

**The Ivory Tower: A Look at the Ethical and  
Social Responsibility of the University System**

*Cammie Hunt Oxendine, UNC Pembroke,  
1 University Drive, Pembroke NC 28372*

## **ABSTRACT**

Many universities tout that they are "in business to serve their communities" and they are good ethical stewards to their stakeholders. This paper will address the issue of whether or not universities are upholding their social responsibility contracts with their internal and external stakeholders. Moreover, this paper will detail the importance of universities to practice corporate social responsibility as a mixture of ethics and strategy. During this chaotic economic time, American universities are being called upon to be proactive in meeting the needs of their internal and external stakeholders.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Throughout the past two decades, there has been a lot of public disappointment expressed against nearly all things that include the government. Most citizens view public American universities as part of government since they receive some funding from the government. According to Thomas (2000), the public was disenchanted with universities, and university leaders such as Ernest Boyer insisted that universities make a change. Boyer (as cited in Thomas, 2000) expressed his concern as follows:

What I find most disturbing...is a growing feeling in this country that higher education is, in fact, part of the problem rather than the solution. Going still further, that it's become a private benefit, not a public good. Increasingly, the campus is being viewed as a place where students get credentialed and faculty get tenured, while the overall work for the academy does not seem particularly relevant to the nation's most pressing civic social, economic, and moral problems. (p.64)

Over the years, the term "Ivory Tower" has been used to denote colleges and universities as places where academic elitism exist. According to Cummings (1998), universities are being considered as ivory towers that are not cognizant of the needs of society and therefore do not deserve public support. The purpose of this paper is to examine if American universities are guilty of not upholding their ethical and social responsibility to society.

## **HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**

Over the course of America's history, American colleges and universities have undergone several changes. The American institutions of higher learning were derived from European models. From the German universities came the idea of university research conducted by the specialized professor with the help of students. The strong emphasis on the teaching of undergraduate students and the broad conception of education that embraced the moral, emotional, and intellectual development of the student came from England's university system (Bok, 1982). In both of these countries, the academic institutions were detached from the public and were considered very elite institutions.

However, even though the American universities did follow these two models, Americans viewed higher education as the vehicle to provide the knowledge and trained manpower that the developing society needed. During the eighteenth century, the goal of the universities was to produce community leaders and their studies centered mainly on the humanities (McComiskey, 2005). Studying the humanities allowed the graduates to become better informed community leaders. According to Duderstadt (1999), the Federal Ordinance of 1785 defined the public role of the university as that of sustaining a young democracy. As America grew, so did the need for more trained manpower to help develop the vast natural resources of the land and there was increased attention to offer education to the working class. Thus, Congress passed the Morrill Act of 1862. According to Bok (1982), this act gave grants of land to each state for:

the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be...to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanical arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the state may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life. (p.62)

The land-grant universities were the beginnings of the state university system that helped make higher education more accessible to all citizens of America. Furthermore, as America has continued to go through many changes, the Federal Government has continued to develop new programs to help the institutions of higher learning keep pace. The GI Bill, the Higher Education Acts, and federal financial aid programs have all helped to expand the role of higher education so that those who want to receive a college education have the possibility to do so (Duderstadt, 1999).

## **Social Responsibility**

As America has evolved, one aspect of the culture is that the citizens who are educated and well-to-do should contribute to the common good; this aspect includes corporations as well as universities (Coles, 1993). Modern corporate social responsibility began taking shape in the United States during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the purpose of this paper, there are many definitions for corporate social responsibility; however, according to Kok, van der Wiele, McKenna, & Brown (2001):

Corporate social responsibility is the obligation of the firm to use its resources in ways to benefit society, through committed participation as a member of society, taking into account the society at large, and improving welfare of society at large independently of direct gains of the company. (p. 287)

Moreover, Friedman (as cited in Argandona, 1998) suggests the theory of social responsibility fluctuates between two extremes; one that diminishes the need for the firm to obtain the greatest possible profit for its shareholders and the other that expands the firm's responsibility to include a wide range of individuals that have an interest or "stake" in the firm. Argandona states that stakeholders can include shareholders, employees, customers, competitors, and society. As one studies social responsibility, it appears that the stakeholder view is based more on a utilitarian ethical point of view. Velasquez (2006) states that "utilitarianism holds that actions and policies should be evaluated on the basis of the benefits and costs they will impose on society" (p. 61).

