Jesuit and Catholic education. Ethics was taught to students at Santa Clara from the university's founding in 1851 as a part of the Jesuit commitment to educating the whole person, and even today, every undergraduate student is required to take at least one course in ethical reasoning.

However, by 1986, the University was ready for a new initiative focused on applied ethics. The "Center for Applied Ethics" was launched that year by then SCU President William Rewak, SJ, who appointed philosophy professor Manuel Velasquez to be the founding director. The Center was initially backed by seed funding from Mike and Linda Markkula. At the time, Mike Markkula was chair of Apple Computer and had long been concerned that America was neglecting ethics education and was producing a generation of "ethical agnostics" with little exposure to the importance of ethics in life.

Operating from a back room in the university's old library, Velasquez, with the close collaboration of Mike Markkula, made three very significant choices which have influenced the Center for the rest of its history:

- First, the Center would focus on applied ethics, the practical application of ethics to personal and professional lives.
 - Second, the Center would be concerned with ethics in multiple applied fields, not just in business ethics, medical ethics, or any other single discipline.
 - Third, insisted upon by Markkula, was that the Center would be a university-level center, not part of any single school or college.
- Velasquez focused considerable effort initially toward defining applied ethics in the context of the Center and toward creating what is known as "A Framework for Ethical Decision Making," an easy-to-use guide to making ethical choices.² The framework provides five ethical lenses to help people view and analyze an ethical issue, as well as a systematic set of steps to use in the process, with the goal always being to help equip individuals to have a better grasp of the ethical decision-making process so they may use the process to make their own decisions. Velasquez also began an outreach to the community to engage professionals in the discussion of ethics and launched a weekly campus speaker series which became known as "Ethics at Noon."

² "A Framework for Ethical Decision Making," Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, 2009, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/a-framework-for-ethical-decision-making/>.

In 1988, Paul Locatelli, SJ, became president of Santa Clara and used the Center as a model to establish what he called the university's three "Centers of Distinction," university-level centers that would express core-values of Santa Clara University, the other two being the Bannan Center for Jesuit Education (now the Ignatian Center for Jesuit Education) and the Center for Science, Technology, and Society (now the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship). These represented to Locatelli what should be three emphases of a modern Jesuit university—ethics, Jesuit education, and a concern for the impact of technology on society. At this point, Mike and Linda Markkula provided an initial endowment for the Center for Applied Ethics, which the University renamed the "Markkula Center for Applied Ethics."³

From 1995 on, the Center's influence was multiplied by the pioneering on-line presence of its website and later on-line courses and streaming presentations. During this early period, the Center's website was the most visited ethics website in the world, eventually attracting over two million unique visitors per year. The "Framework for Ethical Decision Making" has been downloaded over a million times and viewed many more. Ethics Center cases, curricula, videos, and courses are used by millions of individuals and hundreds of institutions around the world.

Over the years, the staff has grown to over twenty-five, and the Center's programs have expanded into eleven main areas of applied ethics: bioethics, business ethics, campus ethics, character education, government ethics, internet ethics, journalism and media ethics, leadership ethics, religious and Catholic ethics, social sector ethics, and technology ethics (along with further resources in environmental ethics, engineering ethics, sports ethics, global ethics, and legal ethics). Each program area with a director (not all currently have directors) has gone through the design thinking process, so we can better know who our audiences are and whether the materials we produce are helpful. These areas are regularly evaluated, as the Center considers whether we should grow into more areas or phase other areas out.

The Ethics Center continues to change, but its focus will always remain on the practical use of ethical thinking in the real world.

FOCUS OF THE ETHICS CENTER: ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND

The Markkula Center, at present, can be thought of as being 90 percent outwardly focused and 10 percent inwardly focused. That is,

³ It is worth noting that the Markkulas did not ask for the Center to be named for them but rather had to be convinced by Locatelli to lend their name to it.

roughly 90 percent of staff's time and effort is put into helping organizations and individuals outside of Santa Clara University; this means helping real human beings in the world outside of the academy understand ethics and use applied ethics to make better decisions in their work and in their personal lives. The remaining effort is spent running a campus ethics program (directed by staff but executed by students), helping faculty develop ethics curricula and modules for classes, supervising student ethics interns, working with student ethics fellows, and parsing out grants to faculty in applied ethics research. For a discussion of university ethics, it may seem strange that the Ethics Center is balanced so outwardly. However, the 90 percent of effort that is aimed off-campus should not be thought of as having no ethical impact on campus. Indeed, the successes of the Ethics Center off campus serve its on-campus mission and develop an overall culture of ethics on campus. Off-campus activities shape the reputation of Santa Clara University, which in turn shapes cultural expectations among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and others who engage the university.

