

A Review of Ethical Issues Facing Administrators in Institutions of Higher learning in Sub Saharan Africa



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International Journal of
Educational Theory and
Practice, Vol 2. No. 4, 2019
Pages 1-15

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Abstract

The paper examines the place of ethics in institutions of higher learning and the challenges administrators encounter in these institutions in Sub Saharan Africa. Among the issues that pose ethical dilemmas to the administrators include: maintaining access, financial management, academic integrity, online and distance learning, human resource management, commercialization of higher education, and power and politics in the development of higher education curriculum. The paper argues for the integration of ethics in the curriculum if these concerns are to be addressed. The administrators are advised to embrace and promote ethics in their institutions. They must put in place coherent and consistent policies and procedures that are embedded in the culture of the institutions. Also there is need to come up with an ethics implementation framework which is enforced. Both the students and staff must understand the policies and put them in practice.

Introduction

Africa and sub-Saharan Africa has embraced higher education as evidenced by the increasing number of existing and emerging institutions of higher learning in the continent. The number of institutions in sub-Saharan Africa has increased from half a dozen in the 1960s when most of the nations in the sub-region declared independence to over 300 in 2003 (Teferra & Altbach, 2003) and this number has since then risen. According to British Council, there has been impressive growth of higher education systems across Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The total number of enrolments in the region increased from 2.3 million in 1999 to 6.6 million in 2013 and this is expected to grow further (UNESCO, 2016).

Due to the centrality of the knowledge economy to 21st century development, higher education has assumed unprecedented importance globally because of its role in preparing young people for the new economy and in creating new knowledge. It is for this reason that the world declaration on higher education for the 21st century (1998) affirmed that the core mission and values of higher education is to contribute to the sustainable development and improvement of the society in economic, cultural and social sectors.

Despite having such an enormous responsibility, higher education is facing ethical challenges which if not well addressed may water down all the



objectives set out for it. These ethical challenges facing higher education range but not limited to finance, human resource, technology, commercialization of higher education and ethnicity. It is in light of this that the paper discusses these contemporary ethical issues that relate to administration of higher education in Africa and proposes tangible solutions that can guide the administrators in achieving the objectives of higher education in the region. It will situate ethics as its central principle in the management of institutions of higher learning.

The above objective will be achieved by answering the following key questions: How can we deal with corrupt systems in our institutions? What is our role in integrating ethics in varying subject areas? What precautions should we take to maintain the highest ethical standards in our institutions? Are there ways of teaching and management that are inherently more ethical than others? How can we achieve higher standards and end the downward spiral that we find ourselves in? The paper argues that institutions of higher learning should teach and practice ethics at all levels. It is imperative for administrators of higher learning to move from talking ethics to start practicing ethics. This will involve careful and critical thinking about basic principles to better understand and solve the dilemmas that face higher education.

The Role of Higher education in the African Context

It is globally accepted that knowledge drives the Fourth Industrial Revolution. To participate in it, African countries need to rapidly build skills in sciences, information and communications technology, engineering, manufacturing, and mathematics (the drivers of future jobs) while accelerating investments in research and development (Aker & Mbiti, 2010). Although Knowledge is a key driver of growth and development in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), qualified human capital remains scarce compared to the continent's development needs. This was affirmed in *African Economic Outlook* (2018) which provides evidence that too few scientists and engineers in Africa work in sectors that drive economic transformation. In 2010, for example, the share of college students in engineering, manufacturing, and construction programs was 7.3 percent in Burkina Faso, 3.0 percent in Burundi, 4.3 percent in Cameroon, 4.5 percent in Mozambique, 5.6 percent in Madagascar, 5.9 percent in Ghana, and 12.8 percent in Morocco. In 2014 the shares in Austria, Germany, Malaysia, and Mexico were all above 20 percent.

On top of the scarcity of trained manpower on the continent, there is evidence that a number of those who have attained higher education go out of the continent for better employment opportunities elsewhere and therefore brain drain has been on the rise. This situation hinders growth and undermines the foundation for sustainable development on the continent.

