
“Tough Choices”:

A Student Workshop on the Ethics of Leadership

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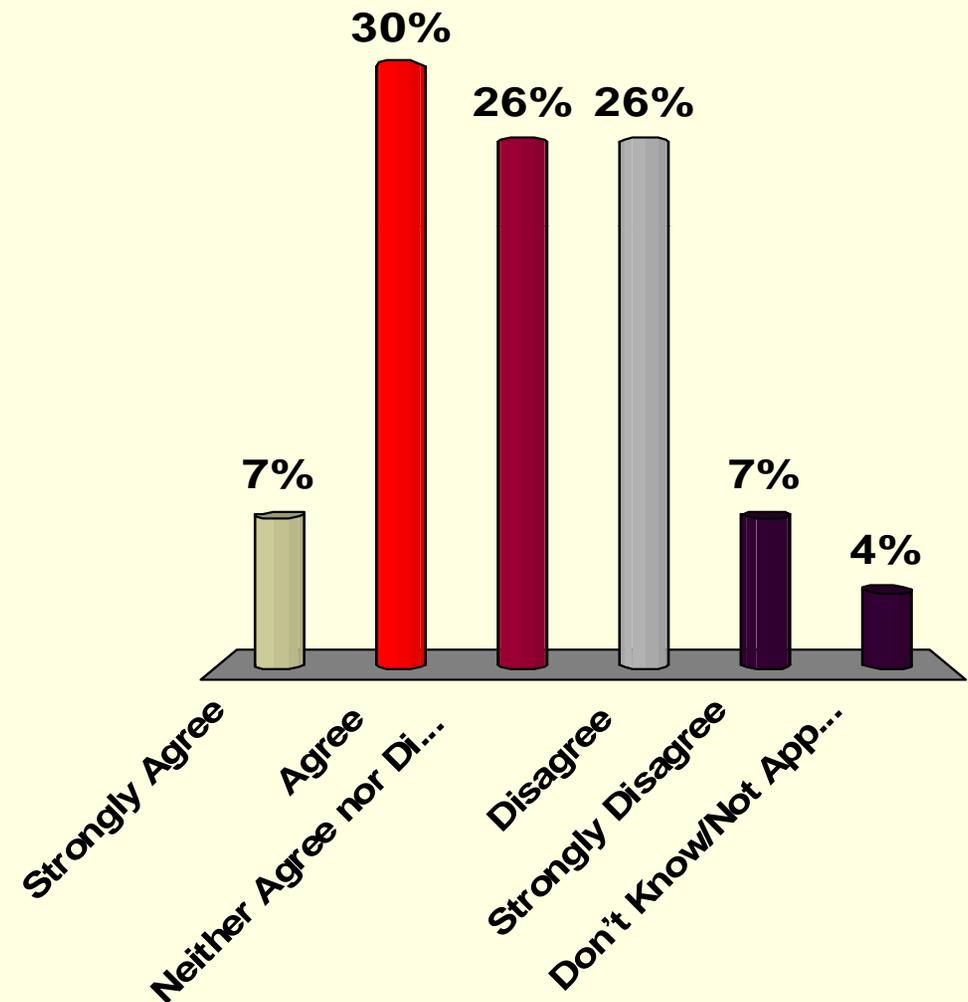
2012 Jon C. Dalton Institute on
College Student Values

Learning Outcomes of the Presentation

- Describe why ethical development needs to be a key outcome of student affairs initiatives.
- Understand UNCW's ethical development curriculum, and determine which parts can be adopted at your own institution.
- Articulate how assessment of ethical development initiatives can be conducted.
- Ask questions and share best practices about how to enhance students' ethical development, which will provide additional insights into how to apply these ideas at their own institution.

