Ethics

Law and Ethics Seminar
Spring 2019
Program Outline

• Today
  – Ethics Overview
  – Ethical Case Studies

• Tomorrow
  – Presentation on APEGGS Investigation, Discipline and Prohibition
  – “Gilbane Gold” - Video
  – “The Hearing” - Play
Quick Overview from Earlier

• What is a Professional?
  – extensive training
  – specialized knowledge
  – professional association
  – ethical code
  – certification or licensing
Overview (Continued)

• Professionalism:
  – Duty and Responsibility
  – Higher Standard of Personal Conduct
  – Code of Ethics
Overview (Continued)

• You are responsible to:
  – Society and Public
  – Employer and Client
  – Colleagues and Peers
  – Employees and Subordinates
  – APEGS
  – Yourself
Definition of Ethics

• Conforming to accepted and especially professional standards of conduct (*synonymous with virtuous, moral, principled*)

• Is relative to the environment you are working in (*the culture/the society in which you work*)
Code of Ethics *(Section 20(2) of the Regulatory Bylaws)*

- Protection of the public and environment is paramount
- Provide services only in area of competence
- Act as faithful agent to clients and employer – maintain confidentiality & avoid conflicts of interest
- Maintain competence
Code of Ethics

• Ethical conduct toward all people
• Advise consequence of ignoring good engineering principles
• Report illegal & unethical practice
• Be accountable and assume leadership
History of Professional Ethics

- Hippocratic Oath
- Primum non nocere
  - First, do no harm.
- Honour Pin Ceremony
  - Some engineering student societies
- Iron Ring Ceremony
  - Calling of an Engineer
- Earth Ring Ceremony
- Engineering Regulated in Sask 1930
- Geoscience Regulated in Sask 1997
Where do we Learn Ethics?

• Age 0 to 5
  – Parents, Siblings, Grandparents, other relatives

• Age 5 to 18
  – Home, School, Church, Media, Friends, Coaches

• Age 18 Plus
  – Employers, Peers, Associations, Church, Service Groups, Spouse

• Plus many more. The important thing is to reflect on the reasons for our decisions

• Your approach may change over time as you age
Ensuring public safety

Basic Ethical Questions

RIGHT VS WRONG

GOOD VS BAD
Difficult Ethical Questions

RIGHT

VS

RIGHT

GOOD

VS

GOOD
Engineering & Geoscience Ethics

“Ethics are the moral issues which we relate to how people and organizations involved in engineering and geoscience should act in given situations.”
Ethical Approaches/Philosophies

1. Relativism
   - Ethical is what the culture/society thinks is right

2. Utilitarianism
   - What makes an action right are the consequences - produces the most good for the most persons

3. Deontological
   - Right versus wrong. Identify your duties, where they come from, how important each are.

4. Virtue Ethics
   - Ethical is what is virtuous (honesty, etc – see the APEGS Good Character Guideline)
   - Goal is to maximize happiness

- Note that this is not an exhaustive list of approaches
- A knowledge of the different philosophies can be used to help define the problem and formulate a solution

Ensuring public safety
Suggested Questions to Ask Yourself

• Know which approach you are using and periodically reflect on that
• What harm to whom and how much? (sometimes you have to offend to be ethical)
• Will it cause you, your family or your profession, embarrassment?
  – step back and re-evaluate
• The public expects professionals to be objective (watch for personal bias)
• If in doubt, ask (without violating confidentiality)
Resolution of Ethical Situations

1. Recognition that there is a problem
2. Define the problem
3. Identify critical ethical duties and responsibilities
4. Build an action plan
   - Alternatives
   - Decisions
   - Act
5. Take a Leadership Role
Know This Process Well

• It will help you pass your exam
• Help you avoid APEGs investigations
• Keep you out of court
• Help you to conduct yourself as a professional
Questions

Bob McDonald, P.Eng., LL.B.
Executive Director & Registrar
APEGS
(306) 525-9547
1-800-500-9547

www.apegs.ca