
Introduction

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The papers and comments included in this issue of the *Journal of Business Ethics* were presented at the Louise MacCracken Olmsted Symposium in Ethics on March 22 and 23, 1990, at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. This symposium, entitled "Understanding Professional Misconduct: A Symposium on the Moral Responsibilities of Professionals," gathered five scholars (two philosophers, a sociologist, an historian of science, and a political scientist) noted for their contributions to professional ethics, as well as five members of the Lafayette College faculty who served as commentators.

The symposium was intended not only for philosophers and academics interested in the application of ethical theory to the specific moral problems which arise within the context of professional life but also for actual and prospective members of the professions and those (all of us) whose interests and well being often depend upon professionals behaving morally. As such, the symposium reflected the general pedagogical purpose of what has come to be known at Lafayette College as The Ethics Project. Comprised of seven members of Lafayette's faculty, each with a different departmental affiliation, The Ethics Project aims to foster both an interest in and a concern for sound moral analysis and reasoning, and to encourage their application to a full range of contemporary problems.

Since its inception and subsequent to this symposium, The Ethics Project has been able, because of a generous gift to the College, to sponsor a series of interdisciplinary lectures and discussions on topics in

theoretical ethics, business ethics, medical ethics, engineering ethics, and computer ethics. These events, open to and well attended by members of the local and neighboring communities as well as the students of Lafayette College, are selected and designed on the basis of a commitment to the idea that sensitivity to moral issues and problems can be both learned and cultivated by persons who spend or will spend their lives engaged in ventures which lie outside the immediate context in which academic debates over issues in applied ethics regularly occur.

Indeed, the issue which unites these papers and which bears direct relevance to many fundamental controversies in business ethics is that which forms the core of Bruce Jennings' concerns in his keynote paper. For it is Jennings' contention, a contention pursued explicitly by Kenneth Kipnis (and in comments by James Lennertz and Stephen Lammers) and implicitly by Judith Swazey, Pat Woolf, and Patricia Werhane, that the moral evaluation of the conduct of persons acting in their professional capacities assumes its most poignant form when occurring in a mode of discourse originating within the professions yet remaining accessible to intelligent and reflective non-specialists — that is, to a concerned public. The degree to which this contention is susceptible to the criticisms of moral philosophers suspicious of the moral adequacy of such modes of discourse comprises, as readers of this journal know, the locus of enduring debates in theoretical and applied ethics. The essays and comments included here are presented in the belief that they contribute substantively to this and other critical controversies in professional and applied ethics.

The contributors to this volume and the members of The Ethics Project at Lafayette College join in thanking the editor of this journal, Alex C.

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Michalos, for agreeing to provide an appropriate forum in which the issues raised by these papers may best be considered.

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