It is imperative therefore for the African institutions of higher learning to ensure the workforce acquires the skills to compete, innovate, and respond to complex social, environmental, and economical situations. It is acknowledging this role that the former, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in his speech stressed that the university must become a primary tool for Africa's development in the new century. Universities can help develop African expertise; they can enhance the analysis of African problems; strengthen domestic institutions; serve as a



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model environment for the practice of good governance, conflict resolution and respect for human rights, and enable African academics to play an active part in the global community of scholars (United Nations Information Service, 2000). For this to happen, higher education (which means all types of studies, training, or training for research at the post-secondary level provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher learning by competent state authority) must become centres of these innovations (UNESCO, 1993).

This noble mandate of higher education then explains the increase in demand for higher education across the globe. The preamble of the World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century acknowledges the unprecedented demand for and great diversification in higher education, as well as an increased awareness of its vital importance for socio-cultural and economic development, and for building the future, for which the younger generations will need to be equipped with new skills, knowledge and ideals (Adopted October, 1998)

Higher education is looked at as an investment whose exponential worth continues to be evident in the number of Institutions of higher learning that continue to be opened across the globe and the innovativeness that is chunned each year from these institutions. In support of the critical role of higher education in a country, the world declaration on higher education for the 21st Century asserted that, without adequate higher education and research institutions which provide a critical mass of skilled and educated people, no country can ensure genuine endogenous and sustainable development (October, 1998)

Article 2 of the World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty First Century spelled out the ethical role, autonomy, responsibility and anticipatory function of higher education institutions that their personnel and students should uphold. These include:

- i. To preserve and develop their crucial functions, through the exercise of ethics and scientific and intellectual rigour in their various activities;
- ii. To be able to speak out on ethical, cultural and social problems completely independently and in full awareness of their responsibilities, exercising a kind of intellectual authority that society needs to help it to reflect, understand and act;
- iii. To enhance their critical and forward-looking functions, through continuing analysis of emerging social, economic, cultural and political trends, providing a focus for forecasting, warning and prevention;
- iv. To exercise their intellectual capacity and their moral prestige to defend and actively disseminate universally accepted values, including peace, justice, freedom, equality and solidarity, as enshrined in UNESCO's Constitution;
- v. To enjoy full academic autonomy and freedom, conceived as a set of rights and duties, while being fully responsible and accountable to society;
- vi. To play a role in helping identify and address issues that affects the well-being of communities, nations and global society.



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To fulfill these mandate universities must delve to produce graduates who can positively change the society. This is only possible if ethics is taken as a priority in teaching, research and community engagement which are the key pillars in higher education. Despite the many challenges posed by modernity, higher education has lived up to its expectations and proved its viability over the years. However, the dynamic nature of society that is increasingly becoming knowledge based has made higher learning to effectively use research to advise on essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations but must be guided by ethics.

Bothwell (2019) reporting during the World Academic Summit in September 2019 quoted Howard Gardner, who said that “what we really need, more than anything talked about today, is an ethical or moral society. And college is the last chance, I think, where we can affect the most people.” This already points to the role that higher education should play in molding the society through education. This is not new since Havard President; Derek Bok urged institutions of higher education to recommit to earlier academic traditions when students’ moral development was considered an integral part of their mission (Bok, 1982). Bok suggested that, when a university refuses to take this responsibility seriously, it “violates its basic obligations to society ...and gives an impression of moral indifference...” (p.79). It is of utmost importance that institutions of higher learning live up to their mandate so that our society that is manifest with deep crisis of values can transcend mere economic considerations and incorporate deeper dimensions of morality and spirituality. If they have to remain relevant, universities and other institutions of higher learning must instill standards of ethics and morality in their students.

Foundations of Ethics and its Place in Education

The word Ethics has been derived from the Greek word ‘ethos’ which means character and from Latin word ‘Mores’ which means customs (www.answers.com/topic/ethicc-legal-term). It therefore deals with moral values, rules or standards that govern the conduct of a particular group, profession or culture www.dictionary.refrence.com/brows-ethics. It also refers to the specific values, standards, rules, and agreements people adopt for conducting their lives. According Rich (2013: 4), “Ethics is a systematic approach to understanding, analyzing and distinguishing matter of right and wrong, good and bad and admirable and deplorable and they relate and well-being relationship among sentient”

An appropriate foundation of ethics requires a standard of value to which all goals and actions can be compared to. There is no better standard than our own lives and the happiness that comes with making that standard habitable. A system of ethics must further consist of not only emergency situations, but our daily choices. It must include how we relate with others, and recognize their importance not just to physical survival but to the integral well-being and happiness of all human persons. It must recognize that human life is an end in itself, and that sacrifice is not only unnecessary, but also destructive. These ideas, knowledge and values must be inculcated right from the families and developed



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further in the schools.