Work aimed outside of the university consists of developing, promoting, teaching, and otherwise sharing materials such as *Campaign Ethics: A Field Guide*, a guidebook for conducting ethical political campaigns,⁴ and *Culture Assessment Practice*, a tool for assessing an organization's ethical culture and guidelines on how to build and foster a culture where ethics is valued.⁵ Though these materials, and many others, are offered for no charge on the Center's website, Center staff spend a good deal of time outside of the Center teaching these and other materials to varied audiences. For example, the *Ethics in Technology Practice* materials have been run at major companies including Alphabet (Google and X) and several other companies, which are protected by non-disclosure agreements, including a scale-up to sixty thousand employees at one firm.⁶ These sorts of outward-facing successes help build the credibility and legitimacy of the Markkula Center on campus and have the overall effect of helping people on campus take ethics more seriously.

⁴ Hana S. Callaghan, *Campaign Ethics: A Field Guide* (Santa Clara, CA: Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, 2019), <http://www.scu.edu/government-ethics/resources/campaign-ethics-a-field-guide/>.

⁵ Ann Skeet, *Culture Assessment Practice* (Santa Clara, CA: Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, 2018), <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/culture-assessment-practice/>.

⁶ Shannon Vallor, Brian Green, and Irina Raicu, *Ethics in Technology Practice*, Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, 2018, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics-in-technology-practice/>. Markkula Center Staff, "Ethics in Tech: A New Resource," Santa Clara University website, Aug 1, 2018, <http://www.scu.edu/news-and-events/press-releases/2018/august-2018/ethics-in-tech-a-new-resource.html>, and Kent Walker, "Google AI Principles updates, six months in," *Google Blog*, Dec 18, 2018, <http://www.blog.google/technology/ai/google-ai-principles-updates-six-months/>.

The Center also acts to engage current issues and controversies. The Center holds weekly meetings on emerging ethical issues in the news, staff members regularly talk to journalists, produce op-ed pieces for news publications, and weigh in on issues such as climate change or immigration in the “Spotlight” section of the website, which highlights the work of Center staff, faculty scholars, and affiliates.

In the following sections, we will explore the role that the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics plays on campus and some specific ways in which it works to develop a culture of ethics at Santa Clara University.

THE ROLE OF THE ETHICS CENTER ON CAMPUS

While the Ethics Center has relationships with many organizations throughout the world, its home at Santa Clara University must always be of paramount importance. The Center has over seventy faculty scholars at the University who collaborate with the Center on campus events, media commentary, and other projects, such as the Ethics Bowl team (National Champions in 2018). Markkula Center experts speak at dozens of conferences and meetings around the world each year on topics across all of its program areas. This section will explore three areas where the Ethics Center engages ethics on campus: fostering ethical norms, promoting ethical practices, and building an ethical community.

ETHICAL NORMS

In *University Ethics*, Keenan argues that ethical norms—understood as values, virtues, and goods—should be practiced across all aspects of a university and not simply be material for classes on philosophical or professional ethics. This claim raises hard questions about what approach to ethics can accomplish such a university-wide goal. Santa Clara University faces a highly diverse social context. To be sure, the Ethics Center stands proudly in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition of the university. But the older Catholic world of the Santa Clara Valley that supplied generations of students to the university has faded in strength and now co-exists with a vibrant pluralism that includes Hispanic Catholicism; the immigrant-rich San Francisco Bay Area; late California boomerish antipathy to authority; postmodern West Coast spiritualities; Silicon Valley upheaval and innovation; and growing, vast disparities in income and wealth.

Amid this social context, several cultural worldviews (each with their own ethic) vie as ways to provide meaning for a good life. In particular, context demands that the Ethics Center take into account the effortless spread of free market logic to ethical decision-making;

the identification of ethics with postmodern concerns about power and social justice; the determination of right and wrong in ways consistent with supposedly benign outcomes of evolutionary biology or technological progress; the subordination of ethics to the raw power of authoritarian populism; and the refusal of all moral claims inconsistent with an uncritical tolerance.

In such a context, how should an Ethics Center identify the norms by which it will seek to foster a university-wide culture of ethics? Here it is important to recognize that the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics is not a “Catholic ethics center”—but it is an ethics center at a Catholic university. In that sense, the Ethics Center appeals to an objective, pluralist approach to ethics consistent with the Jesuit humanist tradition.

The Ethics Center supports research but is more focused on programs that connect ethics and practitioners. The Center favors a dilemma-based approach to ethics, seeking to solve concrete problems now, over an emphasis on long-term character formation, although character formation is certainly not excluded (as our character education program area demonstrates).⁷ At the root of this approach is a conviction that objectivity in ethics is possible. Right answers can be found, or at least the best possible answers consistent with ethics as a field of practical, not speculative, reason. These answers can be true in a real, objective sense insofar as the claim it places on us follows from convincing rational arguments and is a binding claim independent of our desires. Embedded in this objective approach is an openness to a wide variety of traditions in philosophical (utilitarianism, rights, social contract, virtue, common good, and more) and professional ethics (business ethics, medical ethics, bioethics, government ethics, and more). Moreover, the approach is consistently *applied*, and, in saying that, we are expressing a confidence that a consideration of values, virtues, and goods in the context of specific work in areas like law, art, medicine, technology, and engineering can yield objective ethical insights and decisions.

