

**Sources:** Diane Swanson, 785-532-4352, swanson@k-state.edu

<http://www.k-state.edu/media/mediaguide/bios/swansonbio.html>

Dann Fisher, 785-532-6037, dfisher@k-state.edu

**News release prepared by:** Erinn Barcomb-Peterson, 785-532-6415, ebarcomb@k-state.edu

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**K-STATE AUTHORS OF BUSINESS ETHICS EDUCATION BOOK SAY STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES SHOULD CONSIDER AN INSTITUTION'S ETHICS WHEN CHOOSING A JOB OR SCHOOL**

MANHATTAN — Among the questions job-seekers may ask prospective employers — about health insurance, work-life balance or even dress code — asking how an employee can redress a bad review probably isn't one of them.

But according to a business ethics expert at Kansas State University, it should be. And it's a question on the minds of a lot of business students, many of who will begin job searchers or careers in the coming months.

"I see students perk up when I talk about an unfair evaluation, because they want to know whether they have any redress," said Diane Swanson, professor of management at K-State. "Obviously the power is usually with the organization, so I like to advise students to see whether there are measures to counterbalance that power. To me it's a good sign if the organization leaders have thought about processes to help employees do so."

Swanson, K-State's von Waaden business administration professor, and Dann Fisher, associate professor of accounting and Deloitte and Touche Faculty Fellow at K-State, have edited "Advancing Business Ethics Education," which was published in March by Information Age Publishing. More information about the book can be found at [http:// www.infoagepub.com](http://www.infoagepub.com)

"At K-State, we talk about what kind of organization do you want to work for and what kinds of questions you can ask in the interview to see whether the people at the top have thought about how to be fair the employees," Swanson said.

Those include questions like: Does the employer have an ombudsperson on hand? Does it have a peer review panel? Is there some counselor that an employee can go to with anonymity or a hotline for whistle blowing?

"I usually point my finger to the top," Swanson said. "I'm not inclined to think that employees need to

take all this on themselves. It goes back to training — training not only for employees as to what's expected, but continual training of managers. Because many of our business students will also become managers, it is particularly important that they get exposure to organizational ethics in their degree programs. Such coursework can also help prepare them for fast-growing job opportunities as ethics compliance and corporate social responsibility officers."

Swanson and Fisher are part of an effort at K-State's College of Business Administration to emphasize ethics in the education of future business leaders. Their book examines facets of ethics education in business, like educating managers for global business citizenship, corporate governance and how ethics can boost business schools' reputations and enrollment. Swanson and Fisher also outline a three-part approach for schools to deliver ethics education. Two chapters focus on ethics in accounting, an area that Fisher has been researching for nearly two decades.

Although management programs traditionally have led the push for ethics education, Fisher has long been an advocate of the need for more ethics coverage in the accounting curriculum, including a stand-alone course. Fisher said that current demands of the accounting curriculum have been used to justify superficial coverage of ethics and professionalism. Making matters worse, he said that many accounting professors embrace research theories that model human behavior as self-interested, taking this belief with them to the classroom.

"The message that students repeatedly, programmatically receive serves to legitimize and encourage self-interested behavior," Fisher said. "For a profession that relies on a commitment to others' interests to sustain itself, the witting or unwitting promotion of unrestrained self-interest has been and continues to be dangerous."

Despite recent scandals, Fisher is concerned that far too many accounting professors resist efforts to increase coverage of ethics and professionalism in the accounting curriculum. He said that the resistance is disappointing but not disheartening.

"To create meaningful change, we do not need to enlist the majority of accounting professors," Fisher said. "We need only enlist the "moral movers" — professors who understand that they have an obligation to make their students not only technically competent, but also true professionals, deeply committed to protecting the public interest and the traditional values of the profession, such as trust, honesty, integrity, and objectivity."

Swanson thinks that the power to change ethics education in business schools can come from the students themselves. In considering a collegiate business program, students should consider the role that ethics play in the curriculum, Swanson said.

"Recent statistics indicate that students want more ethics education in business schools," Swanson said. "Students should be asking about it, and business schools should want to respond," she said.

Swanson said that prospective students should look for schools that offer a stand-alone course dedicated to ethics material. Secondly, students should look for schools that try to integrate ethics topics across the curriculum. And finally, students should seek out schools that reinforce ethics through other means like guest speakers and endowed chairs.

"This approach to ethics education is one message we continually deliver, and we've been doing it at K-State for quite a while," she said.

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