There has been increased interest on the need for inculcating ethics in education curriculum in developing moral values among the young people to enable them live a balanced life. It is ethical education that provides people the capacity to make decisions by their free wills and is important in the formation of the persons. Aristotle said, "Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all" hence the significance of integrating it in the curriculum. The society needs people who are holistically educated but unfortunately students who graduate from universities are proficient in their professions but not in morals (Nur Yeliz Gülcan 2014). In fulfilling their role in the society, institutions of higher learning must look for ways to help their students internalize ethical practices in their various professional lines by integrating it in the curriculum.

The challenge that is facing the universities is on how to and whether ethics should be taught. Illingworth (2004) demystified this challenge by offering three basic approaches to the teaching of ethics. These include a pragmatic approach which relies on teaching students about codes of ethics, an embedded approach which bases ethics on the students' emerging sense of identity and a theoretical approach in which students are introduced to ethical theories which can then be applied to a variety of situations and contexts. For him all these approaches can be supported by use of case studies. Ethics can also be well taught through role play, practice-based learning and narrative. Other researches done in regard to teaching of ethics supports that ethics can be taught. These researchers posit that a course focusing on ethics can facilitate growth in principled moral reasoning (St. Pierre, Nelson, & Gabbin, 1990, Armstrong, 1993; Bonawitz, 2002). If this happens, it would definitely mean that any person going through a specific education system will have to learn ethics and consequently be able to apply it in their lives. The graduates will therefore be able to act and reason ethically thus imparting ethical values in the society.

On the same, Penn and Collier (1985) claim that there is a need to implement an education program which results in the advancement of students to higher stages of moral development. It is the moral development that will counter the social evils that affect the human race and the society at large. Wright (1995) noted that education is the best means of developing good ethical behavior in the modern world. Since all nations value and take education as a key component for development, then education curriculum that is tempered with values will produce persons who are ethically upright. Hosmer (1988) indicates that educators can reinforce student's ethical attitudes by teaching ethical principles rather than moral standards of behavior and by introducing them to the ethical arguments. The ethical standard are critical in guiding the lives of people for they will help them distinguish between what is wrong and right and therefore choose the right direction to follow. Kerr and Smith (1995) found that ethics education can increase skills in identifying and analyzing problems, and therefore help to handle conflicts of values which arise between the practitioners,



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clients and society. All these lay a very good case as to why ethics should be taught in institutions of higher education

It is however, important to note that the moral judgment of a person is something that continues to develop throughout a person's life in a complex process of social interaction with parents, peers, educators and other significant persons in their life. A person's values are influenced over time (Luoma, 1989; Bishop, 1992). Furthermore, how influential college is on a student's ethical behavior is dependent on a set of mutually reinforcing experiences. (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) Schools, colleges and universities can therefore set their goal for teaching ethics aimed at changing students' moral behavior. Moral behavior is the result of character building which starts from the family and continues throughout their developmental stages.

Contextualizing Ethics in Higher Education Administration

The key roles of ethics in higher education are that it:-

- i. Promote the aims of higher education by avoiding prohibitions against fabricating, falsifying, or misrepresenting research data promote the truth and avoid error.
- ii. Promote cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote the values that are essential to collaborative work
- iii. Build public support for education by promoting a variety important moral and social values.

