

# **Webster University Self Study For NCA – Higher Learning Commission Re-Accreditation**

## **Criterion Four Survey Instructions and Form**

Overview: Criterion Four – Acquisition, Discovery, and Application of Knowledge

**Explanation:** You have been identified as being involved with one University area (as stated below) that relates to Criterion Four for Webster's self study. You are being asked to write a brief written narrative and identify, describe, and explain evidence relating to your area. The specific aspect of Criterion Four that we wish you to address in your response is mentioned below.

**Participant's Name:** Kate Parsons

**Participant's Area(s):** Ethics

**Please address Criterion 4 sub area(s) below in your Narrative and Evidence: (4b), (4c) & (4d)**

- 4a. How does your area demonstrate through its actions that a life of learning is valued at Webster University?
- 4b. How does your area demonstrate that an acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to Webster University?
- 4c. How does your area assess the usefulness of Webster's curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society?
- 4d. How does your area provide support to ensure that faculty, students and/or staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly?

**\*Please see explanation of above Criterion Four sub areas and examples of evidence attached.**

**Directions:** Please fill in both sections (Narrative and Evidence)

1. The Narrative section should include an explanation of how your area or unit accomplishes the questions above (A, B, C, D or a combination). The Narrative might also include explanations of the effort as related to:
  - the mission of the university
  - history of the area
  - processes used
  - policies and procedures that relate to the area
  - recommendations concerning improving the area

\*The length of the narrative is your decision; you may add additional pages as needed.

2. The Evidence Section should include an explanation and description of any evidence you have which supports the Narrative. Also include where this evidence can be found. Evidence can take the form of:
  - survey results or data used to make decisions
  - minutes of meetings and decisions
  - CARS and other database information
  - reports, annual reports or other document

**\*Please see explanation of Criterion Four sub areas and examples of evidence attached.**

3. Please respond via email with attachments to Criteria Four Chair, Grant Chapman, at sherrils@webster.edu no later than April 16, 2007. If you have any questions please contact Grant Chapman's office at x6962.

## Typed Narrative

**Name:** Kate Parsons

**Criterion 4 – Core Component(s):** (4b), (4c) & (4d)

**Area(s):** Ethics

Type narrative below; remember the length of narrative is at your discretion.

The Center for Ethics (originally the Center for Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics) was established at Webster University in 1998 with aid from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Center aims to foster discussion about practical moral problems in various disciplines and professions by promoting teaching and research in ethics, as well as community outreach. The Center hosts lecture series for visiting speakers, interdisciplinary conferences and professional workshops. It also administers the Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethic and the Pledge of Social Environmental Responsibility, and serves as an academic resource for faculty and students pursuing coursework and research in ethics.

The mission of the Webster University Center for Ethics is to stimulate dialogue, encourage awareness, and promote critical thinking about ethical issues. The Center aims to inspire reflection about ethical dilemmas and helps bring together people normally separated by disciplinary boundaries. Through curricular development and public forums, the Center identifies issues of moral importance and supports environments conducive to collegial ethical analysis. The Center serves as a resource for collaboration within the university and throughout the larger community, urging participants to identify their roles and responsibilities to one another as citizens of local and global communities. The Center does not endorse any particular viewpoint; it aims to promote sophisticated discussions through which various ethical positions can be discussed.

The Center and its programs uniquely supports and enhances the mission of Webster University. The Webster University Mission Statement articulates the following commitments:

- develops educational programs that join theory and practice
- encourages in its students a critical perspective, a respect for diversity, and an understanding of their own and others' values
- fosters...a commitment to contribute actively to their communities and the world

The Center for Ethics elucidates the connection between scholarship and the world outside of the university, particularly through the Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics and the Center's administration of the Pledge of Social and Environmental Responsibility).

### **Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics**

With the Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics, students are able to demonstrate an acquired expertise in identifying and analyzing ethical issues from the perspective of various disciplines and professions. This concentration in ethics furthers

the University's mission to foster in our students "a commitment to contribute actively to their communities and the world" in a particularly meaningful way.

Completion of the certificate not only strengthens students' awareness about ethical issues, but also helps students assure potential employers that they have spent substantial time considering the ethical aspects of professional conduct. Studying ethics enhances students' ability to engage in conflict resolution and to discern just solutions when moral dilemmas arise in the workplace. Those students who elect to become involved in community service through the certificate are also able to provide employers with evidence of their willingness to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Webster publicly emphasizes its commitment to the union of theory and practice, and of graduating students who are not merely mature in their fields, but mature as citizens who see themselves as connected to their local communities and to other nations. This certificate gives students the opportunity to stretch their moral imaginations, to recognize the need for creative and critical thinking in pursuing social justice.

### **Pledge of Social and Environmental Responsibility**

In 2003-2004 the Center for Ethics instituted the Pledge of Social and Environmental Responsibility at Webster University. The Pledge, coordinated out of Manchester College in Indiana, has been endorsed and implemented by over 100 colleges and universities nationwide.

The pledge reads as follows:

"I pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job I consider and will try to improve these aspects of any organization for which I work."

