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Introduction to the Center for Education on Social Responsibility

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Look inside the toolbox of a student at a typical business school and you will find conventional business decision-making tools such as market valuation, ROI calculation, profit/loss analysis, marketing strategy, etc. Business schools are “in the business” of imparting fundamental decision-making tools to their students. However, if these tools are taught in the absence of values, the implied charge to future business leaders is: “Go forth and make decisions on the basis of maximizing ROI, market valuation, market share and profit.” Is it any wonder that we see far too many headlines about exercise of poor judgment by business executives who appear to have a “win-at-all-costs” mentality? Turning our attention away from the headlines towards the everyday, we see far more cases of business people simply acting reflexively, unmindful of the full range of impacts of their business decisions.

Recognizing that application of values is essential to sound business decision making, the University of Colorado’s Leeds School of Business launches its students on a journey that few other business students are privileged to take. Leeds is unique among public schools in the country in its substantial and enduring commitment to the infusion of values throughout all years of the curriculum. Through the generosity and vision of the Leeds family (for whom the school is named), students have the benefit of the Center for Education on Social Responsibility (CESR). The Center oversees more than 9,000 credit hours of coursework, all geared to equip Leeds students with the tools they will need to meet the ethical and social challenges of a highly competitive, increasingly complex business world.

Curricular Offerings—Undergraduate

In both required and elective CESR courses, Leeds students study and discuss approaches to business that are concerned with more than just maintaining a positive bottom line. They explore the strategic advantage of sustainability and corporate social responsibility and, more generally, the necessity of thinking about values and ethics in business and in life.

From day one, students are encouraged to consider how personal values relate to business decisions. The required freshman course, “Introduction to Business,” infuses ethics and values into readings and lectures as students learn the basics of business. They see how the decisions and behavior of business leaders play out in the *Wall Street Journal* and other publications, which provide ample fodder for essays and assignments.

At the sophomore level, Leeds students take required courses in the foundations of their major. CESR encourages and offers support for the development of values-oriented materials in these required classes and provides counsel to faculty in any discipline who request such materials.

Approximately 800 students per year take CESR’s required junior-level course (“Business Applications of Social Responsibility”), which is a rigorous and challenging exploration of values and differing views of corporate social responsibility. This flagship CESR course is offered in small classes, allowing students to participate actively in class discussions, “give voice to their values,” and evaluate the role of business in society. Building on a solid foundation of ethical theory and a thorough understanding of societal consequences of the free market

and government intervention, students are asked to determine how real people in real businesses with real dilemmas should act. By evaluating the behavior of business in current case studies, students learn to make decisions based on their personal values and their own view of the role of business. They must also articulate the theory or reasoning behind their views, recognize the shortcomings of their stances, and defend their positions.

At the senior level, CESR assists business school divisions in the offering of capstone experiences, requiring students to examine their values as they consider complex issues within their major field of study . . . accounting, marketing, management, and finance. These capstone courses enable students to apply their personal values and decision-making frameworks to find solutions to some of the most common and troublesome ethical issues they will face in their chosen careers.

Hallmarks of all CESR-sponsored and developed classes, whether required or elective, are self-discovery, high levels of interaction among students and faculty, and challenging project or case-based learning. Curricular innovations include

up-to-date course materials and cases that demonstrate current applications of timeless issues.

Elective Undergraduate Courses

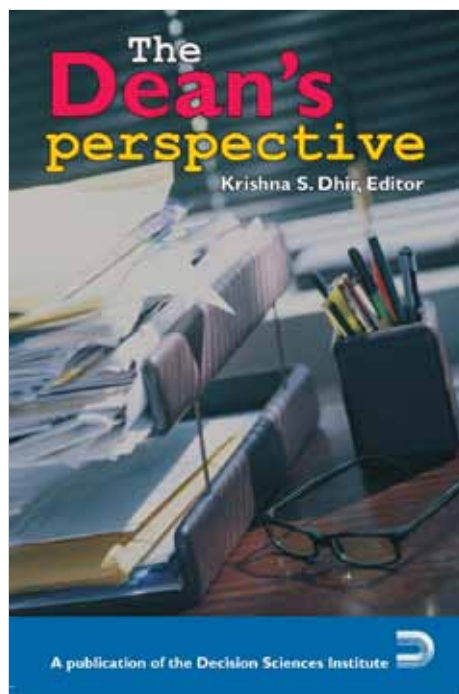
CESR is known for offering creative, out-of-the-box elective classes that address cutting-edge issues and challenge students to grow in their self-awareness, their experiences, and their understanding of corporate social responsibility.