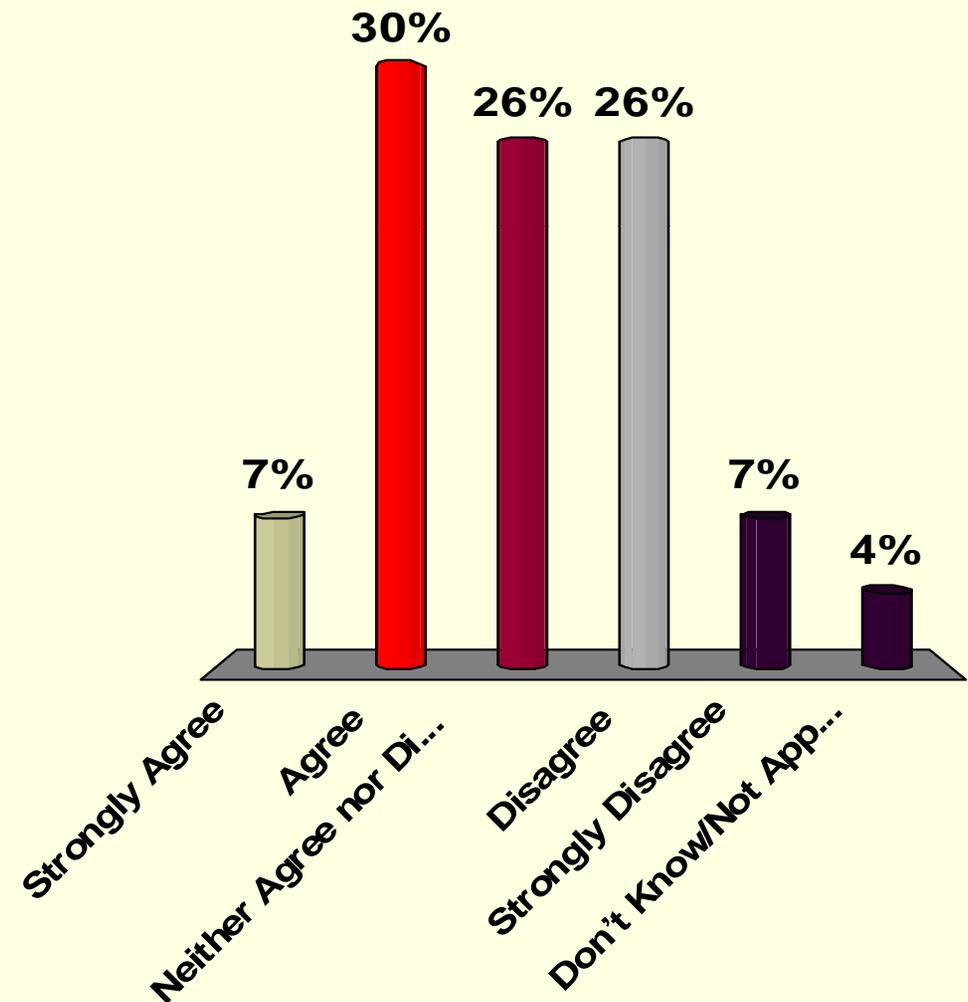
I think that undergraduates at my institution have a good understanding of ethics.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree
6. Don't Know/Not Applicable



I think that student affairs professionals at my institution have a good understanding of ethics.