The Center for Ethics administers materials for the Pledge. For those who elect to participate, we distribute certificates, green ribbons and wallet cards. Because the Center for Ethics aims to promote consideration of ethical issues, but does not endorse particular ethical views programmatically, we are careful to state the following in our letter to students:

Taking the pledge is a voluntary decision, and likewise the determination of what counts as environmentally and socially responsible is up to you. Our hope is that your pledge will contribute to a broader effort to build responsible citizenship and a sustainable world. We ask that you sign the pledge card or wear a green ribbon only if you intend to fulfill the commitment. Wearing the ribbon makes a public statement of your intent to consider the well being of the world and its inhabitants, both in your choice of career and in the decisions you make while in the workplace.

The Center's Web site has an FAQ section on (<http://www.webster.edu/ethicscenter>) and we encourage students to consult binders filled with pledge resources housed in Career Services and in the Center Director's office. Since 2004, the number of students who participate in the Pledge at the Saint Louis campus commencement has been approximately 20%.

\*Additional pages as needed. When finished, proceed to the Evidence section.

### **Evidence**

**Name:** Kate Parsons

**Criterion 4 – Core Component(s):** (4b), (4c) & (4d)

**Area(s):** Ethics

Identify and describe what evidence and where to find evidence relating to the above.

Evidence of the components described above may be found on the Center's Web site: <http://www.webster.edu/ethicscenter>, in the brochure for the Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics, and in the 2000-2007 report copied below. In order to continue improvements in the Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics, we also administer the following Questionnaire:

## **Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics**

### **Questionnaire for Graduating Seniors**

1. Has earning the certificate helped you to analyze, interpret or better understand ethical issues in various disciplines, professions and cultures? How? Please explain and/or provide an example.
2. What might you tell someone who is not enrolled in the program (ex. an employer, a family member, a friend) about the value of this program?
3. To what extent do you think learning ethical theory has enhanced your ability to analyze and formulate positions on ethical issues?
4. Describe the impact you think the certificate has had or will have on your ability to:
  - Approach ethical issues from alternative viewpoints
  - Anticipate and respond to moral dilemmas
  - Vote and shape public policy
  - Engage in community projects and/or service

5. Which course and/or topic had the greatest impact on you and why?
6. Are there other courses, topics or issues that you would have liked to study that were not available in the program? Are there any courses on the current list that do not belong in the certificate?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the program?

### **Center for Ethics Activity Summary: Fall 2000 to Spring 2007**

Between 2000 and 2007 the Center for Ethics (formerly the Center for Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics) has established itself as a resource for students, faculty, and staff at Webster, as well as for the wider Saint Louis community. A certificate program for students and an optional graduation pledge have been instituted, and the Center has sponsored a number of lectures, events, and programs. The following is an overview of the Center's activities during the past four and a half years.

1. Instituted the Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics (Spring 2002)
2. Established a web site and brochure (two versions of each; the brochure has been redesigned and the web site [www.webster.edu/ethicscenter/](http://www.webster.edu/ethicscenter/) is in the process of being redesigned)
3. Hosted lectures and presentations:

Center for Ethics featured speakers:

Mike Godwin, "Cyber House Rules," 3/22/01  
Robert Solomon, "Business: Values and Virtues," 4/6/01  
Mark Sagoff, "Nature's Birthmark: The Separate Science of Ecology," 4/20/01  
Robert McChesney, "The U.S. News Media and World War III," 4/23/02  
David McReynolds, "A Philosophy of Nonviolence," 4/24/03  
Dorene Olson and Mark T. Van Horn, "Difficult Decisions: Euthanizing Dogs, Cats and Other Companion Animals," 3/16/04

SIUE Safe Zone Committee, "Safe Zone Training," 3/11/05  
David Parrish, "The Bhopal Accident in India," 9/22/05  
Darius Rejali, "Torture and Democracy," 2/16/06  
Claude Evans, "Hunting with Respect," 11/14/06

Brown Bag Lunch series:

Don Morse, "Ethics in a Disillusioned Age," 10/23/01  
Robert Goss, Steve Houldsworth, Kate Parsons, "Homophobia and  
Heterosexism: Why it should matter to you," 4/18/02  
Britt-Marie Schiller, "Ethics and Psychoanalysis," 9/18/02  
Don Morse, "Pragmatic Ethics," 11/6/02  
Sandra Gruner-Domic, "Reflections on Migration," 11/10/03  
Bruce Umbaugh, "Programming the Good: Freedom, Privacy and Fair Use in a  
Technological Age," 1/20/04  
James Evans, "Cultural Reflections on the Right to Life Debate," 11/10/04  
Eric Rovie, "Aristotelian Friendship and Loyalty in Business," 2/8/05  
Don Corrigan, "Media Ethics Close to Home," 2/13/06  
Linda Woolf, "Nazi Medicine: The Killing-Healing Paradox," 3/1/06  
Bill Barrett, "Can a Photo Tell the Truth?" 10/30/06  
Eric Brende, "Choosing Technology," 1/23/07

The Center has also co-sponsored a number of speakers, including:

Britt Bailey  
Patrick Ball  
Iris Chang  
Mark Johnson  
Ken Knisely  
Peter Ludlow  
Lucius Outlaw  
Holmes Rolston III  
Jerome Segal  
The Uppity Theatre  
Carol Wagner

4. Established the ETHC 1000 course and prefix

*ETHC 1000: Issues and Problems in Ethics* is a one-credit course in applied/practical ethics designed to explore the moral issues and/or dilemmas pertinent to a specific discipline, profession, or topic. The course is designed to increase student awareness of ethical issues and to

develop critical thinking skills. May be repeated 2 times, total 3 credits. This course is coded for the Values category under General Education and counts toward the Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics.

