
2010 CESR Update: Message from the Director

Greetings Friends of CESR!

I hope this communication finds you well and enjoying the last days of summer. I am happy to provide you with a half-yearly update on all of the exciting developments in CESR. With all the progress we have made, I could overwhelm you with information; instead, I have organized these developments into four areas so you can get a sense of what strides we are making. As always, I would be happy to speak with you in greater detail about this update or anything else for that matter!



Center Developments. As you may know, CESR became a center late in the spring; while we kept the acronym for recognition purposes, we are now called the Center for Education on Social Responsibility. With center status comes internal and external validation for our efforts as we are no longer hidden in the Management Division. Though center status also means that we must become fully-funded over the next several years, we are working closely with the CU Foundation to make that happen! (We already have received increased media attention on NPR, the *Denver Business Journal*, YouTube viewings, and most recently, *BizEd*.)



Internally, the Professional Mentorship Program we have directed has grown dramatically since we piloted it last year. The school has just hired a talented coordinator, Katie Connor, who will work exclusively on that project. In addition, we now have multi-year contracts for six instructors, adding even greater stability to our program.

Significant Curricular Developments. Since we remain a program focused foremost on educating students, the following developments are essential to carrying out our mission. First, our Certificate Program in Socially Responsible Enterprise (SRE) for undergraduate students has been approved by the School and we are now launching and publicizing this specialty. Increasingly, students are interested in the creative electives we offer at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and our classes have been oversubscribed. Second, we are undertaking a year-long update to Introduction to Business, a required, large lecture class for all undergraduate students that is infused with discussions of values and social responsibility. With support from the Dean's office, we are injecting entrepreneurial spirit into our required discussion groups of 25 students (formerly called recitations) held on Fridays. Each Friday class will develop and track a business they create, giving life to concepts covered in lecture.

Third, we completed the overhaul of the required MBA Business and Society class, now called the Socially Responsible Enterprise, which has been extremely well-received by our graduate students. We now also offer electives in environmental sustainability and social entrepreneurship. These electives cover two of the four options for MBAs to acquire the three-course "Sustainability Portfolio," a program created in collaboration with the Deming and the Real Estate Centers. Fourth, our class, Leadership Challenges: Exercises in Moral Courage, which is now entering its fourth year, remains a top-rated course in the college.

It [the course] genuinely made me re-think my stance on ethics and how they interact with business. I feel that I am a better person and future manager for having taken this class.

-- Chris Kozina, MBA student, regarding the Socially Responsible Enterprise course

Finally, as we are not content to rest on CESR's laurels of popular, timely, and challenging electives, we are actively developing new courses. For example, we are hoping to offer classes on "Nonfinancial Accounting" beginning in the fall of 2011 at the undergraduate, graduate, and executive education levels.

Collaborations. With the school's strategic emphasis on CESR, and our goal to integrate discussions of values and social responsibility into the fabric of our curricula, it is essential that we collaborate with other units within our school. In addition to co-offering the MBA Sustainability Portfolio, we are collaborating with the Real Estate and Deming Centers to develop a prototype of a multi-media case on sustainability to begin a "Leeds" branded library in this area. We also are working with the School's divisions to feature faculty research that has CESR implications. Finally, we are looking to cosponsor divisional offerings with significant CESR content, e.g., "Sustainable Operations" and "Privacy and Technology" (cross-listed with Management) and "Microfinance" (cross-listed with Finance).

Outreach. We pledge to devote more of our time to share CESR's activities outside of the Leeds School's walls. Our first Conscious Capitalism Conference was a great success this past year, designed for students from all regional universities to develop values-driven businesses; we look forward to hosting Conscious Capitalism II on campus on March 2nd, 2011! Within the University's walls, we are seeking to forge relationships with other university units that focus on sustainability (e.g., Engineering, Architecture and Environmental Studies) to develop synergies in the study of social and environmental sustainability. These efforts are being led by the Center's Associate Director, Francy Milner. In addition, we are seeking to build stronger ties with businesses (business involvement is critical to our elective classes) and to participate in Executive Education efforts at Leeds.



Finally, rather than simply assuming that our coursework has a true impact on our students, we are reaching out to the academic community, at large, with studies of our own. Recently, we conducted a study on the effects of our junior level required class, "BCOR3010: Business Applications of Social Responsibility." Before and after surveys of student attitudes of business behaviors in 10 different business contexts revealed that, after having taken BCOR3010, more students changed their responses to each situation in favor of more socially-conscious behavior than those in the control group (who had not taken the class). We hope to sponsor research on the effects of pedagogy on student attitudes and, ultimately, on their behaviors once they enter the workplace.

It [the course] allows me to rethink many of my values and redefine them. I get a broader view and a better understanding of business now. My views, values, and opinion of business have changed. It seems like I became a wiser person now.

This class made me take on a whole new perspective about ethics in the business world.

- BCOR3010 students (course evaluations)

In closing, each of these developments is possible only through your interest in and support of CESR. On behalf of the faculty and staff associated with the Center and, most importantly, the many students who benefit from these efforts, I offer you my deepest thanks!

Best Regards,

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For more information, visit
<http://leeds.colorado.edu/CESR>