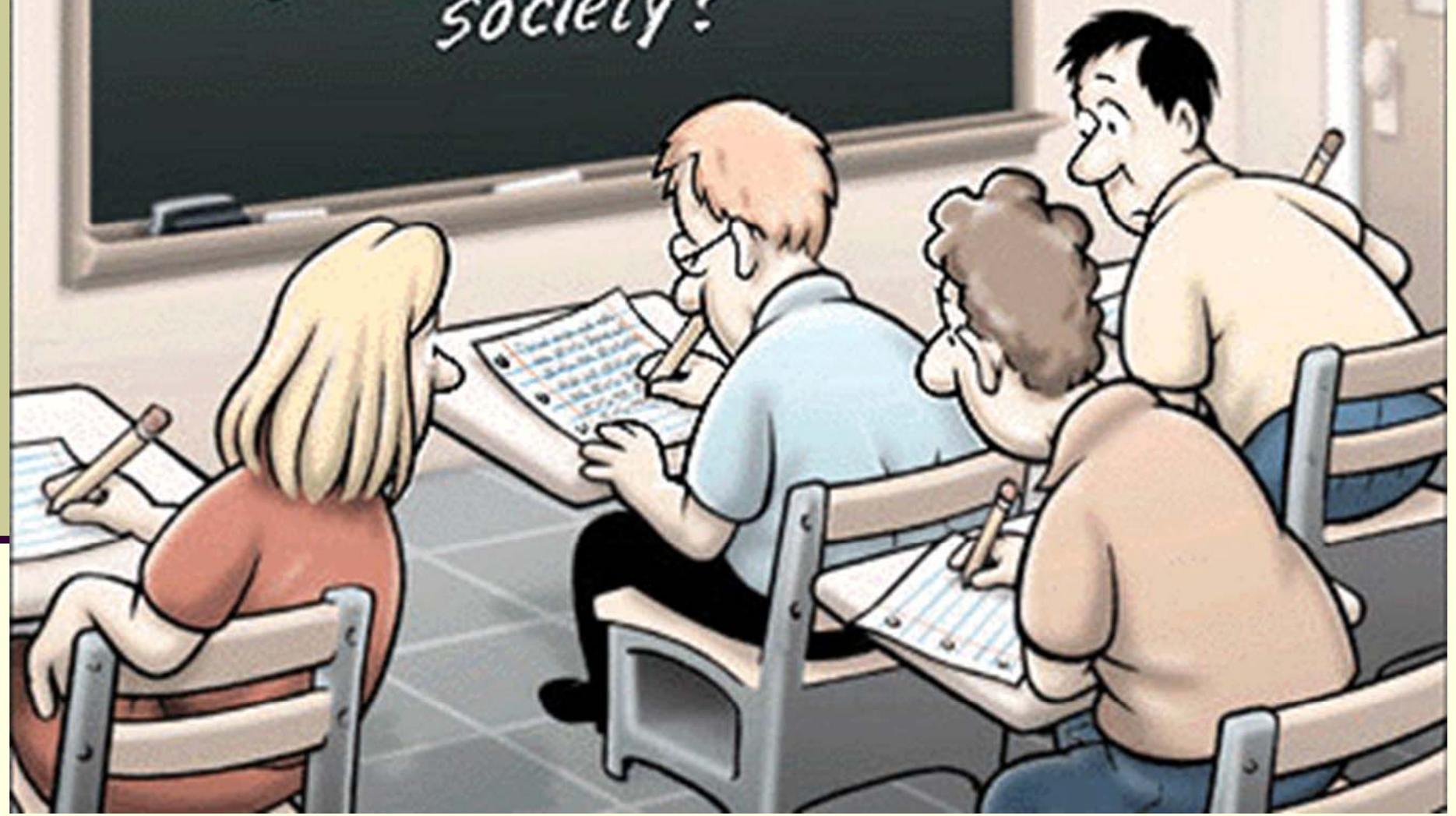
1. Strongly Agree
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An Ethics Drought

- In recent years, scandals of ethical malfeasance have permeated business, political, and religious organizations (Hakim & Rashbaum, 2008; Eichenwald, 2005; Goodstein, & Stanley, 2002).
- In the wake of this misconduct, colleges and universities have been called upon to further engage their students in discussions and experiences that explore issues of ethical character development (Armstrong, et al., 2003; Colby et al., 2003; Mangan, 2003).

How important are ethics in today's society?



An Ethical Drought

- Addressing this is a far more complex task than originally anticipated
- Several factors play into this challenge, including:
 - Different types of experiences
 - Different types of conversations
 - Different types of decisions
- These factors are controlled by an individual's own unique experiences and choices and have a profound effect on ethical development

Ethical Development in College

- American higher education plays an important role in the ethical development of young men and women (Colby et al., 2003; Dalton, 1999).
- Institutions of higher education have a responsibility to society to produce students who are not only experts in a particular academic discipline, but who are also ethical and astute citizens of the world (Kelly, 2006; Rost, 1995).

The Role of Higher Institutions

- Many researchers have characterized institutional practices within higher education as being models for learned ethical behavior (Stewart, 2007; Sullivan & Cunningham, 2006; Procaro-Foley & Bean, 2002).
 - Faculty-student mentor relationships,
 - Respected codes of honor and conduct
 - Institutional missions for the public good exemplify many such customs.

