

Editor's Foreword

Volume 17 begins with two articles that address a widespread concern that haunts business ethics pedagogy: the perception that ethical reasoning simply reinforces pre-conceived views. If this perception is accurate, there is no hope for reaching rational consensus on ethical matters, and to the extent that the goal of ethics is rational consensus, ethics fails. There is even less prospect for bridging political polarization with rational persuasion. Research reported in the first article confirms this pessimistic scenario: an examination of arguments pro and con only strengthens a student's initial opinions. Findings reported in the second article, however, provide a glimmer of optimism: an "Open Mind" exercise can begin to cultivate "intellectual humility" that implies a greater willingness to listen to other points of view. These two articles may also suggest a path to greater optimism. While psychological habits are one possible (and recently much-discussed) factor in our failure to reach consensus, we might bear in mind that most pedagogical literature outside the ethics field does not, to my knowledge, agonize nearly to the same degree over the effectiveness of rational persuasion. Perhaps this is due as much to the way we conceive ethical discourse as to psychological habits. We often teach ethics by presenting a menu of competing frameworks and arguments rather than a single consensus framework (a framework, not a set of opinions or conclusions) within which issues can be resolved. It should be no surprise that students would focus on the elements of this pluralism that reinforce their pre-conceived notions. Perhaps we can further advance the case for rational persuasion by re-examining the intellectual integrity of our courses, while taking care not to slip into the psychologism about which Gottlob Frege warned us long ago.

The Volume continues with three articles that illustrate JBEE's international scope. One studies the impact of postgraduate business education in Sudan on student perceptions of the importance of ethics in business. A second article reports that business ethics courses in Malawi have only a limited impact on student attitudes toward business ethics. This echoes the pessimism just discussed, but the article also finds some areas where an impact exists and suggests that these provide a clue as to how ethics courses can be improved. A final article in the research section of the Volume presents data regarding the extent to which geographical location and various cultural factors might affect student perceptions of UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Volume 17 also contains six teaching articles and eight case studies. The first teaching article addresses the perennial problem of collective impact. In such areas as social responsible investing, climate change, fair trade, and sweatshop

labor, only collective action can make a difference, while actions are taken on an individual level. The article offers some suggestions for using collective impact case studies in the classroom. A second article takes a virtue ethics approach to the goal of cultivating responsible leadership. It is followed by an article that deals with teaching students to deliver an ethics-related briefing to executives. A fourth article shows how Dickens' novel *Hard Times* can be used in a business ethics classroom. A fifth article offers suggestions for using case studies as preparation for instruction in ethical analysis. The final entry in this section of the Volume begins a return to JBEE book reviews with its discussion of *Snapshots of Great Leadership*.

As the only source of peer-reviewed business ethics case studies, JBEE offers a diverse collection in the current Volume. One deals with sexual harassment in STEM-related industries, one with Wells Fargo ethics misconduct, and one with a Caterpillar employee who blew the whistle on the company's tax strategy. A very timely case study examines pressure on Amazon employees to meet demanding productivity quotas, and then one focuses on the massive Odebrecht corruption scandal in Latin America. Another study recounts pressure on decision makers to make questionable decisions during the 2008 financial crisis. Still another describes cronyism in a bank's hiring decisions. A final case study details the impact of the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act on Armor Holdings, a manufacturer of military and law enforcement equipment later absorbed by BAE Systems.

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