The research of Hill, Stephens, and Smith (2003) provided several different categories that gave insight into how socially responsible firms view their duty to their various stakeholders. The first step these socially responsible firms take is to create a culture of high ethical standards that include all aspects of organizational life. These firms also value diversity among their workforce and this allows them to recruit better workers. Furthermore, socially responsible firms have a "must do" approach in regards to community service. The firms invest their resources in the local neighborhoods where they work and live and allow their employees to volunteer on company time to help others (Marens, 2004; Muijen, 2004). Moreover, they develop innovative uses of technology to help improve the lives of the firms' stakeholders and to help protect the environment.

## **AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBILITY**

The American university system has enjoyed much success as a result of the strong bond between the university system and society. There are several stakeholder groups connected with the university system: students, faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, trustees, the communities where they are located and, some argue, the world (Hill, 2004). As there are many different stakeholders, Hill suggests there are also many diverse needs and expectations that these stakeholders try to place on the university system.

Over the years, the university system has taken on the responsibility of teaching the importance of firms being socially responsible; however, as they are teaching the theories and concepts are they actually

performing appropriate and ethical behaviors for the good of their stakeholders? In essence to be socially responsible, universities would need to establish a social contract between the university and the society it serves. If this is the case, then to what extent should universities draw their agendas from and be responsible to the communities that founded them?

Consequently, another issue that ties in with universities and their social responsibility is that of accountability. According to Romzek (as cited in Huisman & Currie, 2004), "accountability is the answerability for performance or the obligation to report to others, to explain, to justify, to answer questions about how resources have been used and to what effect" (p. 530). In the past the universities had an "internally-oriented system of accountability" (p. 535). Currently, there is a shift and universities have more of an explicit, externally oriented system of accountability. According to Huisman and Currie, this shift has occurred because of the strain on national and state budgets as a consequence of the high costs of higher education. Consequently, Huisman & Currie suggest the general public developed the opinion that higher education was not delivering value for the money it received. Thus, universities are seeking to gain greater public approval for their quality. Hence, are universities responsible and accountable to their stakeholders?

## **ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

One of the greatest sources of power and influence for university professors lies within the context of academic freedom. This concept allows professors, students, and institutions of higher learning to pursue their scholarly work without undue or unreasonable interference from outsiders. For the most part, it allows the freedom to choose a research focus, to determine what topics to teach in the classroom, how and when to present research studies to colleagues, and publishing research studies. The Supreme Court of the United States said that academic freedom means a university can "determine for itself on academic grounds: who may teach, what may be taught, how it should be taught, and who may be admitted to study" (*Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 1978).

American universities are viewed as leaders of society and many feel that it is their responsibility to use their academic freedom to lead the nation during this knowledge-intensive age. According to Duderstadt (1999), the United States is entering a new age of knowledge and the key resource that will enable the country to remain prosperous is educated people and their ideas. Therefore, "as society becomes ever more knowledge-intensive, it becomes ever more dependent on those social institutions, such as the university, that create knowledge, educate people, and provide those people with learning resources throughout their lives" (p. 38). As history has progressed, it seems as if more and more universities are being asked to respond to the needs of society.