5. Engaged in community outreach on behalf of the Center for Ethics:

Director participates in St. Louis Ethics Consortium (group comprised primarily of local ethics center directors)

Ethics Roundtables (4-6 annually, facilitated by Dave Hilditch and coordinated by Arts and Sciences Development)

“Ethical, Social and Political Dimensions of the Stem Cell Debate,” Kate Parsons and Bruce Umbaugh, symposium panelists for “Stem Cell Research: Science, Medicine, Law and Bioethics – The Implications for the Future,” 11/29/03

“Rethinking Business Ethics: Lessons from Aristotle and Enron,” Kate Parsons, featured speaker, representing CFE, “Ernst & Young: Women in Tax Seminar Series,” 7/23/03

Several co-sponsored events also introduced the Center to people from the wider community, including presentations by Britt Bailey, Iris Chang, Jerome Segal and the Uppity Theatre.

6. Instituted the Pledge of Social and Environmental Responsibility (started May 2004)

“I Pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job I consider and will try to improve these aspects of any organization for which I work.”

7. Maintained membership in the APPE (Association of Practical and Professional Ethics) and attended special sessions, “Benchmarks of Ethics Center Excellence” at the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the APPE 2/27/03-3/1/03 (committee members: Michael Hulsizer, Kate Parsons, Art Sandler).

## **Our Mission**

The mission of Webster University's Center for Ethics is to stimulate dialogue, encourage awareness, and promote critical thinking about ethical issues. The Center aims to inspire reflection about ethical dilemmas and helps bring together people normally separated by disciplinary boundaries. Through curricular development and public forums, the Center identifies issues of moral importance and supports environments conducive to collegial ethical analysis. The Center serves as a resource for collaboration within the university and throughout the larger community, urging participants to identify their roles and responsibilities to one another as citizens of local and global communities. The Center does not endorse any particular viewpoint; it aims to promote sophisticated discussions through which various ethical positions can be discussed.

### **Center for Ethics Steering Committee**

Karla Armbruster  
Bill Barrett  
James Evans  
Anne Geraghty-Rathert  
Dave Hilditch  
Michael Hulsizer  
Don Morse  
Kate Parsons  
Chris Risker  
Art Sandler  
Britt-Marie Schiller

### **Program goals**

1. Increase student awareness of and interest in the study of ethical issues. This will include supporting and mentoring those students pursuing the Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics, as well as any efforts to increase enrollments in the certificate program.
2. Support faculty development within the interdisciplinary field of ethics. This may include faculty development initiatives for incorporating ethical content into coursework.
3. Engage in community outreach in order to spark interest in the Center for Ethics and to enhance community-wide discussion of ethical issues. This may include sponsoring ethics roundtables, building the Center's website, producing a brochure and/or developing a mailing list for events.

4. Host Brown Bag seminars, visiting speakers, colloquium series, and/or conferences. The three goals outlined above are supported through such forums for lecture and discussion.

### **Responsibilities of the Director of the Center for Ethics**

1. Schedule meetings (approx. 3 per semester) of the Center for Ethics Steering Committee. Distribute agendas, chair meetings, and write up minutes for these meetings.
2. Attend CID Consortium meetings (8-10 per year).
3. Inform faculty advisors and students of the Center for Ethics and the Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics. Serve as contact person for the Center.
4. Advise students pursuing or considering the Certificate in Practical and Interdisciplinary Ethics.
5. Meet with adjunct faculty members who teach courses for the certificate.
6. Ensure that courses counting toward the certificate are offered on a regular basis.
7. Help develop proposals for new courses and/or changes in the certificate course offerings. Present proposals to the Curriculum Committee.
8. Approve proposals for course substitution and for the practical experience component of the certificate. Develop a resource list for the practical experience option of the certificate.
9. Maintain and update the CFE brochure and website. Distribute the brochure to advisors and prospective students.
10. Coordinate special events. Events include two Brown Bag Lunch events per year, and at least one major speaker, lecture series, symposium or conference hosted by the Center for Ethics.
11. Attend Ethics Roundtable events (2-3 per semester) coordinated through the College of Arts and Sciences and conducted by David Hilditch.
12. Oversee and manage the Center for Ethics budget and seek supplemental funding for special events and other programs.
13. Maintain membership with Association for Practical and Professional Ethics and attend annual conference of the association when possible.
14. Order books, videos and other resources for the Center.
15. Increase awareness of the Center for Ethics in communities beyond the university.

\*Additional pages as needed. When finished, send Narrative and Evidence attachments via email to Grant Chapman (sherrils@webster.edu).