Honolulu Community College:
Contemporary Ethical Issues (E) Hallmarks:

- Contemporary ethical issues will be presented and studied in a manner that is fully integrated into the main course content.

- The equivalent of one semester credit-hour or 30% of a 3-credit course will be devoted to contemporary ethical issues.

- A minimum of 8 hours of class time will be spent discussing contemporary ethical issues.

- The disciplinary approach(es) used in the course will give students tools for the development of responsible deliberation and ethical judgment.

- Students will achieve basic competency in analyzing and deliberating upon contemporary ethical issues to help them make ethically determined judgments.

- E-focus courses must be 100 level or above.

- Approval for E-focus courses will be for a period of Five years.

Contemporary Ethical Issues Explanatory notes

- The themes for E courses are expected to be quite varied. The Focus Board anticipates courses treating such issues as fairness in business practices, professional ethics, ethical issues in technology, discrimination, death and dying, victimless crimes, sex and reproduction, privacy, intellectual property, the distribution of health services and so on. Courses may be associated with particular vocations, disciplines, professions and larger enterprises: engineering ethics, computer ethics, the ethics of human and animal research, medical ethics, bioethics, biotechnology, business ethics, ethics in government and leadership, and journalistic ethics, for example. Still others might look at ethical issues that emerge at cultural interfaces, war, evangelism, colonialism and multi-cultural societies, etc. It is important that the issues not be a minor part of the curriculum but are fully integrated into the main course content. Students must not only be encouraged to identify ethical principles, guidelines, and justifications related to a disciplinary discussion but also engage in deliberation of how they might apply in complex situations.

- Course materials must be pertinent to the ethical issues under review. While well-selected textbooks on ethics and applied ethics would serve, so would case studies, judicial opinions, statutes, codes of ethics (and commentaries), film, works of art, performances, as well as a broad range of other readings. It is anticipated that most courses will incorporate materials of several kinds.
Discussion and deliberation are important methodologies in the development of ethical judgment and may involve varying degrees of involvement and presentation. Different approaches might include small group discussions, formal debate, round-table discussions, Socratic questioning, formal essays, journals, and so on. While no specific limits are placed on the range or combinations of disciplinary approaches that may be used -- for example, professional ethics, policy analysis, social criticism, philosophical and religious ethics and law, theoretical criticism and interpretation -- the academic approaches and methodologies should suffice to give students tools for the development of responsible ethical judgments.

It is important that E-courses not be purely descriptive, merely characterizing, for example, the moral commitments of a person, a society, or a discipline. Nor is it intended that the pedagogy be value-free, using approaches that maintain an "arms-length" relationship with current ethical issues. Instead the goal of such courses, at least in part, must be to equip students with some degree of proficiency in ethical deliberation. Accordingly, it would not be enough simply to survey a range of abstract moral theories, the professional ethics of a discipline, or a vocational code of ethics without bringing them to bear fruitfully and responsibly on living moral questions. Nor will it suffice to introduce a range of divergent opinions without giving students the tools to assess these. For instance, the professional ethics of a discipline are appropriate E-topics provided that they are brought to bear on contemporary problems.

For instance, students in a computer networking class could be exposed to the emerging consensus in this field regarding ethical use of information technologies. But they then could be confronted with applied questions of great concern today, such as:

- Can intangible property rights be justified?
- Is it ethical to copy, pirate, or bootleg, the intellectual works of others?
- Should everything posted on the Internet be considered public domain? If not, what aspects of a web page should be copyrighted?
- What is privacy and can strong privacy rights be justified?
- Who owns information — including medical histories, work evaluations, criminal records, etc.?
- What role should our government play in controlling information?
- How should we balance privacy v. free speech and access?

For technical-occupational programs, the following might apply.

Each profession has implicit values. The ethical focus is to make these values explicit and to encourage reflection and discussion on application.

To satisfy the E-focus requirement, the occupational-technical teacher could integrate an ethical issues-curriculum into the technical curriculum of the course. The ethical issues-curriculum might be accomplished through regular discussions, through a case method, or through studying the formal Code of the profession involved. The ethical issues-curriculum could include the following:
• Obligations to oneself. To be the best professional one can be. Emphasized would be personal integrity. The ethical focus would be on how to achieve happiness through quality work, excellence, self-mastery, and the development of potential.

• Obligations to colleagues and trade. Respect for one's employer or employees. Respect for those who do things differently. A willingness to support, learn from, cooperate with, trust and teach others. An ability to collaborate in a multicultural setting.

• Obligations to clients. Why the following are important: Fair pricing; delivering on a contract; solving the problems; and avoiding deception.

• Obligations to the larger society. Why should businesses have reasonable performance goals for all employees and guard against pressure to achieve exorbitant financial results and profits? Why should everyone be treated equally? Why should other cultures be respected? Why is respect for law important to society? Why should the less fortunate be helped? Why should every child have a role model, a coach, a teacher, a parent? Do affluent countries have responsibilities toward poor countries?

• Obligations to the environment. Why is the health of the environment more important than profit? Why should nature be protected from blind exploitation?

In applying the E-focus hallmarks to such an obligation list, it is important that students be given real-life deliberation contexts, such as:

In the context of the administration of justice, when should a police officer's obligation to the larger society take precedence over an obligation to one's colleagues and an internal "code of silence"?

In the context of the aviation industry, how would the Code of Federal Regulations Chapter 14, Federal Aviation Regulation, Part 61, Paragraph 37 regarding unauthorized conduct apply in situations of apparent cases of obligation's conflict?

E-focus Application Cover sheet and Application Form