Furthermore as O'Connell (1998) notes, "in its most authentic sense, academic freedom is freedom for something, namely the advancement of truth. It is truth that yields its own claim on what we teach. And truth is the ultimate value in what we do in the university" (p. 1618). Academic freedom in and of itself does not have a direct impact on universities being socially responsible; however, according to O'Connell, it is how they decide to use their academic freedom that decides how socially responsible they are:

And we must never forget that the right of academic freedom for the truth that we so enjoy bears with it an academic responsibility to the truth. Anything less than responsibility to the truth is not freedom at all but slavery to the blindness, the doubt, the lack of leadership that motivated us to become teachers in the first place. Our "influence" is one determined by our commitment to the truth and our ability to communicate that commitment in a convincing, compelling way. (p.1618)

In order for university faculty members to make contributions to their stakeholders through the use of academic freedom, they must be at level three of Kohlberg's theory of moral development. According to Velasquez (2006), at this stage faculty members would have the ability to see things from a point of view that impartially takes their stakeholder's interests into account. In light of using their academic freedom in this manner, the faculty member at this stage would be able to justify their actions on the "basis of moral principles that are impartial and reasonable and that therefore can appeal to any reasonable person" (p.27).

Furthermore, there may be instances where in an attempt to apply the utilitarian view academic freedom may be compromised. If the universities begin to demand that their professors tailor their research and teaching to particular areas as demanded by their external stakeholders, then academic freedom will no longer exist. Finally, if academic freedom becomes dependent upon the needs of the external stakeholders then it would also jeopardize the tenants of social responsibility because the needs of the internal stakeholders would be overlooked.

## **GRADE INFLATION**

One of the most complex phenomena that universities face is grading. College grading faces both external social forces and internal changes of the participants (Hu, 2005a). According to Edwards (2000), grade inflation on American university campuses has been in existence for over 30 years and the causes and effects have been consistently documented. As Hu (2005b) states, "grade inflation is an upward shift in students' grade point averages without a similar rise in achievement" (p.4). One of the main reasons that university admissions officers give for grade inflation is the increasing quality of students attending post-secondary institutions. However, research indicates that the quality of students attending universities now is lower than their predecessors. Scores for the two college admissions exams, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Testing (ACT), have been declining over the past thirty years indicating that the quality of the students is declining. It would seem that since the quality of students is declining then the GPA's for university students would also be declining; however, GPA's have been on a steady increase (Edwards, 2000).

Another common reason that is given for grade inflation deals with changes in administrative and institutional practices. During the 1960s and 1970s, universities had very rigorous academic programs that required students to study foreign languages, higher level mathematics, and science (Ravitch, 2004). As universities have grown and added degree programs many feel that the same academic rigor no longer exists. Also, universities have adopted many new institutional practices such as late withdrawal, pass/fail options, and removal of first-attempt grades from transcripts that help to conceal how students are actually performing in the university setting (Edwards, 2000).

As universities compete for state budget monies, they are actually competing for money based on their enrollment growth and they risk losing money if their enrollment declines. Furthermore, as the money received by the state is then allocated to the departments based on their credit-hour production there could be undue influence to inflate grades. In this scenario, departments and professors are trying to increase or maintain their enrollments so their existence is justified. For some students, when deciding on a major they look at the departments with the higher GPAs and decide that is the area they want to major in. Also, as students try to maintain their GPAs they will try to enroll in classes that are taught by professors who are known to be low graders. And due to very lenient late withdrawal policies, if they feel that they may not earn a high grade with a certain professor they will drop the course and take it with someone else (Edwards, 2000).

According to Edwards (2000), "student evaluations of faculty are among the most frequently cited and pernicious contributors to grade inflation" (p. 539). Renner (1981) explains that by having students evaluate faculty the quality of higher education is diminished because students are encouraged to evaluate their professors based on anticipated grades and other factors. Faculty come to realize that by giving low grades their evaluation ratings by students will go down and thereby their class sizes will be reduced and this could eventually result in the loss of their job.

