



SPOTLIGHT

Business Schools & Ethics/Sustainability

Featured School:

Kansas State University

College of Business Administration

Manhattan, Kansas, United States

www.cba.k-state.edu

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Kansas State College of Business Administration – Business Ethics Education Initiative

Kansas State University has a long-standing tradition of requiring ethics courses of its business students. Starting as early as 1967, Kansas State embedded ethics coursework in its curriculum. Part of that commitment stems from a core of four tenured/tenure-track professors teaching ethics in addition to qualified adjuncts. Ethics is thoughtfully integrated into the following courses: strategy, organizational behavior, leadership, small business consulting, as well as the other core courses such as management, marketing, finance, accounting, and CIS. Undergraduates take a required course called “Business, Government, and Society.” The required course for MBAs is “Legal and Social Issues in Business,” with an additional elective course called “Professional Ethics.”

Kansas State University has a college-level education initiative founded and chaired by Dr. Diane Swanson. This initiative has strong ties to the local business community with its own local advisory board. Professor Clyde Jones, chair of the advisory board and one of the founders of ethics education at KSU states, “As a professor, it was extremely challenging to lead students in discussions about issues which were often shrouded in many shades of gray. My objective was simply to have the students understand that there is an ethical dimension to many business decisions and that they should be aware of the social consequences of their decisions.” One of the initiative’s projects involves teaching ethics with film as part of an effort to increase awareness of business ethics education locally, regionally and nationally. To learn more about Kansas State’s “Business Ethics Education Initiative” visit: <http://www.cba.k-state.edu/index.aspx?NID=332>.

Many Kansas State faculty have been vocal concerning the need for greater thought and resources being devoted to business ethics education. In an article in the *Lawrence Journal-World*, “Business Education Deficient on Ethics, Study Says,” Dr. Swanson stated, “I think it should shock the public given all the damage that has come from illegal and unethical corporate conduct. Students need a course to explain their future business responsibilities¹.”

Extra-curricular activities, such as the Business Ethics Speaker Series planned for Fall 2004, enhance ethics education at Kansas State University. Students are also providing leadership, as members of SIFE (Students in Free Enterprise), one of Kansas State’s student organizations in the college of business, have worked with two KSU professors to develop a set of radio clips on business ethics. This organization also delivers ethics materials to workshops given during the Kansas State University SIFE High School Symposiums.

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End Notes

¹ Rombeck, Terry. (2003) "Business Education Deficient on Ethics, Study Says," *Lawrence Journal-World*, November 28, 2003. Electronic document, http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2003/nov/28/business_education_deficient/, accessed February 2004.