The Role of Higher Education

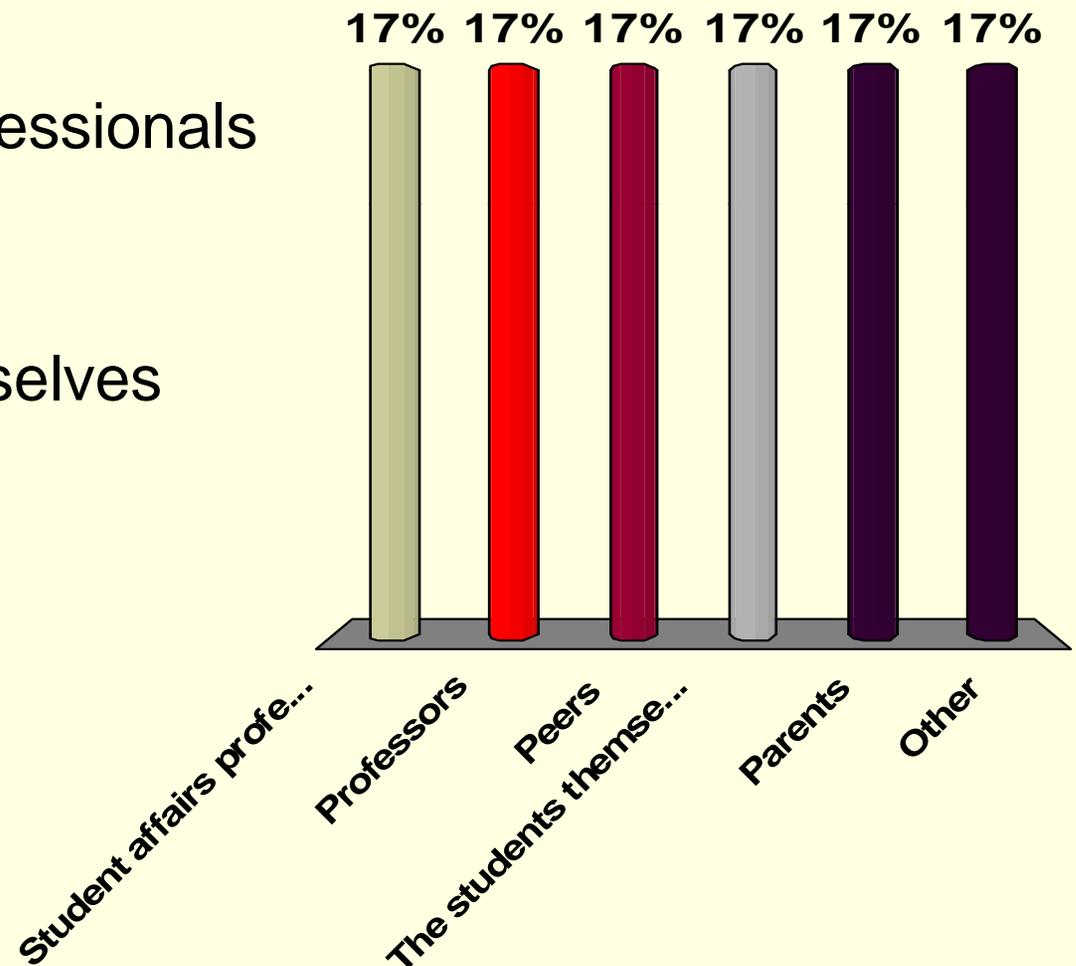
- Higher education provides an atmosphere that facilitates ethical development in students
 - This is due to the ample opportunities such as:
 - Diverse group discussion and interaction
 - Ethics education
 - Faculty/student mentorship
 - General intellectual stimulation
- Given that many future leaders and thinkers will come from higher education backgrounds, it remains of the upmost importance to instill a strong ethical foundation in our students.

The Role of Student Affairs

- Student affairs professionals can create environments which facilitate ethical growth
- This is done by exposing students to a variety of situations that allow for ethical standards to be developed and shared
- By engaging in structured workshops which allow students to discuss their assumptions and perspectives. In these environments:
 - They can learn from each other
 - Understand the experiences of their peers
 - Understand the perspectives of their peers.