In essence, grade inflation among American universities is promoting lower academic standards and students are not given an accurate view of their academic achievements and abilities (Lenkowsky, 2001). Looking at a candidate's GPA and trying to determine their ability level are misleading employers. Other agencies are having to step to the plate and become gatekeepers between the universities and certifications that are needed for professions. Society is becoming increasingly less tolerant of college graduates who fall below the minimum standards.

According to Edwards (2000), the American university undergraduate degree will soon be viewed as high school diplomas are today. Consequently, some universities will start to administer exit examinations to help raise the value of their degree; however, even that process will face a lot of scrutiny (Ravitch, 2004). If the trend of grade inflation keeps pace, it will only be a matter of time before business and industry will disregard college degrees when making hiring and promotion decisions and will rely instead on their own in-house evaluations according to Edwards.

Furthermore, as the issue of grade inflation continues to draw attention to the American university system it appears as if the universities are not upholding their ethical and social responsibility to society. To graduate students and send them out to employers with ability and knowledge levels that are below what their grades indicate is a clear violation of the ethic of care. In Velasquez (2006) ethic of care is defined as "an ethic that emphasizes caring for the concrete well being of those near to us" (p. 102). Consequently, the universities are also violating the communitarian ethic. "A communitarian ethic is an ethic that sees concrete communities and communal relationships as having a fundamental value that should be preserved and maintained" (p. 103). Employers, as major stakeholder to universities are their source of labor. However, if the universities are producing a misleading product, a student with high grades and no ability, then the university has failed to maintain the positive value that has been placed upon them by their communities. Finally, universities should not use the egalitarianism approach with grades. Not all students have equal abilities to attain knowledge and not all have attained the same amount of knowledge when they graduate; thus, grades should not be distributed as if the students are equal.

## **LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION**

From its earliest beginnings, the American university system was set up to provide a traditional education grounded in the humanities. According to Hollway (2005), more than 90 percent of the universities in America require a general education core that is grounded in the liberal arts. Traditionally, it has been viewed that the purpose of a liberal arts education is to shape the values of students. With this type of core curriculum, students are exposed to philosophy, history, the fine arts, and literature with the goal of increasing the student's humanitarian values. However, Hollway's research indicates that the impact of a liberal arts education on student's value change is inconclusive in proving that universities are achieving this goal.

Though the university was initially set up to provide a liberal arts education, the new demographics of students is changing what was once the perceived goal. The influx of non-traditional students entering

the university system are no longer interested in a liberal arts background but want to receive technical training and knowledge (McComiskey, 2005). McComiskey suggests the debate revolves around the institutional stakeholders who feel that the universities should change the content of the general education core curriculum so that the needs of the ever-changing society are met (Hollway, 2005). As McComiskey points out:

Demand for college education has increased in the past two decades, especially among working adults for whom credentials have been identified, correctly, as the new condition of market survival in an increasingly uncertain situation. While during earlier decades a college degree was valued for its cultural capital, this new population of students valued their degrees for the market capital, the credentials, they could provide. (p. 103)

Critics who oppose the idea of universities doing away with the traditional liberal arts education argue that doing so is caving to the demands of society (Scott, 2006). However, by keeping the curriculum status quo "humanities departments" have become "service departments" since the traditional humanities fields are not deemed as having a specific function in the marketplace. It is the responsibility of American universities to provide a global education so that students will understand the burdens and benefits of a global community. As Sullivan (2000) indicates by insisting on a liberal arts education, American universities are creating a paradox with so many of the "world's best universities" in the midst of urban decay and social neglect. Graduates are not being equipped with the knowledge they need to make an impact on society.

Consequently, by deciding to do away with a liberal arts education and provide more of a global education, American universities will be making this decision based on utilitarianism. According to Velasquez (2006), "utilitarianism is a general term for any view that holds that actions and policies should be evaluated on the basis of the benefits and costs they will impose on society. In any situation, the "right" action or policy is the one that will produce the greatest net benefits or the lowest net costs" (p.61). Since the economy is now a global economy and most business decisions are based on a global view, in order to be socially responsible to their stakeholders universities must change the face of liberal arts education and educate students on the global community.

