Beyond The Accounting 19 Final Exam

I get it. Most students forget much of what they learn in a class soon after the final exam. This class is exactly the opposite.

During the next few months my goal is to help you think about ethics, not only in the accounting profession but also as they apply to your personal life. There will be lots of discussion in class, and you may, but probably won’t, agree with everything you hear. That is the point – we all have our own ethical standards and it is up to you to determine what yours are.

To help you get an idea of what to expect in this course I have highlighted eight “big ideas” that you will learn this semester. Many executives, politicians and even college administrators may have made wiser decisions if they had thought about some of these ideas before making up their minds.

Idea 1 – What Exactly Are Ethics?

Believe it or not, most cultures define ethics in basically the same way; how they apply their ethical beliefs differ. In Chapter 1 (yes, right away!) you will be introduced to the basic tenants of ethics and learn about the Six Pillars of Character, plus discover some accounting scandals that could have been avoided with ethical behavior.

Idea 2 – How Is Behavior Influenced?

We all know people who are scared to drive too fast, much less cheat on an exam. And we know others who love to drive fast and don’t think twice about cheating. In Chapter 2 you will learn about some theories as to why some behave unethically and how greed figures into unethical behavior.

Idea 3 – What Are The Causes of Fraud?

You probably took Business Law and learned the technical definition of fraud. That might be great in theory, but what factors influence (or even encourage) fraud? In Chapter 3 you will learn about the Fraud Triangle, the effect of fraud in companies and some common fraud techniques.

Idea 4 – How Does The Federal Government Deal With Accounting Fraud?

There are lots of Federal laws that deal with unethical behavior. In Chapter 4 you will be exposed to various Federal statutes that are specific to accountants.

Idea 5 – What About the Accounting Profession?

A profession is usually defined as an occupation that involves training and examination (sounds like accounting, huh?). In Chapter 5 you will learn about how the Accounting profession looks at ethics, including specific rules and potential violations.
Idea 6 – So What If Everybody Cheats On Their Taxes?

Believe it or not, everybody does not cheat on their taxes; but given the opportunity, many will jump at the chance. Chapter 6 discusses many of the professional standards accountants must follow when dealing with taxes, and also some of the IRS rules to help discourage, usually through punishment, people who cheat.

Idea 7 – How Does This Apply To Me as a CPA?

If you are a CPA you have to follow the rules of the state you are licensed in. Chapter 7 introduces some of the requirements applicable to California CPA’s and delves into the specifics of many of those rules.

Idea 8 – What Makes An Ethical Leader?

By now you have figured out that we will talk a lot about what is “right” and “wrong” and you will have to determine how that concept applies to you. In Chapter 8 you will see how ethical leadership intersects with accounting and how it may influence situations you may find yourself dealing with in the not so distant future.

There you go – this, plus much more, will be covered in Accounting 19. I’m excited to teach you these concepts and to help you look at a variety of topics in a whole new way.

Let’s enjoy the next few months together!

Howard