

CE 790 Engineering Ethics Case Studies Rubric.
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Task	Maximum (%)
1. Gather the facts, state assumptions.	6 12
2. Define and separate the various ethical issues.	9 12
3. Study more information available on web.	2 3
4. Identify the affected parties (stakeholders).	5 7
5. Identify the consequences related to each issue.	5 7
6. Identify the obligations related to each issue.	7 7
7. Consider the character and integrity related to each issue.	3 7
8. Think creatively about potential actions or solutions.	6 9
9. Develop competing viewpoints or arguments supporting each solution.	0 12
10. Visit with peers.	6 6
11. Test solutions.	2 6
12. Decide on action and prepare to deal with opposing arguments.	10 12

TOTAL

100

QUALITY OF WORK PRESENTED IN A REPORT

poor

- missing some steps
- short on facts/assumptions of case
- very short analysis of the 3 methods
- few potential solutions presented and argued
- doesn't argue decision well
- report not well constructed
- overall does not illustrate understanding of case or issues

good

- all steps included in report
- Some analysis of the three methods weak
- not exhaustive list of potential solutions
- decision argued well
- report well done
- understands case, just not every point considered

excellent

- all steps done in-depth
- all topics considered, analyzed
- very convincing argument for decision
- report organization excellent
- exhaustive list of potential solutions
- illustrates expert understanding of case, issues, how to analyse, and great decision argumen

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Case Study 1 - Plagiarism

The plagiarism of the commencement speech by Bryan LeBeau from Cornell West was caught by Sally Greene, a professor, who felt obligated to report the plagiarism. LeBeau decided to withdraw his candidacy for the post of executive vice president for academic affairs at DePaul University (The Chronicle, June 16) after being caught. He was also put on administrative leave and the UM faculty asked for his resignation as a result of his plagiarism. LeBeau is a "widely acknowledged scholar and author/editor of numerous works, and also the host for **"Talking History"** [emphasis added], a nationally syndicated radio program of the Organization of American Historians carried on National Public Radio every week" (<http://www.famousplagiarists.com/academia.htm>). He publicly apologized 2 years later.

Opinion
Avoiding the act of deception is required by the NSPE code of ethics for engineers, even though LeBeau was not an engineer there are similar codes for faculty members (one such code can be found at <http://www.piercecollege.edu/faculty/senate/pages/CofE.pdf>). However, using someone else's commencement speech and not giving credit to the person who originally wrote it, is definitely a deceptive act and would be considered unethical. There is nothing wrong with using the ideas, words and phrases of others, because they are worth repeating and have a good meaning or point to make; if one does so, simply giving credit to that individual or group of individuals is important. A Ph D. student told me how he deals with his classes. On the first day, he tells his students that all the cool ideas and phrases that he uses are someone else's, and that he has used them for such a long time he no longer remembers their origin.

By taking part in this act of deception, LeBeau faced several consequences. He had the pleasure of having a good speech, until he got caught – then it was not as pleasurable. He put his employer in a situation where they had to justify either keeping him as a professor and/or dean or letting him go. This is not pleasant for anyone not to mention the public humility that the university had to face. If the university decided to let LeBeau go, this would result in the unpleasantness of one, LeBeau, with a much more positive result for the university. There is an obligation by the professor and the academic community to "encourage the free pursuit of learning by acknowledging our obligations...C. To foster honest academic conduct." (<http://www.piercecollege.edu/faculty/senate/pages/CofE.pdf>). By not following this obligation LeBeau acted unethically and immorally. A person of virtue would not take part in actions that would not be seen as virtuous.

Another fundamental canon from the NSPE code of ethics for engineers is that services should only be performed in the area of competence. If LeBeau was incapable of performing the commencement address, he should not have accepted the responsibility and honor of giving a commencement speech. This may have tarnished his entire career works, because he decided to plagiarize a speech. All the work that he has completed will be under a watchful eye and could be questioned as to the validity of the work. Citing LeBeau's work may be difficult for others for the reason that it may not be entirely his work, but also could be plagiarized from someone else.