## **RACIAL INEQUALITY/DIVERSITY**

### **Students**

For centuries, Blacks, American Indians, and other minority groups have struggled with the burdens of inequality that they must carry due to the color of their skin. It was not until the "Civil Rights" era of the mid-1960s that American universities began enrolling minority groups with a sense of urgency (Giroux, 2006). It was during this time that the practice of "preferential admissions" began in an effort to increase minority numbers on a university's campus. According to Bok (1982), minority students would be admitted with lower admission test scores and lower grades than White applicants who were not admitted. In essence, universities were going a step further than affirmative action and were admitting students who did not appear to be as qualified as those applicants who were rejected. University admissions offices would decide on a case-by-case basis to admit a number of minority students who had lower test scores and grades than White applicants as long as they appeared to be qualified and motivated to do the work. According to Bok (1982), these types of admissions policies were not unprecedented for universities:

Colleges have extended preferential treatment for years to other groups of students, such as exceptional athletes or children of alumni, and these practices rarely arouse controversy. But



efforts to enlarge the enrollment of minority students have provoked an angry outcry from people who feel that universities are acting unfairly by favoring minority applicants. (p. 93)

The vast amount of literature available on American universities contains a lot of information on the subject of preferential admissions; however, most of the authors admit to little understanding of how admissions processes work. Some authors actually divulge their biases either in favor of or opposition of and then ignore decisive arguments from their opponents (Bok, 1984). This type of conflict in the literature has only made it even trickier for universities to gain a positive momentum in establishing their admissions criteria.

The opponents of preferential admissions argue that universities are causing White students who are rejected from their first-choice university to suffer an injustice. The argument that is widely held is that these White students were not a part of the past discrimination injustices against minorities and they should not have to pay for past mistakes of earlier generations (Bok, 1984; Giroux, 2006). Consequently, those who support preferential admissions usually admit that for the most part this admissions practice does eliminate better-qualified Whites so that they can amend past injustices against minorities. However, they contend that the practice only imposes a temporary injustice and the price is worth paying so that greater equality will be achieved in the long run (Bok, 1984; Giroux, 2006).

Furthermore, the literature suggests that there is a greater social reason that deems preferential admissions a necessity for American universities. As Bok (1984) remarks:

In a country where racial problems and misunderstandings are so prominent, all students stand to benefit from the chance to live and work with classmates of other races who can offer differing attitudes and experiences that will challenge and inform others and increase the understanding and tolerance of everyone concerned. (p. 98-99)

As mentioned earlier, the practice of preferential admissions does raise questions about the ethicality of those decisions. The utilitarianism theory supports the practice of preferential admissions. For three hundred years, the United States was built on policies and programs that promoted racial exclusion and segregation (Fullinwider, 1997). These policies helped make the rich "richer" and the poor "poorer". Preferential admissions have helped ensure that people who were previously excluded from higher education and the better paying jobs now have the same opportunities afforded to them. Thus, preferential admissions policies take into account the need of those previously excluded parties and give them special opportunities that benefit the public welfare greater than the costs.

Since one of the original duties of the American university was to prepare students to become leaders of their communities, students have to be introduced to a diverse population while they are in college and equipped with the tools to battle racial bias. According to Hogan and Mallott (2005), "racial prejudice is expressed more covertly in American society today than it was before the civil rights movement of the 1960s" (p. 115). Consequently, racism on a university campus is typically characterized as a form of resentment about the social, political, and educational gains of minorities according to Hogan and Mallott. When universities first began the practice of preferential admissions they did not take into account this new type of racism that would surface on their campus. The universities were not prepared for the challenges they would face in educating a diverse group of college students. Therefore, they had to develop a number of educational interventions that would help improve the relationships among the diverse student body (Engberg, 2004). Research by Engberg and Hogan and Mallott showed that many universities developed multicultural curriculum, diversity workshops and training, peer-based interventions, and service-based interventions to prepare their students not only for the new demographic makeup of the American university system but also for the constantly changing demographic makeup of

corporate America. Thus, by fulfilling the need of their students to appreciate diversity while in higher education, universities also are preparing the future leaders of corporate America to recognize the need for diversity and how it will make for a better more competitive society.