In a bid to meet the growing demand for higher education, institutions of higher learning are challenged to be mindful of their ethical standing in society. Elson Floyd, President of the Western Michigan University, in his, now famous speech- Walking the walk- The reality of Ethics in University presidency, reminded institutions of higher learning that they hold an exalted place in society, that universities are seen as places of morality and higher ethical standards. (April 3, 2000). He further said that due to the nature of responsibility bestowed on universities that of learning, teaching and gaining knowledge, emphasis ought to be placed on high value, rational thoughts, fairness and principled behavior. His sentiments could not have come at a better time, because in the recent past there has been an increase in calls for return to the values of old. Schools are being asked to do more to ensure that we return to a value based society. It is apparent that society has begun asking itself where it went wrong in as far as ethics is concerned. Above and beyond questions of whether ethics can actually be taught and whether morality makes sense without a shared religious foundation , is a deep sense of conviction that something ought to be done to inculcate ethics back into society.

Higher education's contribution to society is advanced knowledge; knowledge which may have major economic, technological, biological and social impact. Ethics is therefore critical for higher education and is becoming an integrated part of curriculum for a growing number of students (Illingworth, 2004). According to Illingworth a growing number of professions have codes of ethics that seek to regulate behavior. How higher education positions itself in relation to society is crucial. It includes interrogating what is being researched and



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taught including how it is being researched and taught. To a large extent it also involves looking at how these institutions are run and if ethical considerations and policies are implemented and how they are implemented.

Colleges and universities are built on moral obligations, ethical responsibilities and principles and codes of behavior. It is therefore imperative on these institutions to encourage and promote ethical behavior and to exhibit such behavior in all of our institutions. (Floyd, April, 2000) A Carnegie study posited that "Universities have taught and practiced moral and civic virtues throughout the history of Nations, they have sought to advance the truth and have been devoted to public service, and their members have often served as conscience of nations. The academic virtues are a model for the conduct of society at large."(Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, 1979)

This therefore makes it mandatory for institutions of higher learning to then start addressing the ethics question by first tackling the ethical challenges it faces within. It is time that universities move from talking ethics and start doing ethics. This can only happen when these institutions start asking how they can ethically deal with the corrupt systems within their institutions, what their role in ethics education as educators in varying subject areas is, what precautions could be taken to maintain high ethical standards, how to deal ethically with finances within their institutions and how to deal with the commercialization of higher education that to an extent violates citizen's rights to education among other tough questions.

The Ethical Dilemmas Facing University Administrators

Higher education has been referred to as a public and private good. (Schwartz, 2003) It is for this reason that the ethical awareness and practice of institutions of higher learning should inform each and everything they do. Despite this, it is to be noted that institutions of higher learning are faced with numerous challenges, especially administratively. Ethical issues arise in any and all of areas of institutional operations, such as maintaining access, purchasing and estate management to research and teaching. This section discusses some of these ethical dilemmas.

(a). Maintaining Access

Although there is a considerable increase in access to Higher education, there remains a challenge in as far as maintaining this access is concerned. The number of students who need to be part of the higher education is increasing and the institutions cannot accommodate the big number. Access would mean not only availability but also affordability and yet higher education is becoming very expensive as the governments cannot fully support such an education. For Bailey (2004), the access issues that loom in our future will affect students of every background and from every walk of life. These challenges speak to the heart of what universities do in order to survive financially and the ethical responsibility owed to students. This situation is likely to make higher education a preserve of the elites and therefore higher education will not achieve its desired end of transforming society. If universities have to tackle the issue of access to higher education, Bailey feels that they (universities) need to recognize that they have a



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moral obligation to manage resources well, be transparent about funding, where it comes from and how it is used and be forthright about costs of higher education. Failure to make these ethical considerations is a disservice to students and a denial to students of their rights to education.



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(b). *Financial Management*

Institutions of higher learning are persistently seeking donors to fund the projects they engage in. These donors most often than not will have vested interests. The pursuit for private public partnerships therefore becomes a potential area for ethical conflict in universities. Whereas it is important that universities and private sector collaborate, universities ought to keep in mind their values and ethical commitments. In the quest to attract donors and increase the number of projects institutions are running values and ethical standards are often compromised. Universities and the private sector must form strong collaborative relationships that will ensure that relevant curricula are developed so that students meet the needs of business corporations. Often corporate educational linkages are opposed on the grounds that university should not be corrupted by the influences of the profit sector.