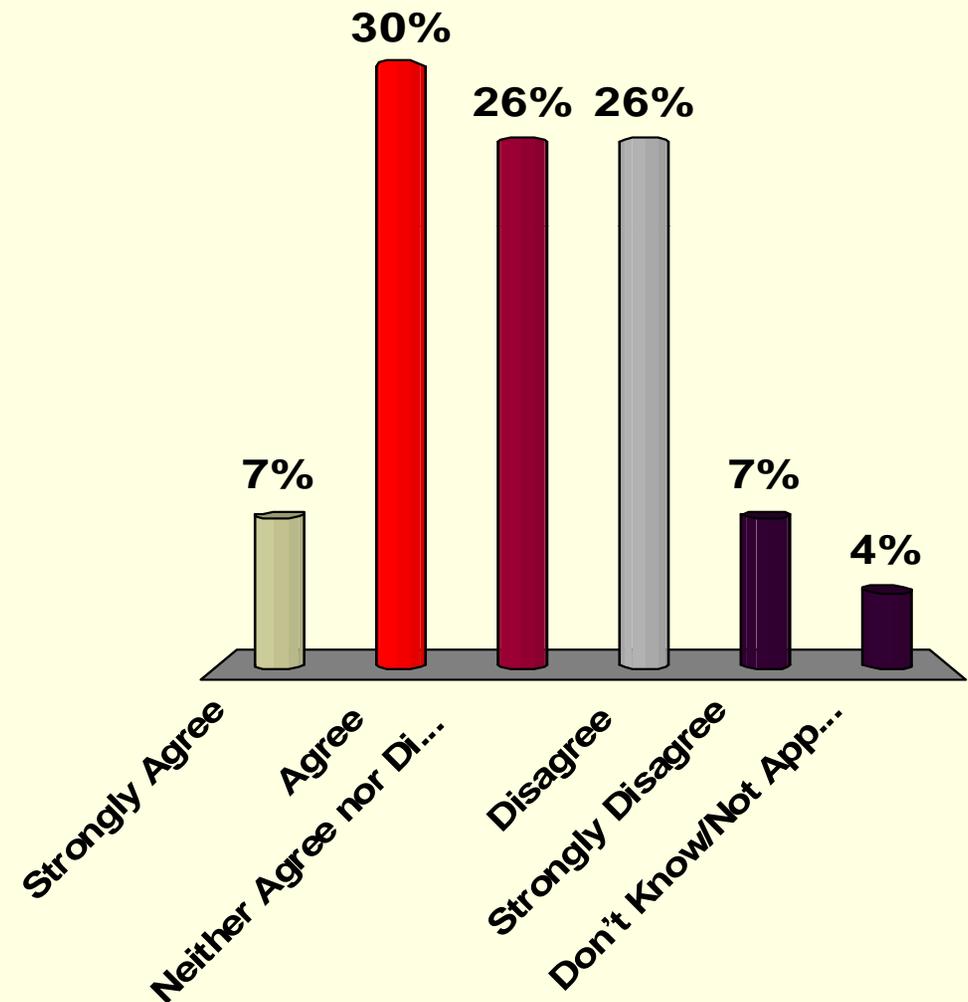
In college, who do you think plays the most profound role in students' ethical development?

1. Student affairs professionals
2. Professors
3. Peers
4. The students themselves
5. Parents
6. Other



I believe that most students become more ethical by attending college.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree
6. Don't Know/Not Applicable



An Ethical Development Initiative

- Administrators at the University of North Carolina Wilmington developed a 60 minute seminar style workshop to facilitate awareness and stimulate thinking about the importance of ethical behavior.
- The development of the ethical leadership training curriculum was based on:
 - Research literature
 - Institutional assessment data
 - Discussions with UNCW student affairs administrators

An Ethical Development Initiative (cont.)