## Faculty

Just as the American university has had to respond to charges of racism with its admittance policies for students, there has been more criticism with the issue of racism that exists among hiring university faculty members. According to Bok (1984):

Among the ethnic groups recognized by the federal government, only Asian-Americans have found their way to university faculties in numbers that equal or exceed their percentage in the population as a whole. Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians are all represented on the faculties of major universities in proportions far lower than their percentages in the total population or in the student bodies of these institutions. (p. 104)

The process of hiring faculty is a very different than the process of admitting students. According to Bok the number of people who hold doctorate degrees is very low regardless of the ethnicity involved, the number of minorities with doctorate degrees is minuscule. Often times the lure of careers in law, business, or medicine, which provides much higher incomes than academia, will attract the minority students who are pursuing higher education degrees. Consequently, the labor pool of qualified minority faculty members is decreased.

For most universities the mission is to provide the highest quality of instruction and research. Consequently, they search for faculty members who have established records of teaching and scholarship. Therefore, they are less likely to use a system of preferential hiring such as the preferential admissions system that is used to admit some minority students. If search committees pass over the candidates with the best credentials in order to hire a minority so their numbers will improve, they are essentially overlooking the primary goal of the university system. Furthermore, if this is the action they take they will "generally be acting with a clear probability of diminishing the quality of teaching and research" (Bok, 1984, p. 111). In order to maintain their mission, whether they are a teaching institution or a research institution, universities will have to focus on hiring the most qualified faculty members.

By not utilizing a system of preferential hiring for faculty members, universities are using the contributive principle of distributive justice. This principle maintains that "the more a person contributes to a society's pool of economic goods, for example, the more that person is entitled to take from that pool; the less an individual contributes, the less that individual should get" (Velasquez, 2006, p.91). Consequently, since universities are looking for faculty members with the best credentials, they are looking for those who have contributed to society not just by their teaching but also by their research. However, when the university system uses preferential admissions for students they will be in turn helping create more minorities who will be able to make these same contributions to society; thus, helping create more diverse faculties.

The second issue in regards to the hiring of minority faculty that universities must address is the environment towards these minority faculty members on their campus. As Patton (2004) found, "many faculty of color face isolation, racial and gender-based antagonisms, the devaluation of their research interests and achievements, insufficient mentoring and support mechanism, and ambivalence about their academic authority" (p. 194). Since universities are making the effort to hire qualified minority faculty members they must also take the time to develop a culture on their campuses that fosters the diversity among the faculty members. It is important that the university environment not "mirror the same attitudes

and generalities about cultural / racial differences that plague larger society" (p. 194). Furthermore, if universities are going to uphold their social contract then they should exist as the ideal marketplace for diversity where value is placed on difference.

## **MORAL DEVELOPMENT/TEACHING ETHICS TO STUDENTS**

One of the most critical problems facing society today is what appears to be a decline in ethical standards. People seem to no longer trust the integrity of business or political leaders. If there are such moral deficiencies then it is caused by the actions and decisions of individuals who are in a position of influence. According to Keohane (2006), universities maintain the mission to educate leaders for our nation and the world. If universities act on this part of their mission in a responsible manner then they will actively engage in the moral development of their students. Universities have the perfect strategic position to help shape the moral development of students.

