The Michael S. Rapaport Initiative for Everyday Ethics: *Ethics Across the Curriculum*

What field of study is appropriate for discussing ethical issues? Philosophy? Biology? Literature? Economics? Art? Union College, following the lead of a distinguished alumnus, Michael S. Rapaport ('59), believes ethics is essential for every major, all across the curriculum.

To prepare students to face the world of tough decisions and to empower them to exercise moral leadership, their college experience has to provide extensive training in everyday ethics.

**General Description and Structure of the Program:**
The Ethics Across the Curriculum Initiative strives to provide extensive training in everyday ethics to faculty, staff, and students at Union College. The program was introduced in 2006 with funding by Union College distinguished alumnus, Michael Rapaport ('59). Robert Baker, PhD, William D. Williams Professor of Philosophy, serves as the Director of the Ethics Across the Curriculum Initiative. Anastasia Pease, served as the Associate Director from 2006 through the spring of 2009, when Amy S. Bloom replaced Dr. Pease as Associate Director.

**Three Main Goals of Ethics Across the Curriculum:**
1. to provide funding, through a grant proposal process, to faculty members to incorporate ethics teaching into their curricula
2. to educate faculty and staff through regular lunch workshops and speaker series about ethics and innovative ways to incorporate ethics teaching into undergraduate courses, and
3. to promote ethics across the curricula through public lectures, symposia, workshops, and conferences

**Accomplishments:**
Since its inception in 2006, Ethics Across the Curriculum has provided more than 40 lunch workshops guided by external speakers bringing their expertise in the fields of ethics or other related fields to help faculty and staff learn about incorporating ethics teaching and concepts into the classroom. Ethics Across the Curriculum has also funded more than 70 different proposals by faculty members in most every department on campus to incorporate ethics segments into their own courses, bring in speakers, buy supplementary materials or attend conferences for further ethics-related training.

**Special Project: Re-introducing an Honor Code at Union College**
**Background:** Union students initiated an academic and social honor code early in the twentieth century but ended the experiment in 1925. Six years ago some engineering students proposed the reinstitution of an academic honor code at Union. Responding to their request, the Academic Affairs Council (AAC) convened the Subcommittee on Academic Integrity to investigate and draft a new Honor Code, which was passed by students and faculty in the spring of 2011. This subcommittee, comprised of students, faculty, and staff, is now in the process of developing an implementation plan to put the new Honor Code into place over the next year.

**What are Honor Codes/Honor Councils?** Honor codes are conduct codes that students pledge to adhere to as members of an academic community. All honor codes presume trust between students, faculty, and administrators. They came to be called “honor” codes because conduct was viewed as emanating from a student’s honorable character. Accusations of a breach of the honor pledge are brought to a student-led council.

**What Would Change Were the Union Honor Code/Council Implemented?**
- Inverting a Paradigm (emphasis on integrity and honesty rather than cheating)
- Student Self and Peer Accountability
- Emphasis on Faculty Responsibility
- Transparency
- Fairness with Flexibility
- Chair-Dean Disposition in Cases of Self-Admitted Guilt
- Consistency
- Formalization
- Assessment and Review