- This initiative was in response to an observed increase in 2008-2009 of student leaders making poor decisions
 - These decisions led to significant consequences (e.g. losing their positions)
- The Ethical Development Task Force was charged with the goal of creating an ethical development training model for student leaders
 - This task force is chaired by the Director of the Center for Leadership Education and Service and is comprised of seven members from across the division of student affairs

Learning Outcomes for the Workshop

- Three primary learning outcomes were developed for all student participants
 - Identify factors that influence personal ethics
 - Examine consequences of unethical behavior
 - Develop strategies for making ethical decisions

Curriculum of the Workshop

- Listed below is a brief outline of the curriculum that was developed:
 - Introduction of Session
 - Case Study
 - Ethics Rank Order Exercise
 - Develop Strategies
 - What Ethical Codes Exist at UNCW
 - Consequences of Unethical Behavior
 - Student/Group Case Study Revisited
 - Closure

Introduction of Session

- Facilitator discusses why ethics are important in the context of the student's life
- A working definition is introduced, which was developed by the committee
- A case study is then presented that is appropriate to the students' positions
 - E.g., if students in the session are members of the student government, the case study would entail a scenario involving a student in student government

Ethics Rank Order Exercise

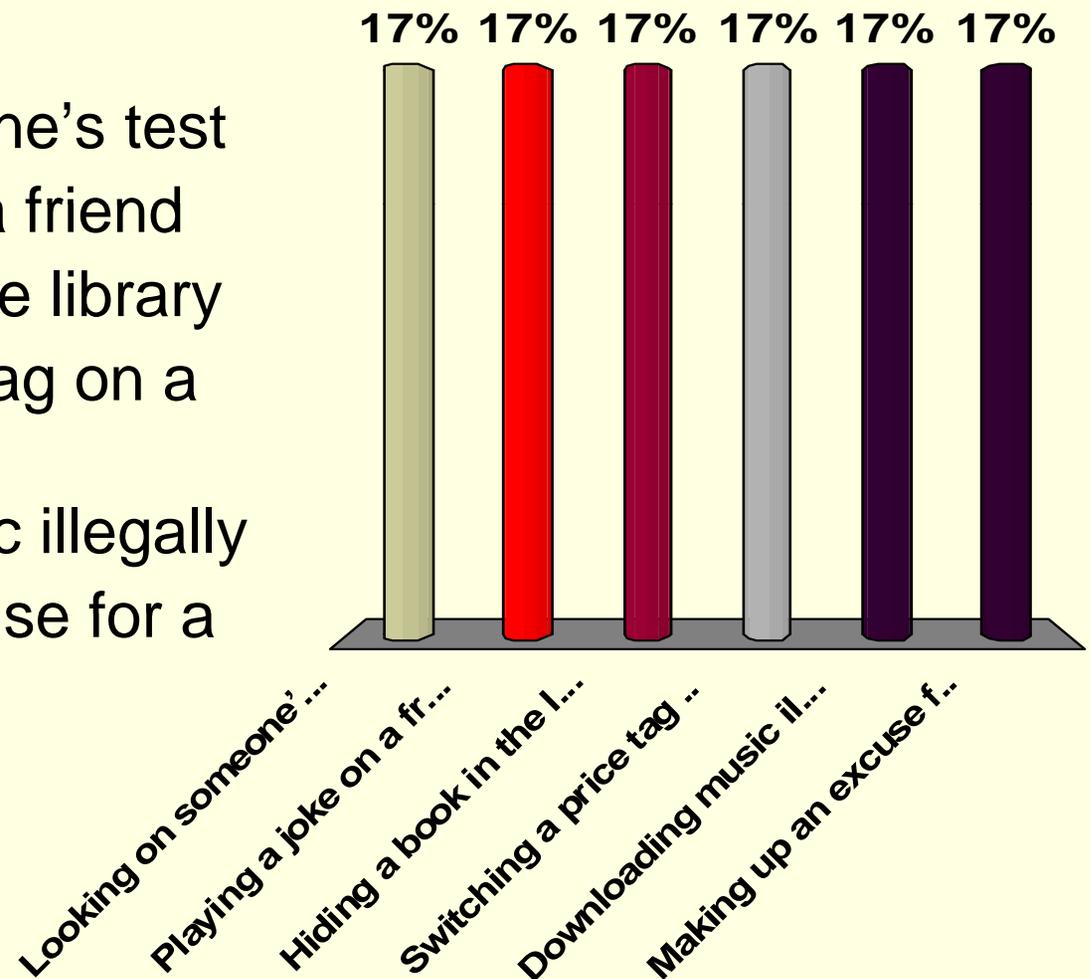
- Students are given an exercise in which they must rank 10 statements in order from least ethical to most ethical
- Statements were developed by the committee and reflect everyday ethical decisions the students encounter
- After completion, students are asked to share what they ranked highest and lowest, and how they came to these conclusions with the rest of the group