In "Business Solutions to Global Poverty: Learning Through Service," upperclassmen work with Peace Corps volunteers and social entrepreneurs in the U.S. and in developing countries to gain hands-on experience and engage in focused academic research related to doing business and "doing good" at what is now called the "base of the pyramid," where 4 billion people who make under \$5/day remain outside the global market system. Acting in consulting teams, students provide business advice to help their project partners, who are working to address the needs of the poor and to solve global social and environmental problems around the world.

In "Sustainable Operations," students examine a number of business

dilemmas directly related to today's environmental challenges. This course allows students to learn from real-world businesses that are not only finding solutions to these challenges, but are extremely profitable in doing so!

"Leadership Challenges: Exercises in Moral Courage" is a year-long, highly selective course, based on an interactive model that creates a genuine dialogue between executives and students. Six high-level executives visit the classroom, share their experiences, and present an ethical dilemma, to which students present a solution for the executive to evaluate and critique. Donna Sockell, director of the Center for Education on Social Responsibility, created this demanding, yet highly popular course. She believes that having students interact with talented and successful executives who are willing to share real life stories they viewed as life-defining challenges in their careers will provide outstanding preparation for students to succeed when they assume business roles in the future. How often does an undergraduate student interact with executives such as Michael Francis, chief marketing officer for Target Corp.; Peter Burns, GM of Celestial Seasonings;



This book shares the perspectives and insights of an impressive array of current and former deans, as well as faculty members, about the role of a business school dean in all its dimensions. The book is appropriate for sitting deans as well as for aspiring deans, and is an important addition to the literature on business school leadership.

**Jerry E. Trapnell, Ph.D, CPA,
Executive Vice President &
Chief Accreditation Officer**

For more information, see
www.decisionsciences.org/publications



Mark Retzliff, founder and CEO of Horizon Dairy, or Aaron Kennedy, the former CEO and founder of Noodles & Co.? Through this CESR course, students are not just passively listening to an executive's prepared speech; they are engaging in transformational dialogue and debate. According to one visiting executive, "I've had the opportunity to speak to hundreds of college students at numerous universities over the years as part of their curriculum. Leadership Challenges was by far the most relevant, engaging, and clever class I have experienced. The combination of student-professor-executive interaction, coupled with examples of real life drama and dilemmas, give students an incredible insider's view to the difficult decision-making that goes on every day in business." (Larissa Herda, CEO of tw telecom).

Real-life Experience

At Leeds, bringing the real life experiences of business leaders to students happens not only in the classroom setting, but through mentoring relationships as well. CESR spearheaded the Professional Mentorship Program, which connects upperclassmen with a business professional in their chosen field of study. The program impacts over 200 students each year and has brought a wealth of career advice, industry insight, networking skills, and internships to undergraduate students at Leeds.

MBA Program: A Focus on Responsibility, Entrepreneurship and Sustainability

At the graduate level, the required "Socially Responsible Enterprise" course engages all MBA students in a stakeholder-focused discussion of values and business obligations. This inter-disciplinary course encourages students to take stands on complex issues facing today's business leaders and has been very well received by Leeds graduate students.

In "Social Entrepreneurship in Emerging Markets," MBA students consult in teams to provide advice to social entrepreneurs in developing countries. After assessing the needs of the social en-

trepreneur, each team conducts research and develops a comprehensive report that will help its partner achieve his or her goals. Examples of recent projects include a business plan for ecotourism development for a coffee farming community in Honduras, a business plan for a social venture that will provide access to technology for university students and teachers in Rwanda, and a model for financial sustainability for a nonprofit that provides education for young entrepreneurs in Uganda.

"Topics in Sustainable Business" provides an overview of the core concepts, strategies, and practice of sustainable business, with an emphasis on entrepreneurial opportunities and development of a personalized sustainability action plan.

Certificates

Although *all* Leeds graduates will have been exposed by CESR to principles of corporate social responsibility and the practical applications of these principles, an increasing number of students seek more intensive study of this field. Leeds students now have the opportunity to pursue a Certificate in Socially Responsible Enterprise (SRE), one of the first certificate programs of its kind offered at the undergraduate level.

Certificate holders must complete coursework carefully selected from a cross-section of disciplines; demonstrate experiential learning in the form of an internship, independent study, or a pre-approved service-learning course or program; and present a personal statement of purpose, after reflecting on their unique educational experience. Students who complete the certificate will see and understand the social and environmental impacts of business and their ethical implications from a broader perspective. They will also graduate with practical knowledge and marketable experiences that will guide them in conducting business in an informed, responsible, and ethical manner.

