

It's Our Choice Not To Be "Ugly"

"The story that was too ugly to tell," by [Craig S. Wilder](#), was reported today in The Chronicle of Higher Education and is well worth reading.

In it, Mr. Wilder states that "Colleges were not innocent occupants of a world with slavery; rather, they helped bring that world into existence."

It will come as no surprise that colleges and universities exist in, and are consistent with, the larger environment. The implications are far reaching and may not be obvious.

Today, business schools, for example, exist in, and are consistent with their larger business environment. Nevertheless, for decades anguish is expressed in many articles, including in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The LA Times*, and other prominent news organizations, that business colleges have not had much success improving the ethical and legal behavior of "real world" business women and men.

Here's the unspoken rub: Academics participate in their own ways in immoral and unethical behavior in academe, if anyone cares to look. Academics may think they understand ethics, but in fact don't. Unethical behavior is as much a part of business academics' lives as unethical and immoral behavior is in "real world" lives of business men and women.

Here's the challenge I've offered business academics and ethicists that leaves them silent:

I've got a new idea about how to understand and teach ethical behavior and maybe have some success. Maybe.

It begins with understanding the difference between talking and doing ethics. Talking and doing are two entirely different propositions. And, we, academics, do not practice what we teach. Do it—practice ethics, dear academic business colleagues—then tell students how to practice ethics. Make sure you have "skin in the game," so you'll clearly understand what you're asking students to do. Let's not delay because opportunity is everywhere on campus, all campuses.

Take common unethical behavior, in our own academic neighborhoods, work to understand what's going on, and, act to improve the behavior. Yourself. See what you learn and what happens, first hand. We can learn how to practice ethical behavior at our universities and by extension, elsewhere, too. We'll have a much better understanding of how to teach others to act ethically.

Any one have a suggestion? A specific suggestion? Well, you may not know me, but I wouldn't ask you to do anything that I haven't done. I've got a suggestion. Let's start with the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, an accreditation institution important to hundreds of business schools and hundreds of thousands of business students. And, I've got just the place to start. I offer lots of details and documentation about failures of

the AACSB to practice its own ethical principles and standards. It is a study that was started in "Ethics, Power, and Academic Corruption, Parts 1 and 2." I'm proposing a continuation of that study. In fact, the study continues by the fact that the AACSB and several of the schools continue their unethical behavior. Be that as it may, documentation and evidence, included in "Ethics, Power, and Academic Corruption," was obtained through freedom of information requests, court transcripts, depositions, etc, and represent clear cases of actual unethical and immoral behaviors of the omnipresent AACSB and academics—administrators and faculty—from several colleges of business throughout the United States.

Hey, AACSB, the challenge is addressed to you, too. After all, you can change your unethical ways without prodding, if you choose to do so.

What do you say? Let's start understanding and really practicing ethics. And teaching it, too.

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