When it is found out that the knowledge and/or experience needed is not present the consequences could be public humiliation. The duty to perform in an area of competence should far out way any happiness that may come from participating in such an honorable part of

students' lives. One who lives and follows the ideas of virtues would know from experience that taking credit for someone else's work, because one is incompetent of performing the action on one's own.

references Code of Ethics
 Since engineers shall act for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees, by plagiarizing the work of another in academia LeBeau left the University of Missouri in a bit of a predicament. The officials of the university have to decide what actions to take in regards to LeBeau, as well as how those actions will be viewed by other faculty members and the public. I would have to assume that when LeBeau took actions to plagiarize the work of another he did not take into consideration the effect of his actions on the university. It is even possible that he did not think about how these actions could have the potential to end his career. As a result of his actions, he made a statement saying that he probably would not be kept on as dean, and although he would like to stay on as a history professor, believed that the chancellor would probably ask for a resignation.

The final fundamental canon states that engineers shall also "conduct themselves honorably, responsibly, ethically, and lawfully so as to enhance the honor, reputation, and usefulness of the profession" (<http://www.nspe.org/ethics/eh1-code.asp>). There is nothing about plagiarism that is honorable or improves the honor, reputation and usefulness of the profession.

By not acting in the best interest of his employer and not behaving in an honorable manner, LeBeau faced losing his job as well as tarnishing the name of the his employer. The penalty of these actions could be that he has a more difficult time getting another job as a professor or dean. He may also have to defend his other works as his own for some time in the future. One would think that there would be some kind of obligation for LeBeau to protect his name and the name of his employer, and act in such a way that he would choose the right action. There is no honor in plagiarism. The concept of virtues says that acting as LeBeau did does not lend to the idea that a virtuous person must act with high moral excellence and practice it continuously.

Turning in a colleague of academia could be seen as an ethical dilemma as well. There is a duty to let others know the truth, but by doing so the cost could be someone's career – which is not a pleasant thought. By not turning someone in when it is found out that there has been something done that is inappropriate, one has thrown out the idea of living as a habitually excellent person.

Unfortunately, this is not the only case where persons involved in academia have been caught plagiarizing; some, like LeBeau, on speeches as well. There is a website dedicated to exposing those that have been caught plagiarizing <http://www.famousplagiarists.com/academia.htm> and even ranks their "threat level" like the government does for war on terror. LeBeau's threat level is orange meaning high risk, while others, like Ward Churchill, are as high as red meaning severe risk and even others, like Gary A. Giamartino; Robert Carver & the SIUE School of Business, are as low as blue meaning guarded risk. There are even entire colleges that are on this list like Edward Waters College. A level of green was the absolute lowest, but there was no one that received such a ranking.

The solution to plagiarizing is not to do so. This will eliminate the act of deception, any thought that there may be some level of incompetence, any act that may be seen as harmful to the

employer or the profession and any dishonorable act. By simply citing the original author or declining to give the speech, all of this public humiliation could have been avoided. LeBeau could have kept his job as a professor and dean, and would not have had to withdraw as a candidate from DePaul University. Since LeBeau did plagiarize, the university was forced to take action. Those actions resulted in what would be best for the university following the idea of utilitarianism of doing what is best for the most people since the only person hurt was LeBeau. The decision was easy since he put himself in that situation voluntarily by committing the act of plagiarism. } affected

For Greene to decide to turn LeBeau in must have been a hard decision. Two years had already passed since the speech was given; it was in the past and could have easily stayed there. As a person in academia it may have seemed like there was no other option, but to expose the truth. If any students wanted to use a part of the speech and reference LeBeau, they would not be referencing the original author. It could be that she felt that in not letting the truth be known that she was putting her character in jeopardy and to do this would result in not having such a good life. These actions can be justified by deontology and virtue; however not taking these actions can be justified by utilitarianism, because the outcome of the action would not be pleasurable for the person being affected. Since two of the three methods indicate that this action should have taken place it was morally and ethically acceptable.

actions of Greene

The actions that were taken since the plagiarism happened were morally and ethically just. There are those who feel that plagiarism is not that big of a deal, because the good from the original thought is being circulated throughout the people. It can be said that there would be great good from telling fellow students what to study on a test that you took early, so that they all do well. This idea would be acceptable by utilitarianism standards. But there is an understanding with the professor that allowed you to take the test early (for whatever reason), that you will not share anything with anyone else. If there was not this agreement, then the relationship between student and faculty would not be worth anything. There is also the character trait that would show through if you decided to help your fellow classmates that you do not respect the student-teacher relationship and the trust between would no longer exist.

- discussion heavily focused around obligations

- lacks discussion on 2 other approaches

- needs improved org.