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Recently, universities have been challenged by legislatures and the business community to become more helpful in developing economic opportunities for themselves. This is against the backdrop of the rising wage bills of running the institutions and payment of lecturers who are themselves underpaid. (Hanicke, 1986) This therefore makes lure for additional income for the academics as well as the institutions a simple economic necessity. This then forms a basis for ethical challenge.

Universities and industry work for different motives and purposes, all proper and honorable, but often at odds with each other. Universities in their purest form seek truth while industry seeks profit. The university seeks new knowledge objectively and should share it openly and freely. Industry seeks knowledge for commercial application and exploitation and will treat new knowledge as private property (Hanicke, 1986). In essence these parallels between university and private sector should lead institutions of higher learning to make ethical decisions in their choices for partnerships. The need to maintain ethical standards should always supersede the need for monetary gain.

(c). *Academic Honesty and Integrity*

In a world that is fast becoming technologically savvy, ethics is also challenged. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty is a growing concern in most universities. Studies have proved that exam cheating is common among university (McCabe, Trevino & Buterfield, 2001). To solve this problem, institutional mindset ought to be re-examined. Individual lecturers need to assess themselves in relation to what happens in their classrooms. Questions such as whether what they prepare to teach to the students is well researched work and not plagiarized work? Are they convinced about what they impart to their learners? Are they offering the students value for what they pay for by being in class at the right time for and covering the recommended credit hours? This assessment has to be borne both from the perspective of assessment of the institution and the students accomplishments. This kind of a process also helps



the institution administrators to be honest, truthful, responsible and accountable with their students and would be students. It enables the institutions to give a true reflection of the identity of the university so that potential students know what they expect of the institution. In these times of heavy commercial advertisement to attract students, universities face an ethical challenge on whether to give a true image of them or to fake identity that is not reflective of who they are and what they offer.



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(d). *Online Distance and E-learning*

Technology has had enormous impact on both teaching in the traditional classroom and online, distance and e-learning (Odel). It is in light of this Bennett (1998) saw the possibility of reduced numbers and size of institutions of higher education and increased global electronic educational opportunities grow. He noted that many campuses will become service stations through which multiple learning modules are made available to students at a distance. He felt that significant distance learning will occur; assessment criteria will be considerably improved or affected, the internet would provide an extension of the library and laboratory, and the faculty who has been isolated by geography or campus politics, telecommunications will rejuvenate interaction with scholars elsewhere. As a result of technological advancement and desire for more learning distance learning has become one of the modes of delivery that makes it possible for many people to access education from different places.

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Though a blessing, online distance and e-learning if not well used it can lead to breaches of ethics. Some of the breaches according to Hallam (1998) include plagiarism, defamation, and infringement of intellectual property rights. Hallam argues that these breaches of ethics may occur unintentionally and often because users are unaware of policies that may be in place. For him it is important for users to review the guidelines or policies established by their own organization on distance learning and use of internet. Hallam proposes that using the institution's resources for personal gain, sending threatening, obscene or harassing messages, posting confidential material outside the institution, reposting messages without permission, disruption or interference of network activities, including the distribution of unsolicited advertising, propagation of computer viruses or worms should be included in institutions policy to safeguard it from misuse of internet facilities

(e). *Human Resource Management*

The level of high competition between institutions of higher learning has led to a number of institutions investing in their staff through staff development programmes. These are programmes whereby universities train their very own staff to better serve them. This is a very expensive venture that these institutions get in. However, as soon as these staff has been trained and are ready to take up these responsibilities, it has been seen that a competing institution will poach these staff and offer better pay than is offered by the university that has taken on the cost of this staff development. This is one very unethical practice that leads to loss of expensively trained human resource.

The African continent continues to suffer massive brain drain whereby talented human resource is driven out of the continent in search for greener



pasture in Europe and America. The impact of this massive brain drain is that the continent is affected in its economic and social development. Another thing that happens with this brain drain is that the continent is heavily investing in the education of its people but the people who enjoy the fruits of the formation that happens in the educational journey is not enjoyed by the continent



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(f). *Commercialization of Higher Education*

Worldwide, education is being increasingly treated as a commodity and students are increasingly treated like customers. Higher education and generally education has become very commercial. The terms being used include the students being referred to as the customer; the teaching programs are being asked to be market oriented and such kind of terms. These therefore push institutions to even compromise their values in favor of the market values.