This approach to ethics has proven successful as a way for the Ethics Center to engage the very diverse community at the university and beyond. While philosophy departments may lament the lack of attention to meta-ethical questions, this practical applied approach proves successful for ethical decision-making as experienced in the real world. The Ethics Center is also determined to include more social and non-Western ethics in this pluralistic approach in the future.

⁷ Markkula Center Staff, “Character Education,” Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, <http://www.scu.edu/character/>.

PRACTICES

The Ethics Center has many program areas, but the Campus Ethics Program is the designated means by which the Ethics Center engages the university campus. Over the years, there have been three primary ways the program has done this: public events; student fellowship and internship programs; and grants for faculty and student research in applied ethics. These three modes of engagement are themselves ethical practices and have sought to foster ethical awareness, thinking, and practices across the university.

In the experience of Ethics Center staff, the recognized potential for public events to contribute to ethical formation may be greatly underestimated. The work required to make such events a success also may be greatly underestimated. It has been a core aspect of the identity of the Ethics Center to be non-partisan and an honest broker. This commitment has been inspired by respect for individuals' points of view and by the desire to foster public conversation. By modeling the behavior of an honest broker, the Center is engaged in a process of ethical formation. And public events where controversial or disputed points of view are aired out passionately, but civilly, also provide signal instances of ethical formation. There are costs to this honest broker status; for instance, the Ethics Center does not comment in its own right on challenging issues of university ethics like the unionization of adjunct faculty.

However, the benefits of this honest broker status are evident, too. Among many possibilities, one such event stands out that focused on police shootings in African American communities and featured on a panel the District Attorney of Santa Clara County; the official Police Auditor of the City of San Jose; the Police Chief of Los Gatos, California (who was a former high-ranking officer in the San Jose Police Department); and an African American professor at SCU who had been pulled over by the police dozens of times.⁸ Students, staff, and faculty packed the large room. Presentations were respectful and clear; audience questions were passionate. Perhaps as important as anything that was said at the event was the fact that a crucially important and emotionally intense conversation was held during which everyone was welcome and represented. Such a conversation, in itself, fostered a sense of community consistent with one of Keenan's key claims: ethics creates community.

Second, the Ethics Center offers fellowships and internships in medical ethics, business ethics, environmental ethics, and general

⁸ Nicolas Sonnenburg, "Police Brutality Discussed: Panel Addresses Discriminatory Treatment of Blacks," *The Santa Clara*, January 15, 2015, <http://www.the-santaclara.org/blog/police-brutality-discussed>.

campus ethics. These fellowships are one of the key ways by which the Center seeks to foster ethical practices across the university and facilitate students moving from theory to practice. Accordingly, almost all of these experiential learning opportunities are applied, not academic. Our Health Care Ethics Interns engage in “shadowing” work at local hospitals where they can see and discuss real-time ethical concerns with hospital staff (more below). Our Business Ethics Interns have placements in Silicon Valley companies. In 2018-2019, the Environmental Ethics Fellows focused on ethical issues related to California wildfires. Their project culminated in a packed public event that featured SCU faculty and representatives of Cal Fire, the state organization that fights wildfires.⁹

Endowed through a generous gift from the Hackworth family, the Center is able to offer fellowships and grants to students and faculty who engage in research, teaching, or other work on campus in the field of ethics. Hackworth Fellowships allow for a broad scope of work for students.¹⁰ For example, in the 2019-2020 academic year, Hackworth Fellows were focused on the following topics: ethics and life in the residence halls; ethics and intercollegiate sports; ethics and commuter students; ethics and students seeking their first job after college; ethics, sex, and relationships at a Jesuit, Catholic university; developing an ethical lens for hazard risk assessment specifically related to homeless persons; ethics, impeachment, and national politics; ethics and the gig economy; ethics and computer science education at SCU; and ethical issues related to the possible revocation of fifteenth century papal bulls that opened the door to the conquest of the Americas.

The Ethics Center also issues Hackworth Grants—up to \$5,000 for faculty members, up to \$2,500 for a student—for research in applied ethics. Unlike many campus grants, Hackworth Grants are made in two cycles per year, fall and spring, to improve their availability to students and faculty. Two things have especially helped with the success of this grant-making program as a way to foster a broader culture of ethics across the university. The first key to success is that the grants are open to faculty in all disciplines: ethicists are not favored in the grant competition. But every proposal must highlight the *applied ethical* significance of a project, whether that project is in music, engineering, sociology, finance, religious studies, literature, law, etc. The second key to success is its openness to all faculty on an equal footing:

⁹ Efren Oxlaj, “After Paradise: Ethics and the Future of Wildfires in California,” Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, Aug 27, 2019, <http://www.scu.edu/environmental-ethics/resources/after-paradise-ethics-and-the-future-of-wildfires-in-california/>.