Ethics Rank Order Exercise

- Looking on someone's test for help with an answer.
- Playing a joke on a friend, and he/she gets slightly hurt.
- Hiding a book in the library so no one else can find it except for you.
- Downloading music from online that you did not pay for
- Lying to a police officer when asked for more information.

Which of the following is the most egregious?

1. Looking on someone's test
2. Playing a joke on a friend
3. Hiding a book in the library
4. Switching a price tag on a book
5. Downloading music illegally
6. Making up an excuse for a professor



Developing Strategies for Ethical Behavior

- Four strategies were created to help students engage in positive ethical decision making
 - The strategies were written on a small, wallet sized card and handed out to students
 - The strategies are as follows:
 - Is it legal?
 - Is it fair?
 - How will it make me feel about myself?
 - To whom do I go for guidance?

Ethical Role Models and Ethical Codes

- Students discuss who their ethical role models are.
- Students are asked to name some of the ethical codes that exist at the university
 - Code of Student Life
 - Academic Honor Code
 - Community Standards
 - Seahawk Respect Compact
 - And any others they can think of

Consequences of Unethical Behavior

- A discussion is facilitated about why these ethical codes are important
- The consequences of someone not living up to these expectations is also discussed

Student/Group Case Study Revisited

- A revisiting of the ethical issues brought forth in the case study shown at the start of the session
- Facilitator asks questions about how students:
 - Might handle each situation
 - Possible outcomes of decisions
 - Pros and cons of each decision
- To conclude, a discussion about why ethics are important and the role of student leaders play as ethical leaders is presented

Development and Execution of the Initiative

- During the 2009-2010 school year, members of our committee trained over 500 student leaders and employees utilizing the format provided above
- In 2010-2011, we have trained nearly the same number of students

Reaching Many Student Groups

- Some examples of groups that have received the training include:
 - resident assistants
 - recreation center employees
 - campus life employees
 - Greek leaders
 - members of the student honor and conduct boards
 - student peer mediators
 - health peer educators
 - and sport club presidents

Advanced Ethics Seminar

- Currently working on an advanced training seminar for students that have completed the first program
- Format consists of a review of information from the first program as well as more in-depth discussion amongst students
 - Small groups
 - Role playing
 - Individual student experiences

Feedback on the Initiative

- To assess the learning outcomes of this session, participants filled out surveys consisting of quantitative and qualitative questions
- Quantitative questions were asked on a 5 point Likert-scale questionnaire, and all items were ranked from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree
- Qualitative questions were open ended and allowed students to share personal feelings and feedback about their learning outcomes

Quantitative Results

- The average results for responses are given here:
 - Am more aware of strategies for making ethical decisions (4.27)
 - Am better able to identify factors that influence personal ethics (4.22)
 - Am more aware of ethical codes at UNCW (4.22)
 - Am more likely to make ethical decisions in my life (4.13)
 - Am better able to examine the consequences of unethical behavior (4.09)
 - Have a better understanding of what ethics entail (3.72)

Qualitative Results

- These questions included:
 - What was the most useful thing you learned at this workshop?
 - How can you apply what you learned to your daily life?
 - For what areas/issues related to ethics would it be helpful to have further training?

- Feedback showed that students appreciated the session, and found it important to have examples that were relevant to their positions

Summary of Results

- Findings indicate that the workshop is successfully increasing students' awareness of ethical dilemmas in their lives, as well as helping them to develop strategies for ethical decision making
- Based on our experiences and findings from this past year, we have enhanced and adapted our trainings for this coming year to train and encourage more students to lead lives of integrity

Sharing Best Practices...

- What other efforts have you made on your campus to promote ethical development among students?
- What are ways that ethics initiatives can be assessed?
- How can/should student affairs professionals be trained to promote ethics among students?

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