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On the issue of commodification of higher education, Goolam, (2002) adds that globalization has resulted in higher education being regarded as a commercial product governed essentially by market forces and has brought in the concept of competitiveness. The new competition between institutions of higher education for students, for scarce resources and for recognition is central to today's higher education, which is increasingly transnational in nature.

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The danger of a market driven system of higher education is that it neglects the imparting of values and concentrates on skills and knowledge needed in the market. Such type of education leads to people who are learned but with no values such as respect for human life, concern for justice and common good for all. It will also bring forth forward the different social evils as put forward by Mahtma Gadhi namely, knowledge without character, wealth without work, religion without sacrifice, politics without principle, pleasure without conscience, business without ethics and science without humanity (<http://www.mkgandhi.org/mgmnt.htm>).

(g). *Power and politics in the development of the curriculum*

A curriculum may refer to a defined and prescribed course of studies, which students must fulfill in order to pass a certain level of education, and institutions of higher learning are not exceptional. It is no doubt that curriculum has its base in the socio-political systems of the countries and institutions of higher learning in particular. Sometimes the decision of what should be in the curriculum is politically motivated and the beneficiaries of the products are rarely consulted. Occasionally those who have the power and authority to make decisions are able to exercise control over what gets written into curriculum and what remains excluded.

This may be attributed to academic freedom which Barnett and Coate (2005) points out as the content of curricula is concerned, as something that has been earned and do not allow a lot of room for negotiation. Though academic freedom is good it should not be misused. UNESCO (1998) stressed institutional autonomy and academic freedoms as a necessary tool for the effective functioning of the higher education system and for the strengthening of its capacity. It must be added that the academic freedom which, in a way, serves as a justification and basis for the critical function of higher education presuppose the observance of certain principles and norms, while laying upon higher education institutions



the duty of objectivity, impartiality and intellectual rigour. When developing the curriculum such objectivity should be considered. The question that one should ask in the light of such is whose interest does the university curriculum serve? Does it respond to the needs of the society or of the individuals? Is it ethical to provide education that has no value and which does not stress on creativity for the citizens? Lack of objectivity may compromise the values of the students as evidenced by different riots and closure of universities in many countries in sub Saharan Africa. A framework for developing a value based curriculum must consider the notion of how power and politics shape content and activities of courses and programs.

The Role of Administrators in Promoting Ethics in HEIs

Ethics are a personal matter, and are about means as well as ends. Moral action may not always yield good or even acceptable outcomes because it is possible to do the right thing for the wrong reasons (Floyd, 2000). Ethical action is ultimately about decision making, reasoning and acting out of a perceived responsibility.

The nature of higher education places its administrators in high responsibility and enormous expectation is placed on them. University administrators are not only expected to provide academic and administrative leadership, but are also expected to be ethical leaders for their institutions (Walker, D.E., 1981). In their hands is placed public trust and financial accountability not just to the University councils but also to the benefactors, tax payers, parents, students, alumni and society at large. These administrators are collectively responsible for the expenditures, activities, actions and strategic direction that the institutions take. They are essentially responsible for the organizational character of their institutions.

Conducting the affairs of higher education institutions therefore requires selfless people, people who do not have in their minds self-interests and self-protection but rather those who are convinced of the common good. This therefore requires of administrators a delicate balancing act. In a bid to balance this enormous responsibilities placed on them, as administrators, they are likely to face conflicts and/or competing values. It is here that ethics starts being a challenge to them. Administrators are faced with the ethical challenge of growing the universities to meet market demands and at the same time improve teaching and educational quality, while keeping college affordable and accessible. This is against the backdrop of technological advancement, diminishing public funds, rising enrolment and rapidly changing public expectations (Perlman, 1990). It is these kinds of conflicts and competing interests that then calls on university administrators to fit within the ethical tenets of virtue ethics. Virtue ethics requires that given such circumstances the institutional values and ethics must be at the core of all the actions that are taken. The only way universities can be looked at as the mirror of society really be said to be walking the walk and talking the talk.