¹⁰ Markkula Center Staff, “Hackworth Fellowships,” Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, <http://www.scu.edu/hackworthfellowships/>.

proposals by non-tenure-track faculty have the same weight as proposals from chaired professors. These criteria help make ethics a topic of thought and practice across all parts of campus. Since their inception in 2003, over two hundred Hackworth Grants have been given to faculty and students, about 5/6th and 1/6th to each group, respectively (this ratio is not prescribed; it is merely the outcome of selecting the best applications).

Whether it is student fellowships or research grants, one thing that is very important to remember is that staff time is required to make such programs a success. Center staff treasure the opportunity to mentor the wonderful students who come to the Ethics Center but are also aware of the care and commitment demanded in order to be successful mentors. Likewise, Center staff are proud of the excellence, diversity, and completion rate of the projects funded by Hackworth Grants, but are also aware of the time needed to meet with grant applicants who may seek clarification about the ethical dimension of a project, to review proposals, and to work with grant recipients to ensure their projects' success.

All of these programs, however, at their core act not only to produce ethical "products" that forward ethical conversation and thinking in the campus environment, but, even more, help to develop ethically aware and ethically-trained people, and facilitate relationships among those across campus and beyond. In this way, these programs promote community, and along with that community, dialogue, creativity, and ultimately a growing culture of ethics on campus.

In the next two sub-sections, we will take a closer look at two instances where the Ethics Center is contributing or has contributed to the development of ethical practices on campus.

A Closer Look: Bioethics and the Health Care Ethics Internship

Since 2000, the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics Bioethics Program area has sponsored a distinctive undergraduate bioethics course for students planning careers in health care. Guided by the Ignatian commitments to *cura personalis* (care for the whole person) and being a person for others, the Health Care Ethics Internship (HCEI) intentionally integrates experiential learning in diverse health care settings with a combination of ethical theory and guided reflection in a classroom environment.¹¹ Students are exposed to nitty-gritty real-life medical situations and equipped with the tools and the space to reflect

¹¹ For more information on the HCEI and its components, see M.R. McLean and R.F. Holmes, "Undergraduate Health Care Ethics Internship: An Ignatian Innovation in Bioethics Education," *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal* 4 (2016): 82–87.

on their experience. This unique approach brings reason and experience together to support the development of ethical sensitivity; critical ethical thinking; and competence, conscience, and compassion—hallmarks of a Santa Clara University education.

The HCEI experience is a blend of coursework, fieldwork, and reflection that continues over the course of a full academic year. This pedagogical approach stands in contrast to the typical undergraduate bioethics course with its reliance on newsworthy cases, such as DIY genetic engineering, that may not provide much insight at the hospital bedside. Over the Internship year, students experience the joy of birth and the heartbreak of death, the elation of cure and the burden of chronic illness, the trusting relationship between physician and patient, and the gnawing suspicion that severs that relationship. Learning begins with concrete experience, after which students take a step back to critically reflect and discuss their experience in a structured, confidential environment, developing new insights to be applied in future situations. The Ethics Center's Framework for Ethical Decision Making assists their critical thinking and reflection.

The HCEI is a resource-intensive program requiring a full-time administrator and content support from Center faculty. Because Santa Clara University does not have health related professional schools, partnerships are forged with community hospitals, hospices, and others to offer the needed experiential learning opportunities. This affects the ability to scale. Universities with a medical or other health-related professional school may have the opportunity to integrate undergraduates into facilities already associated with the university, avoiding site-specific contracting and aiding the implementation and maintenance of a high-quality ethics internship.

Each year, twelve to eighteen undergraduates with junior or senior standing are selected to participate in the HCEI. Over two hundred students have completed the course. Students, the majority of whom are in the pre-medical track, also come from a variety of disciplines including biology, bioengineering, psychology, public health science, and theater.

In an effort to understand the impact of the HCEI, in 2014, surveys were sent to 137 participants who had graduated between 2002 and 2013.¹² The response rate was 40 percent. Survey responses demonstrated: (1) an increased ability to identify ethical dilemmas (ethical sensitivity); (2) acquisition of tools for ethical decision making (thus aiding ethical judgment); (3) continued use of Internship learnings in

¹² This study (Protocol 14-02-476) was approved by Santa Clara University's Institutional Review Board.

professional and every day decision making; and (4) an increased ability to speak up when faced with an ethical dilemma (moral courage).¹³

The responses of former interns to questions about the persistence of their learning and its impact on their professional and everyday lives offer a strong indication that the Ethics Center's approach with the HCEI is highly effective and that the lessons learned persist over time. We believe that we have had a valuable, long-lasting impact on our students by providing a real-world context in which they experience medicine and medical decision making firsthand. This sets them on a trajectory for continued personal, professional, and moral development to be and become forces for ethics in the world.

This quote from a former intern, who is now a practicing pediatrician, summarizes one experience:

I believe the most important trait that the ethics internship instilled in me was compassion. When I began the internship, I was a 20-year old who, despite wanting to become a pediatrician, didn't know much about the health care field outside of my individual encounters with my own physician. Well, that year I experienced my first case of child physical abuse.... I watched a physician break the news to a young adult that her athletic career was over, and I saw a physician hold the hands of family members while their father was taken off life-support. I realize that I don't have all the answers, but I do know that this Health Care Ethics Internship prepared me to start asking myself difficult questions.

