

E FOCUS BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL ISSUES FOCUS BOARD FALL 2004 - SPRING 2005

Introduction

During the 2004-2005 academic year, the UH-Manoa Contemporary Ethical Issues (CEI) focus board reviewed and approved courses for Manoa undergraduates to enable these students to meet their CEI focus requirements. This report briefly specifies our focus board's actions and activities, documents the current status of the CEI course offerings, and identifies future plans.

This report was prepared by the current CEI board members: Andrew Arno, Thomas Bopp, Ernestine Enomoto (Chair), Linda Engelberg, and Amarjit Singh, with assistance from Elaine Nakao (GEO).

Board Actions and Activities

During the school year, the board reviewed applications for Ethics-designation based upon five specific questions, related to content, percentage of class time devoted to ethical issues, specific methods or approaches employed, and assessment used. The responses to these questions served as the criteria used in reviewing applications. If the board determined that a faculty member's application did not have sufficient information (e.g. about content or process), the board chairperson contacted that faculty by email to obtain more clarification. Responses received from the faculty were then circulated to the board via email for further review and recommendation. The course applications with three or more votes by board members to approve (i.e. simple majority) are then recommended to the GEC to be Ethics-designated.

An ongoing challenge of the CEI board was to increase the number of applications submitted by faculty. Presently there are a few departments that are not offering Ethics designated courses in sufficient numbers for their students. For example, the departments of Accountancy and Psychology had over 200 majors but offered no ethics designated courses. As focus board chair, Enomoto contacted these departments and spoke with the chairs. The board offered to assist the department's efforts in providing more Ethics-designated courses.

To obtain information about what the need for courses actually is, a report on available seats as related to degrees earned was requested. Lisa Fujikawa (GEO) prepared the report for the board.

Another concern dealt with department chairs submitting applications where no instructor has been assigned. These applications are specified as being taught by "staff" and have little more than a course title, course number and section, and the department chair's signature. The board wrestled with how to accommodate the department's need for some flexibility with staff-designated courses while retaining the credibility of an Ethics-designated course offering. The board decided that it would NOT approve a new course but would consider a RENEWAL that was staff-designated, provided 1) that the course had been taught previously, 2) that there was a syllabus from the previous instructor demonstrating the ethics content, and 3) that the department chair submitted his/her assurance that the course would be so taught. Once an instructor is designated, then the instructor would be requested to submit responses to the five questions of the original CEI application.

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Current Status

Table 1: CEI-course offerings

	Classes Offered	Seats Available	Seats Filled	Average Enrollment	Median Enrollment
Fall 2004	56	1546	1507 (97%)	27	22
Spring 2005	80	1990	1891(95%)	24	21

Website Development

Based upon ideas generated in the 2003-2004 year, the board developed a website for CEI teacher resources to assist faculty in developing Ethics-designated courses. The information on the website includes a) proposal questions with sample responses, b) common misperceptions about CEI courses and who can teach them; c) instructions on locating video and DVD resources through Sinclair Library; d) useful links to other websites; e) alternatives to the 3-credit ethics-designated course offering; and f) assessment activities and student questionnaire results. Monica Stitt-Bergh (GEO) assisted the board in constructing and posting the information on the website. To view the website, go to <http://www.hawaii.edu/gened/cei/cei.htm>

Student Questionnaire

A questionnaire was distributed during the Fall 2004 semester to solicit student responses from those taking E-designated courses during the term. This questionnaire was sent out by the GEO staff to all faculty currently teaching CEI-courses. The responses to Likert scaled questions were compiled and reviewed by the board in the subsequent Spring term. Of the 56 courses offered in Fall 2004, 42 (73%) were surveyed with a total of 892 student questionnaires returned (61% return rate).

Generally students felt that the ethical issues covered in the class related to the course content (64% strongly agreed, 26% agreed with this statement). Asked about feeling comfortable expressing their opinions, most of the students were in agreement (43% strongly agreed, 31% agreed). As far as how the instructor fared in introducing techniques for deliberating on ethical issues, 43% strongly agreed and 35% agreed with this statement. Students generally felt more competent in evaluating ethical issues in their major (40% strongly agreed, 34% agreed). Statistics from the survey may be viewed at <http://www.hawaii.edu/gened/cei/assessment.htm> These data are consistent with surveys done in Fall 2003.

Spring Workshop

A faculty development workshop was conducted on March 17, 2005 from 3:00-4:30 p.m. in Kuykendall 206. The aim of the workshop was to share experiences in teaching about ethical issues as well as to encourage those who might consider applying for the CEI-designation. The chair presented the results of the Fall 2004 student survey and displayed the teacher resources available on the CEI website. Faculty members Tom Bopp (Chemistry), Tom Klobe (Art) and Karen Kosasa (American Studies) shared their experiences teaching Ethics-designated courses. A brief discussion followed with attendees raising questions about how to offer E-designated courses to meet the focus requirement.

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Future Activities

For next year, the board will be looking more closely at assessment and learning outcomes. Beyond individual course assessments, the board will be working on a long-term assessment to examine how UHM graduates are faring in terms of the new General Education requirements, specifically for ethics. Efforts through the Chancellor's Office are currently underway to develop a pilot assessment program with one of the focus areas being CEI.

Special thanks to those who have served on the Ethics Board and are ending their service! They are Andrew Arno who was board co-chair in 2003-2004, and Ernestine Enomoto who chaired from spring 2004 to spring 2005. Both will end their terms on the Board this spring.