It is incumbent upon administrators of institutions of higher learning to pay attention not only to what they say but to what they do. It is often said



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that universities have two sets of moral values, those expressed explicitly in the institution's formal policies and pronouncements and the implicit values that drive institutional practices with regard to matters such as allocation of resources, personnel decisions, curricular offerings, how the institution defines excellence and the kind of assessment data it collects (Astin, 1989). According to Astin, some of the most serious ethical problems in higher education arise from inconsistencies between an institution's explicit and implicit values.

Higher education is said to be both a public and private good. To this end, ethical awareness and practice does and should inform everything that these institutions of higher learning are and do. It is vital then that administrators of these institutions ensure that they have in place coherent and consistent set of policies and procedures in the form of a statement of ethical principles and behavior that is embedded in the culture of the institutions. Such a policy then goes a long way to help the institutions, staff and students as well as other collaborators resolve ethical issues as and when they arise. The staff and students should be enabled to handle the range of ethical dilemmas they will face in an increasingly multicultural society with global dimensions. This way the institutions of higher learning play a valuable role in pursuing wider community and societal aims.

Proposals for Implementing Ethics in Higher Education

From the aforesaid challenges we propose a sustainable mechanism for implementing ethics in higher education. A lot of the challenges facing these institutions can be easily dealt with if better management procedures and accountability mechanisms are put in place. It is imperative for institutions of higher learning to develop a framework or policies through which ethics can be practically implemented. An institution-wide ethical framework that is championed at the highest level and endorsed by the institutions governing council. This is a process that has to be championed by the vice-chancellors.

Most universities have policies that address standards of conduct for university officers, employees and even students. This is normally done to be in tandem with the country's legal requirements. These policies address issues such as sexual harassment, affirmative action and nepotism just to mention but a few. Research institutions also have policies in place that spell the ethical standards that must be fulfilled in a research. These policies are not just necessary but also useful. They help in ensuring that institutions of higher learning operate within the set legal parameters and articulate ethical standards. It is however, critical for institutions to move from the comfort of establishing ethics related policies and start evaluating how the policies are implemented and whether those policies in the long run are achieving their intended results.

Institutions of higher learning can also consider how issues of ethics can better understood by its staff and students. Most institutions assume that students come to higher education with full knowledge of ethical principles, which most often is not the case. Mechanisms of examining students understanding of ethics prior to admission ought to be devised. This will go a long way in ensuring that the institutions know how to continually adjust its ethics curriculum based on the emerging ethical issues. Equally important is ensuring that the staff



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understand the institutional values that advice its ethical considerations. Perhaps it is important that human resource departments are directed to include a valid and reliable selection test t measure a job candidate's ethical understanding and maturity.



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Conclusions and Recommendations

From the aforesaid discussion, a number of proposals can be made to ensure a sustainable mechanism for implementing ethics in higher education. A lot of the challenges facing these institutions can be easily dealt with if better management procedures and accountability mechanisms are put in place. It is imperative for institutions of higher learning to develop a framework or policies through which ethics can be practically implemented. Most critically required is an institution-wide ethical framework that is championed at the highest level and endorsed by the institutions governing council.. Most universities have polices that address standards of conduct for university officers, employees and even students. This is normally done to be in tandem with the country's legal requirements. These policies address issues such as sexual harassment, affirmative action and nepotism just to mention but a few. Research institutions also have policies in place that spell the ethical standards that must be fulfilled in a research.

Policies are not just necessary but also useful. They help in ensuring that institutions of higher learning operate within the set legal parameters and articulate ethical standards. It is however, critical for institutions to move from the comfort of establishing ethics related policies and start evaluating how the policies are implemented and whether those policies in the long run are achieving their intended results. Institutions of higher learning can also consider how issues of ethics can be better understood by its staff and students. Most institutions assume that students come to higher education with full knowledge of ethical principles, which most often is not the case. Mechanisms of examining students understanding of ethics prior to admission ought to be devised. This will go a long way in ensuring that the institutions know how to continually adjust its ethics curriculum based on the emerging ethical issues. Equally important is ensuring that the staff understands the institutional values that advice its ethical considerations. Perhaps it is important that human resource departments are directed to include a valid and reliable selection test to measure a job candidate's ethical understanding and maturity

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Educational Theory and
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