This campus practice—taking undergraduates and giving them direct experience of ethical issues in a medical context—is truly a transformative experience for many students.

A Closer Look: Resource Development in Internet and Technology Ethics

The Markkula Center's programs in Internet Ethics and Technology Ethics are another place where ethical practices engage the campus community. While the examples below are in many ways outward-facing, the practice itself of developing new educational materials by engaging Santa Clara University faculty is one way that the

¹³ Jennifer B. Dirking, "Health Care Ethics Internships at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics: Distal Effects of an Undergraduate Health Care Ethics Internship Program with Clinical Rotations," Master's Degree Thesis, University of San Francisco, 2014.

Markkula Center helps make a lasting impact on campus and the world.

The Center's Internet and Technology Ethics programs are separate but work closely together.¹⁴ The Internet Ethics program began in 2012, while the Technology Ethics program began in 2018. This section will mainly examine three teaching modules developed by a university faculty member and facilitated by the Markkula Center, that are available free on the Markkula Center website, to instructors at any university interested in covering ethics in their software, cybersecurity, or data science courses. It will also briefly discuss a compendium of materials designed for ethics training within technology companies; and the Center's work with the Partnership on AI, World Economic Forum, and Pontifical Council for Culture.

From the inception of the Internet Ethics program at the Markkula Center, it was already clear that the ethical issue of online privacy would be an important subject for the foreseeable future. And as experts discussed "privacy by design" and the need to "bake" privacy into products (rather than trying to tack it on as an afterthought), it was clear that the people who would have to create the privacy recipes and do the "baking" were the engineers.

In response to this, the Center decided to focus on developing more resources for software engineering ethics. If privacy (and other ethical concerns) were to be baked into products, applied ethics had to be baked into engineering education.

At the time, Santa Clara University's School of Engineering was already offering many courses in engineering ethics, including a long-running (at least twenty years) course specifically in software engineering ethics. Resources at SCU, then, were already available. What the Center hoped to do was to develop resources that would be helpful to engineering faculty at other colleges and universities, who might be interested in incorporating ethics into their own courses but might lack the time or the institutional support to devote to the creation of relevant materials.

The ethics of software engineering/computer science is by no means a new field, and many universities, professional organizations, and other groups and individuals have contributed to it over time. The Markkula Center website already featured numerous case studies and related articles, but we aimed at something more comprehensive. In March of 2013, the Ethics Center began working with SCU philosophy professor and technology ethicist Shannon Vallor, who was one

¹⁴ Markkula Center Staff, "Internet Ethics," Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/internet-ethics/>; Markkula Center Staff, "Technology Ethics," Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/technology-ethics/>.

of the center's faculty scholars, to produce the first draft of a module titled "An Introduction to Software Engineering Ethics."¹⁵ It was designed to be used in one to three class periods, not in a separate ethics course, but in introductory software engineering and computer science courses themselves. It included a concise but substantive overview of software engineering ethics, case studies, classroom exercises designed to spark conversation, homework assignments, and more. It was also accompanied by notes that suggested to instructors which parts would be best incorporated (and how), depending on how many class periods they could devote to the subject. As we explained later, we "were taking a leap of faith, hoping that engineering professors would take it upon themselves, and feel comfortable enough, to lead those conversations. We believed that they were actually in the best position to do so."¹⁶

The module was made available on the center's website, free for anyone to use, in July of 2013. It received media coverage in *Pacific Standard* magazine and in *Slate's* Future Tense.¹⁷ The journal *Communications of the ACM* also featured a piece adapted from the module's introduction, authored by Shannon Vallor and Princeton professor of computer science Arvind Narayanan (who had also played an important role in the development of the module) titled "Why Software Engineering Courses Should Include Ethics Coverage."¹⁸

Since its initial publication, more than 140 instructors have requested and received permission to use the Introduction to Software Engineering Ethics module in their courses, in universities from more than twenty countries, including Bulgaria, Canada, Egypt, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Uganda.

¹⁵ Shannon Vallor and Arvind Narayanan, "An Introduction to Software Engineering Ethics," Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/more/engineering-ethics/an-introduction-to-software-engineering-ethics/>.

¹⁶ Irina Raicu, "Two New Teaching Modules Focused on Data Ethics and Cybersecurity Ethics: Resources for Students and Practitioners," Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/internet-ethics-blog/new-teaching-modules-on-data-ethics-and-cybersecurity-ethics/>.

¹⁷ Lauren Zumbach, "Should All Software Engineers Be Required to Take an Ethics Course?" *Pacific Standard Magazine*, September 6, 2013, psmag.com/education/teaching-software-ethics-course-facebook-engineering-silicon-valley-65728; and Lauren Zumbach, "Software Engineers Need a Crash Course in Ethics," *Slate*, September 9, 2013, slate.com/technology/2013/09/software-engineers-need-a-crash-course-in-ethics.html.