Likewise, MBA students at Leeds are afforded a similar opportunity to distinguish themselves as excellent can-

didates in the growing field of corporate social and environmental responsibility. In collaboration with the Deming Center for Entrepreneurship and the Real Estate Center's Initiative for Sustainable Development, CESR offers the Sustainability Portfolio to MBAs who wish to focus their coursework and career goals on the critical field of sustainability.

CESR's Impact

Curricular programs are one thing; true student impact is another. How do graduates of the Leeds School of Business feel about the toolbox of decision-making skills provided through CESR? A few thoughts from Leeds undergraduate and MBA students . . .

The CESR program has proven to be the most valuable coursework of my college career, with its unique classroom interaction. By challenging my moral stand and the thought processes behind them, the Center has created an awareness of the ethical issues that I will be unable to ignore as I strive to become a future business leader.

—Eric Stout '09

Before I took this class I had a rather narrow view of what was good for the company and this was mostly based on financial measures. Recently I have used what I learned in this class for a capital proposal that was requested for the Health and Safety department's incident reporting management system.

—Joe Fricano, MBA

I feel the class has made a positive impact on the way I view ethics. Before, I had the viewpoint of—I would never be in that position—and now I realize it is all around. I find myself sharing concepts and stories discussed in class with senior management and peers.

—Eric Wuestefeld, MBA

How many minds do you have to change to make an impact? CESR believes that changing the mind of even one student will have a significant effect on that future leader's business and personal circles, rippling out to the commu-

nity at large. The Leeds School believes in the long-term impact of the CESR curriculum, considering that after just one semester of the junior-level course on “Business Applications of Social Responsibility,” over 21.5% of students changed their evaluation of business conduct in ten scenarios, in favor of more “socially conscious” behavior. Moreover, students are becoming more selective about the businesses for which they will work, seeking a fit with their values.

Looking ahead, CESR strives to integrate this disciplined focus on values and social responsibility further into the basic fabric of the Leeds curriculum. In collaboration with functional divisions in the business school, multiple disciplines across the university and executives in the business community, CESR hopes to foster a generation of business professionals who are well-equipped to meet the ethical, environmental and social challenges of today’s business world.

course helped me refine my thought process and gave me new platforms from which to think. I was wondering if I could get my final paper and test back at some point . . . I think that it will be a useful reference to me later in life. What I wrote on that test is a culmination of what I learned and thought about in your class this semester—and I was able to take the time to provide truly honest answers, answers to difficult questions that I would rather not forget.

—Rafael Pedicini '09 ■

There are plenty of jobs for warm bodies, but who really wants to be valued as a convenient replacement for a computer that doesn't exist yet. Knowing my values and pursuing work consistent with them was vital to my integrity and values are a foundation for my passion. Passion and integrity are always attractive to worthwhile employers. I got this job because of who I am as a person and that feels really good. The time I spent in your class helped me achieve greater clarity that helped me succeed in this way. I absolutely love that doing the right thing (being true to myself) is paying out huge! Thank you!

—Beau Mannering, '09

It [the course] genuinely made me re-think my stance on ethics and how they interact with business. I appreciate you opening my eyes. I feel that I am a better person and future manager for having taken this class.

—Chris Kozina, MBA

The concepts learned and discussed in this class are now a part of my conscious thinking and have changed how I will approach future decisions. I am better equipped to be a “trusted advisor.”

—Jamie Regehr, MBA

I learned a lot about corporate social responsibility as well as what are the important questions to ask in difficult situations. Your

NAMES IN THE NEWS

CAROL LATTA, Executive Director, Decision Sciences Institute



Render



Heizer

Barry Render of Rollins College and **Jay Heizer** of Texas Lutheran University have recently opened an OM Blog for faculty teaching in the operations area. Combining their 75 years of teaching experience, the daily blog (at www.heizerrenderom.wordpress.com) includes teaching tips, classroom exercises, video ideas, guest blogs, and an “OM in the News” feature. The

latter collects articles from leading newspapers and magazines, summarizes them, suggests classroom discussion questions, and provides an on-line link to the article.

<http://www.heizerrenderom.wordpress.com>



Ken Boyer of Ohio State University was named the 2010 Distinguished Scholar by the operations management division at the 2010 Academy of Man-

agement meeting in August. The award recognizes “distinguished leaders in the field of operations management.” Boyer was cited as an influential scholar with more than 40 published journal papers and for his leadership as co-editor of the *Journal of Operations Management*.

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