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Ethics Essay

What is the purpose of having/following a "Code of Ethics"?

Having a code of ethics is an integral part of any establishment/institution. Throughout its lifespan, an establishment will likely face difficult cases testing the fairness and responsiveness of its faculty. This is where a code of ethics is incredibly important. A code can give one a backbone argument to rely on when in distress. If some situation violates the code, it's seen as immediately incorrect, therefore making the situation easier to subdue. A code of ethics can help one make fair and unbiased decisions.

When you are faced with an ethical situation, how do you personally go about making a decision? What factors are involved in making your decision?

When I'm faced with any difficult ethical decision I apply a 3 step process. First, I'll figure out what the problem is and who it affects. It's important to know the root of a problem, and who it could affect down the line. Secondly, I go through as many possible paths that I can think of. This really helps in laying out which actions will lead to the best resolution. Finally I'll actually make the decision. Using this process, I can usually solve an ethical dilemma.

What ethical issue(s) were discussed during class? How did the ethical considerations introduced by your class differ from your own? How were they alike? Was your class able to come to a consensus on what the most "ethical" decision would be?

During class multiple issues were discussed. These ranged from things like data security, autonomous cars, and more. The topics introduced by the class were much broader than ethical decisions I've dealt with. While data security is something a company has to manage and keep intact, I've never had to deal with it whatsoever. Ethical deals that currently relate to me are things like academic honesty, and decisions regarding friends. These two types of issues are quite different from each other, however both can be solved in the same way. By using a code of ethics, or even the method I mentioned above, the same logic can be applied to any situation. In some situations, such as autonomous cars, it can be difficult to come to a decision. There may not be a single correct response/solution. Generally, whatever does the least harm to the least amount of people is the correct way to go, but it isn't perfect.

Choose three of the six virtues that you feel are most related to your case study and briefly write about them. Why did you choose the three you did? How are they relevant to the case study? Why are the other virtues less relevant? Is there another ethical virtue you feel could apply to your case study that is NOT included in the "Virtue of Ethics?" Why or why not?

Our group chose to discuss autonomous cars and the ethical implications that come with that. The virtues most relating to this topic are: Integrity, Responsibility, and

Self-Discipline. Each of these values relates strongly when applied to the idea of a collision when inside an autonomous car. Integrity is key, as the company programming the car has many decisions to make. When a collision is inevitable, will the car try to protect its driver at all costs? Or will the car take into account people near the car and put precedence on saving multiple people. High moral standards are needed when considering what the car will do when the time comes. This same idea applies to responsibility and self-discipline. The company is directly responsible for how the car behaves, and is obliged to keep its occupants safe. This goes hand and hand with self-discipline however, as greed plays a big factor in the decision. Companies could potentially market their cars as safer, or more likely to protect you and only you. The greater good should be thought of when designing these cars, which may not always favor the driver.