¹⁸ Arvind Narayanan and Shannon Vallor, "Why Software Engineering Courses Should Include Ethics Coverage," *Communications of the ACM* 57.3 (March 2014), dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/2566966.

In 2015, the Ethics Center issued a revised version of this module, and in 2018, two additional modules were made available: “An Introduction to Data Ethics”¹⁹ and “An Introduction to Cybersecurity Ethics,”²⁰ both authored by Vallor. Like the initial module, they “don’t purport to be all-encompassing, or to be the first such resources in their fields. They are intended to be practical, challenging, relevant conversation starters—rooted in a concise overview of ethics as the topic arises in those two important areas.”²¹ The case studies included in the new modules focus on key issues in data and cybersecurity ethics, and readings lists aim to lead users to additional resources for those who want more depth.

With the success of these course modules, and amid a barrage of ongoing news reports related to technology ethics, the Center’s Internet and Technology Ethics programs, again in collaboration with Vallor, embarked upon a new endeavor to promote technology ethics within technology companies themselves. The result was another set of free materials, designed to comprehensively discuss applied technology ethics in a corporate setting, and made available through the Center’s website.

Funded by the Omidyar Network’s Tech and Society Solutions Lab, and piloted at X (formerly Google X), these *Ethics in Technology Practice* materials are designed to give people who work in the technology industry the tools needed to make better decisions and eventually to build ethical thinking into the design process.²² These materials have been used by several major technology companies, and we are working to make them available to even larger audiences. Professors have also found the “Ethics in Technology Practice” materials useful and have incorporated them into university courses.

The ongoing relationship of the Ethics Center and one faculty member, then, resulted in numerous resources, both for higher education and corporate ethics training. The Ethics Center continues to work with Santa Clara University faculty on projects related to delivering and developing *Ethics in Technology Practice*, as well as on other projects, while continuing to explore new opportunities.

¹⁹ Shannon Vallor, “An Introduction to Data Ethics: A Resource for Data Science Courses,” Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, January 23, 2018, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/technology-ethics/resources/an-introduction-to-data-ethics>.

²⁰ Shannon Vallor, “An Introduction to Cybersecurity Ethics: A Resource for Cybersecurity Courses,” Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, February 7, 2018, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/technology-ethics/resources/an-introduction-to-cybersecurity-ethics>.

²¹ Raicu, “Two New Teaching Modules Focused on Data Ethics and Cybersecurity Ethics,” 2018.

²² Vallor, Green, and Raicu, *Ethics in Technology Practice*, 2018.

Toward this end, the Markkula Center has built strategic partnerships with such organizations as the Partnership on AI, the World Economic Forum, and the Pontifical Council for Culture. The Markkula Center joined the Partnership on AI early on because we realized that ethics was going to be a major concern for their organization. Since that time, we have deepened our collaboration, and we now have four staff members who regularly work with the Partnership on issues related to: AI safety; fairness, transparency, and accountability; labor and automation; AI, journalism, and disinformation; and more. The Markkula Center likewise has been working with the World Economic Forum on developing various resources on ethics and considering opportunities where faculty might be able to engage.

The Pontifical Council for Culture, on the other hand, might seem quite remote from the world of technology ethics, but the Ethics Center has been participating and working with them on issues related to AI, theology, anthropology, and ethics. These interactions have included academics, industry leaders, and Church officials in productive conversations about the future of technology and ways to promote the common good as technology is rapidly restructuring our world.²³ These efforts present opportunities to draw in faculty from across the university, once again fostering ethical thinking on campus, in connection to the practical interests of major organizations in the world.

Altogether, the Ethics Center has produced resources that have made a significant impact not only on other educational institutions, as well as at corporations and major world organizations, but also has done this by collaborating with university faculty and helping them to fulfill their own interests and goals. The Center continues to create new resources in conjunction with faculty, most recently as part of Santa Clara University's grant-winning team involved in the Mozilla Responsible Computer Science Challenge, which will culminate in a joint repository of resources developed by all of the Challenge winners.²⁴ The Center continues to scale up these programs due to overwhelming demand, with the help of University faculty, as the world comes to realize the importance of embedding ethics into and maintaining ethical control over our newfound technological powers.

²³ See, as one example, the Common Good in the Digital Age conference, Vatican City, 26–28 September 2019, <http://www.digitalage19.org/Home>.

²⁴ Markkula Center Staff, "What We Are Doing with #EthicalCS at Santa Clara University," Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, December 18, 2019, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/technology-ethics/resources/what-we-are-doing-with-ethicalcs-at-santa-clara-university>.