Many universities have already begun work in this critical area of student development. In an attempt to meet the demands of external stakeholders, such as their communities, and meet the moral development needs of their students universities have begun programs in civic engagement. There is a growing belief among universities that civic responsibility depends on moral values and institutions of higher education should educate their students on the two as one (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont & Stephens, 2003). For the purpose of this discussion, Ehrlich's (2000) definition of civic engagement will be used:

Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. (Preface, vi)

In order to meet the goal of preparing students for civil engagement and moral maturity, there are three dimensions that universities must address. The first area that must be addressed is that students must understand the significance and levels of moral judgment and they must understand civic and political concepts. "Many college students are grappling with issues of epistemology-'What is true?' and 'How can you know?'-as well as with questions of ethical relativism" (Colby et al., 2003, p. 43) Universities can and should aid students in developing answers to these questions. Furthermore, students should learn the critical role they will play in society once they graduate.

Secondly, students must be motivated to act on their social and moral concerns. Finally, they must also have a sense of "political efficacy, that is, a sense that what they think and do civically and politically matters" (Colby et al., 2003, p. 43). As universities prepare to reach their students through moral and civic education, there are three areas where they can focus: the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and the campus culture.

### **The Curriculum**

According to Bok (1982), American universities in the nineteenth century considered moral development of their students an important part of their mission. Graduating seniors were required take courses on moral philosophy that would allow them to develop a common moral code that would be passed from one generation to the next. Bok states this knowledge not only impacted the students for their own advancement it also allowed the students to have an even larger impact on society.

Over the years, as changes occurred within the societal framework of universities it became rare for universities to require students to study moral philosophy. As the social sciences divided from philosophy, departments began to place emphasis on the scientific nature of their work and students were not engaged in courses that would allow them to develop their powers of moral reasoning (Schneider, 2000). Schneider suggests a lot of discussions were held in faculty meetings that emphasized the teaching of professional responsibility in the various academia professional schools; however, in practice most universities were ignoring moral education for their students (Bok, 1982). According to Bok, by the mid-twentieth century, there were few reminders about the earlier efforts of universities to teach moral development:

Catalogs continued to speak of moral development as a prominent aim of the institution, but there was scant evidence of any serious effort to pursue this objective. In the selection of faculty, the traditional emphasis on character had given way almost completely to the demands for scholarly excellence and academic freedom. Presidential lectures on moral issues had likewise disappeared without any visible replacement, a casualty of the search for value-free learning and the reluctance to engage in any form of teaching that could be criticized as doctrinaire. (p. 121)

Consequently, by the 1970s, due to events that were happening that were changing the face or image of America the external stakeholders of the universities began exerting pressure on them to help aid with the decline in ethical standards. Items such as the Watergate scandal that showed how far the ethical standards of leaders had eroded were making news. Also, multinational corporations were being accused of unethical business deals with foreign officials and the medical profession was involved with issues such as abortion and the rights of terminally ill patients (Bok, 1982). In an effort to renew their social contract with their stakeholders, universities began to look for new innovative ways to include moral education in their curriculum. Administrators felt that it would be more beneficial to students if the curriculum was developed so that students would be enlightened on how to reason carefully and make decisions about ethical issues. Therefore, the classes would be more discussion based than lecture based. Consequently, the students would participate in active discussions on how they perceived ethical issues this would lead them to identify competing arguments and then give them the chance to evaluate the different views and draw their conclusions (Thomas, 2000).

The best-known approach that universities are using to combine moral and civic education is service-learning. This pedagogical approach links disciplinary study and community service together and allows students to see first-hand how they are helping shape society and making a difference (Colby et al., 2003; O'Connor 2006; Thomas, 2000). One of the problems according to Colby et al. faced by many universities who want to implement the service-learning concept into their curriculum is the lack of faculty who have the knowledge and pedagogical expertise needed to include moral and civic learning into their courses. Therefore, universities are forming partnerships with organizations such as Campus Compact to help provide faculty with the knowledge they need. The research conducted by Colby indicates that when universities include moral and civic goals into their curriculum they are not making a trade-off with other academic goals. On the contrary, Colby et al. concluded that:

We are convinced that the two strands of undergraduate education, disciplinary or "academic" and moral and civic, are most powerful when creatively combined. Part of the value of broadening the goals of higher education is that linking academic material to students' lives and personal concerns and passions will lead to deeper understanding and more memorable learning of the course's academic content. (p.45)

## Extracurricular Programs

Even after developing their curriculum to include moral and civic development many universities still felt the need to develop extracurricular programs that would give students even more opportunities for moral and civic involvement. Universities understand that much of the knowledge students need upon graduation they have to actually receive outside of the classroom. According to Sullivan (2000), many universities develop leadership programs that combine service activities and moral reasoning seminars and some even include that distinction on a student's transcript. Also, universities are rich with disciplinary, religious and political organizations that are able to incorporate the moral and civic development of students into their programs.

## Culture

Finally, the culture that exists at a university will help aid in the moral development of students. University culture is complex as there are many facets that can send out conflicting messages. Since conflicts at universities normally become very public, a lot of attention is placed on how the university leaders respond. If they respond in an ethical manner it helps develop a sense of sound moral judgment at the institution (Colby et al., 2003). Also, universities should create obvious and unique cultures that are considered "open" and not "closed".

American universities have no choice but to continue to maintain moral and civic development of their students as a vital part of their mission. Citizens seem to be losing trust in the American political system, the legal system, and corporate America. It is up to the universities to engage students in studying the many contemporary moral issues and help them develop a moral framework.

## CONCLUSION

American universities are not ignoring their ethical and social responsibilities, but perhaps they could be taking them more seriously internally and externally. The universities are addressing the needs of their internal stakeholders through development of "learning opportunities that help faculty, staff, and students understand the responsibilities of individuals and organizations to the larger society" (Hill, 2004, p.94) such as the curriculum that develops service-learning. On the other hand, there is still the challenge of universities changing from faculty-centered to learner-centered institutions. Universities need to continue to work on becoming more responsive to what students need to learn rather than simply what faculties wish to teach (Duderstadt, 1999). Also, American universities need to take a closer, more objective look at the problem of grade inflation. Reports of grade inflation are causing many critics of the university system to denounce the value of a college degree.

Furthermore, in order to advance their social responsibility to their internal and external stakeholders they must make a tie to their mission that incorporates ethical and social responsibility. One area where universities need to tie their mission to social responsibility is the area of student admissions and faculty hiring as it relates to diversity. External stakeholders should not have to guess as to why their local campuses are not diversified. Also, in an effort to reach their external stakeholders, they must overcome the intellectual divide that is seen as a barrier between the internal and external stakeholders. In fact, many universities, which are considered "oases for the educated elite," (Hill, 2004, p. 98) are actually located within some of the poorest neighborhoods of America. Consequently, Hill suggests in these locations and others there are often physical barriers to entry, gates, fences, and uniformed guards that keep the local community outside the ivory tower. However, even if there is no physical barrier to entry, many external stakeholders face emotional barriers because they have little in common with or experience in institutions of higher education.

Therefore, in order for universities to accurately respond to the needs of their internal and external stakeholders; they must know what those needs are. Communication with both sets of stakeholders will allow for the collaboration that is needed to tie the university's social responsibility to their mission. However, regardless of the quality of their goals, plans, or actions, the possibility that any university will solve all of the intractable problems such as poverty or discrimination within a stakeholder community is miniscule. Hill (2004) notes, "A company, no matter how laudable its intentions, will never be good enough. The more ambitious its social agenda, the more elusive its success will be" (p. 99). In conclusion, American universities can never do enough in regards to upholding their social contract with their internal and external stakeholders. However, American universities must break down the barrier of the "ivory tower" and construct their agendas from the utilitarian view so that their internal and external stakeholders will benefit from the greater good they have to offer from within their system.

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