**Responsible Professional and Ethical Corporations**

The engineering industry has been at the forefront of the development of corporations in recent years. This is due to the increasingly shifting of the markets for its goods and services towards the developing world and the core activities of the engineering industry that require many individual to work together.

In this topic, the different forms of corporate responsibility are discussed.

Before the main topic lets understand what is profession means to be…

**Professions**

In Engineering Ethics, Professions are defined as those forms of work involving advanced expertise, self' regulation and concerted service to the public good.

•**Advanced Expertise**- acquiring theoretical knowledge and refined skills from an extensive formal training/education

•**Self-regulation**-professional societies has a certain degree of autonomy in the regulation of their practice which were allowed by the public

•**Public Good** - occupation serves some aspect of the common good

**Moral Committed Corporation (Ethics at workplace)**

In ethical work climate leads to more trust in the company, stronger commitment from employees, lower absenteeism and turnover rates, higher profitability and productivity, and a more positive attitude to work and good conduct.

An ethical climate also reduces employee misconduct. Several studies have found a positive relationship between the ethical climate in a company and Job satisfaction. Larger corporations characterized by more intense competition and profit-making pressures face a greater challenge in maintaining an ethical climate.

* **Corporate Social Responsibility**

Social Responsibility Movement has outstretched consideration to product quality, the well-being of workers, the wider community and the environment since 1960’s and also, of which is reflected in the Stakeholder Theory. Responsible corporations also strive to be good neighbors by supporting local schools, cultural activities, civic groups and charities.

Stakeholder Theory:

Corporations have responsibilities to all groups that have a vital stake in the corporation including employees, customers, dealers, suppliers, local communities, and the general public.

The social responsibility movement was attacked by Milton Friedman, a Nobel Laureate economist, in a famous essay “The Social Responsibility of a Business is to Increase its Profits” He argued that the sole responsibility of the management is to satisfy the desires of the stockholders while conforming to the basic laws of society but his view is ultimately self-defeating.

When the public perceives corporations as having wider social commitments, it is more willing to cooperate and purchase products from socially responsible corporations. Thus, the moral roles of engineers and their corporations are symbiotic and it is essential for engineering and corporations, in their major dimensions, to be morally aligned

* **Senses of Corporate Responsibility**

In dealing with corporate responsibility, the senses of responsibility of an individual which revolve around obligations, accountability, the virtue of being conscientious, and praiseworthiness and blameworthiness are also applied. Corporations, as defined, are communities of individuals, structured within legal frameworks. Thus, the senses aforementioned apply for corporations, too.

* Corporations have responsibilities (obligations) just like individuals. In addition, corporations have internal structures consisting of policy manual and flow charts assigning responsibilities to individuals. The unity of a corporation is expressed when these individuals act in accordance with their assigned responsibilities.
* Corporations are accountable to the general public, to their employees and customers, and to their stockholders. The actions of the corporation are performed by individuals and subgroups within the corporation, according to how the flowchart and policy manual specifies areas of authority.
* Corporations manifest the virtue of responsibility (conscientious) when they routinely meet their obligations.
* Corporations could also be blameworthy if they are accountable for a wrong doing and praiseworthy if they are accountable for right conduct.

Hence, these pertain to the moral responsibility of a corporation. Causal responsibility and legal responsibility are distinct from moral responsibility.

* Causal responsibility consists simply in being a cause of some event.
* Legal responsibility consists simply what the law requires.
* Engineer has the immense capacity to help provide benefits to the society but it also has similarly large capacity to be used to cause harm. As an engineer, it is crucial to understand this dual nature of the profession and to be vigilant regarding our own role and that of our employers so that we maximize the chances of a positive contribution to society. In essence this is what it means to be a socially responsible engineer.