COMMUNITY

One of Keenan's most striking points is his insistence on the connection of ethics and community. The establishment of practices provides the basis of an ethical culture that in turn provides the spirit that makes a community. The Ethics Center over the years has focused on ethics without strongly emphasizing a more specific intention to foster community. In this way, it has not directly focused so much on this aspect of Keenan's book. Being more intentional about this perspective could enhance the Center's work on campus. At the same time, the Center can be confident that its approach thus far, working closely with varied and discrete units on campus and with strategic opportunities as they arise off-campus, has borne communal fruit. The commitment to public events, fellowship programs, research grants, and other projects has established a solid basis of engagement with campus.

Distinct opportunities arise for further campus programs, and the Center takes these opportunities when it seems appropriate. For instance, the Center co-sponsors with the School of Engineering the Engineering Ethics Prize for senior undergraduate design projects.²⁵ In another case, they worked on a years-long effort to establish an academic integrity honor pledge for all undergraduate students.²⁶ Both of these programs help to establish a sense of community and togetherness around ethical concerns. The Center continues to be especially concerned now on how to identify and develop strategic and user-friendly ways to engage every first-year undergraduate in the real-time significance of ethics (perhaps especially around the ethics of truth-telling and truth-seeking) and to work with faculty on the integration of ethics into teaching in all disciplines.

There are certainly still challenges remaining for the development of moral practices and community on university campuses. In the next section we will examine a few of these, mostly in the context of university ethics centers more broadly.

Remaining Challenges for University Ethics Centers

The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics was never intended to be the "conscience" of Santa Clara University. Indeed, only a university's leadership—the president and board—are capable of fulfilling that role on campus and no one else. Moral leadership must come from the top. But that university leadership can look to a campus ethics center

²⁵ Markkula Center Staff, "Ethics Prizes," Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/focus-areas/campus-ethics/programs-for-students/curricular-activities/ethics-prizes>.

²⁶ "Academic Integrity," *Santa Clara University website*, <http://www.scu.edu/academic-integrity>.

for guidance should ethical issues arise on campus. However, such relationships between ethics centers and leadership also must keep in mind the mission and objectives of an ethics center, many of which are quite specific. For example, while the Markkula Center is certainly interested in ethical issues on campus, as mentioned before, the primary mission of the Center has always been outwardly focused. That has been its objective since the very beginning when it was just an idea.

Given, then, the specific objectives of university ethics centers, and other limitations that affect how much ethics centers are able to do, there are still many more opportunities for ethics centers to engage campus community, and Keenan's book helps to highlight some areas for improvement. The following are some thoughts on places where a university ethics center might be able to contribute to dialogue on significant topics in university ethics and thereby contribute to improving a university's ethical community and culture.

Institutions of higher education face significant obstacles blocking the formation and sustainability of ethical cultures on campuses. For example, university faculty, staff, and administration often have unexplored ethical interests that they are never encouraged to follow. In addition to the all-consuming work of teaching and university service, successful academics must publish in a particular area of expertise. This intense and practically necessary focus (in the sense of achieving such practical aims as retaining a job) can be to the detriment of other scholarly pursuits as well as personal moral development. However, having an ethics center on campus can help to extend an invitation toward scholarly pursuits with an ethical flavor, as explored in some of the programs above. For example, the Hackworth Grants that fund ethical pursuits in all academic fields. Events on campus also help to facilitate an ethical campus community by bringing together those with ethical interests and building a sense of camaraderie upon those interests. But the overall problem—the specialization required for expertise in knowledge and the way academia realizes that in institutional structures—is ultimately not one that an ethics center can solve, yet is one that works against the type of integrated university-wide culture of ethics that Keenan calls for in *University Ethics*.

This system also yields further issues. Colleges and universities struggling to make the financial math work in the face of tuitions rising beyond what the market will bear have arrived at a solution—the development and use of adjunct, non-tenured faculty—to rebalance the weight of risk between the institution and the workforce, providing the university a means for greater flexibility to respond to changes in the marketplace.

It is an imperfect solution, to say the least. Creating two distinct academic career paths works against the kind of integration that Keenan calls for. This distinction between faculty types also draws attention to the very different realities experienced between faculty and staff, a third employee class. There is vastly different compensation, job security, decision making, and inclusion realities between these classes of employees. These gaps can impede a university's ability to manage both strategic and executive functions.

The academy has long relied on shared governance as the modality for bringing the interests of the administration and the faculty together. Shared governance encounters difficulties, however, when attempting to align these interests in the modern university business model in two ways. First, as already noted, it often excludes staff and adjunct faculty from participating in many significant activities intended to drive the institution towards coherence and stability. Shared governance has devolved, in part, because of some of the same technological advances eroding civil discourse in broader society: e-mail as a primary means of enterprise communication, social media, and other one-way forms of communication. Governance scholar Dick Chait defines governance as "generative dialogue" in his book *Governance as Leadership*.²⁷ To govern, he claims, is to engage in dialogue that creates new understanding as a result. The current reality of many exchanges between administrations and their faculties is far from this type of genuine, dialogic discourse.

The same challenges facing the academy are reflected in the donor base. Higher education gifts flow more readily to capital projects that can bear the name of donors and provide evidence of their generosity. Such "ego gifts" have long been a reality in the fundraising world and an acknowledged reason that many donors give (it is worth noting, again, that the Markkulas did not ask for the Ethics Center to be named after them). Most institutions of higher learning rely on donated funds as a means for ensuring that the university can continue. Increasingly, these funds are critical to establishing access to higher education as universities respond to the urgent mandate to broaden student populations beyond those who can afford today's stunning college tuition.

Yet higher education donations have typically resulted in a tipping of the scales towards new named projects, such as buildings, and away from the primary purpose of a university—to create and distribute knowledge and wisdom by cultivating knowledgeable and wise people. Illustrating the dilemma, a 2009 *Vanity Fair* article described the capital accumulation of Harvard University, the oldest nonprofit and educational institution in the United States (and with the largest endowment), this way: "Consider this: Over the 20-year period from

²⁷ Richard P. Chait, William P. Ryan and Barbara E. Taylor, *Governance as Leadership* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley & Sons, 2005).

1980 to 2000, Harvard University added nearly 3.2 million square feet of new space to its campus. But that's nothing compared with the extravagance that followed. So far this decade, from 2000 through 2008, Harvard has added another 6.2 million square feet of new space, roughly equal to the total number of square feet occupied by the Pentagon. All across campus, one after another, new academic buildings have shot up. The price of these optimistic new projects: a breathtaking \$4.3 billion."²⁸ This means that in the eight years just prior to the Great Recession, Harvard more than doubled the square feet added compared to the previous *two decades*. Some reconsideration of priorities and education of donors are in order if universities hope to receive donated funds to more regularly support affordability and accessibility to college.

Keenan proposes that universities create cultures that build on their mission and foster community. At the Markkula Center, we have created tools for tying ethics to mission, utilizing frameworks for ethical decision making that serve an institutional purpose. And, we have defined healthy organizations to be those that reach their full potential through integration. *A healthy culture* is one that is integrated in which individuals can thrive and participate in supported relationships when they are part of groups, teams, or organizations. An integrated culture is flexible, adaptable, coherent, energized and stable.²⁹ Organizations, like other healthy complex systems, have the ability to perceive their internal state, to reflect on experiences, and encourage interconnectiveness between people.

To aid a university in modeling the themes in Keenan's book, a university ethics center could support various efforts that encourage a culture of ethics on campus. These campus community conversations are just one way to build an ethical campus community. As a community, a university is composed of people, and those community members should be intentionally engaged and mutually respected, in a way that is specific to that community. This can help that community to flourish.

While the obstacles to university ethics are significant, and any university ethics center is subject to those obstacles, there is still much opportunity for growth. In some areas action may not yet be realistic, while in other cases incentives may align and generate productive and ethical outcomes. At the Markkula Center, the tension of being a non-


²⁸ Nina Munk, "Rich Harvard, Poor Harvard," *Vanity Fair*, August 2009, <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2009/08/harvard200908-2>.

²⁹ Ann Skeet, "Defining Healthy Organizational Culture," Markkula Center for Applied Ethics website, October 2019, <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/culture-assessment-practice/defining-healthy-organizational-culture>.

partisan honest broker for the discussion of ethical issues in a pluralistic society, while at the same time strenuously advocating for ethical conduct in many fields, sometimes seems to be a nearly impossible mission. Despite these difficulties, the Ethics Center has not just survived but thrived.

CONCLUSION

The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics has made a positive impact on campus, as well as in its community, and around the world. However, there is always more work to do. In the world of ethics, every generation must learn anew what generations before have learned, and then more, as technology changes our world and makes it ever more complex.

The Center not only focuses on producing resources that can help people make better choices in their lives and work, but also is part of an educational institution and therefore seeks to make an impact on the world through the moral education of our university's graduates. Those graduates absorb the environment in which they live, they absorb the moral community, and insofar as that community is deficient in ethics, so too will those graduates be. The Markkula Center has worked for over three decades towards developing ethical thinking in the Silicon Valley community and the world, while at the same time also contributing to ethical thinking on the Santa Clara University campus. There is much more to be done, and we are working to meet the challenge. 

The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University is the largest and most comprehensive multi-program, university-based, applied ethics center in the world. Brian Patrick Green is the director of the Technology Ethics Program at the Markkula Center and adjunct faculty in the School of Engineering. David DeCosse is the director of Religious and Catholic Ethics and Campus Ethics Programs at the Markkula Center and adjunct associate professor of religious studies. Kirk Hanson is a senior fellow at the Markkula Center and the former executive director. Don Heider is the executive director of the Markkula Center, John Courtney Murray, S.J., University Professor of Social Ethics, and holds an appointment as professor of communication. Margaret R. McLean is the associate director of the Markkula Center, senior lecturer in religious studies, and affiliate faculty in bioengineering. Irina Raicu is the director of the Internet Ethics Program at the Markkula Center. Ann Skeet is the senior director for Leadership Ethics at the Markkula Center, guiding programs in Leadership, Business, and Social Sector Ethics.