

ETHICAL ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURES IN THE ACADEMY:

**Insights from our
Business Schools,
Journals, and
Academic Associations**



ACADEMY OF
Management



Webinar co-sponsored by AOM Ethics Education Committee and the AIB Ethics Policy Committee

Monday 24 March 2025 11:00 am-12:30 pm ET

Review of Norms: AOM's Code of Conduct for Events

At AOM, we are committed to maintaining a professional, inclusive, and respectful environment for all participants. We appreciate your cooperation in upholding these norms to ensure a constructive and respectful discussion.

As we engage in this webinar, we expect all attendees to uphold the following:

Expected Behavior

- *Treat all participants with respect and professionalism*
- *Foster a safe and welcoming environment for learning and discussion, contributing to the purpose of the webinar*
- *Prohibited Conduct*
- *Harassment, discrimination, or intimidation of any kind especially lewd comments, sexual harassment, or inappropriate communications.*
- *Any behavior deemed abusive, bullying, coercive, or disruptive to the purpose or learning experience of the professional environment.*
- *Threats, violence, or creating a hostile environment.*

Violations may result in removal from the event. Participants removed from meeting cannot rejoin.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions

Sybille Sachs, University of Applied Sciences Zurich

2. Why Ethics in the Academy Matters

Sharon Alvarez, University of Pittsburgh

3. Ethical Organizational Cultures (EOCs): Theory and Assessment

Linda Treviño, Penn State University

4. EOCs in our Business Schools: Lessons from the Smeal College of Business, Penn State University

Jennifer Eury, Penn State University

5. EOCs in our Scholarly Journals: Lessons from Journal Editors

Kathy Lund Dean, Gustavus Adolphus College

6. EOCs in our Academic Associations: Lessons from the Academy of International Business

Lorraine Eden, Texas A&M University

7. Q&A with the Audience and Wrap-up

Sybille Sachs, University of Applied Sciences Zurich

Panel Members



Sybille Sachs
University of Applied
Sciences Zurich
AOM EEC Co-chair



Sharon Alvarez
University of Pittsburgh
AOM Past President and
AOM Ethics Committee
Chair



Linda Treviño
Penn State University
AOM Ethics Code Task
Force and first Ethics
Ombudsperson



Jennifer Eury
Penn State University
AOM EEC Member



Kathy Lund Dean
Gustavus Adolphus
College
AOM EEC Member
AOM EAC Member



Lorraine Eden
Texas A&M
University
AOM EEC Member
AIB EPC Member

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Sponsors of this Webinar

- The **Academy of Management Ethics Education Committee (EEC)** is a small group of Academy members who are charged with engaging other members on the topic of ethics and sharing positive professional practice.
- The **Academy of International Business Ethics Policy Committee (EPC)** is a small group of AIB members who are responsible for implementation, interpretation, advice, communication, review and updating of AIB's ethics codes.
- Both committees are part of a larger network of ethics committees, resources and activities within each association.

Academy of Management Ethics Committees

**Ethics Education Committee,
Sybille Sachs & Rachel Balven, Co-Chairs**



Handles ethics education in AOM. Helping members understand AOM's Code of Ethics and how to uphold it proactively.

**Ethics Ombuds Committee,
Jennifer Schultz, Chair**



Initial Point of Contact for confidential ethics inquiries. Active listening, informal counseling, mediation and guidance about the Code and P&Ps.

**Ethics Adjudication Committee,
Mary Ann Glynn, Chair**



Enforcement body for the Ethical Standards of the Code. Adjudicates cases and makes best possible determinations.

Ethics@AOM: <https://aom.org/about-aom/ethics>
Mission, Vision and Values: <https://aom.org/about-aom>

Academy of International Business Ethics Committees

**Ethics Policy Committee,
Chuck Kwok, Chair**



▼
The EPC is responsible for implementation, interpretation, advice, communication, review and updating of AIB's ethics codes.

**Ethics Review Committee,
Denis Arnold, Chair**

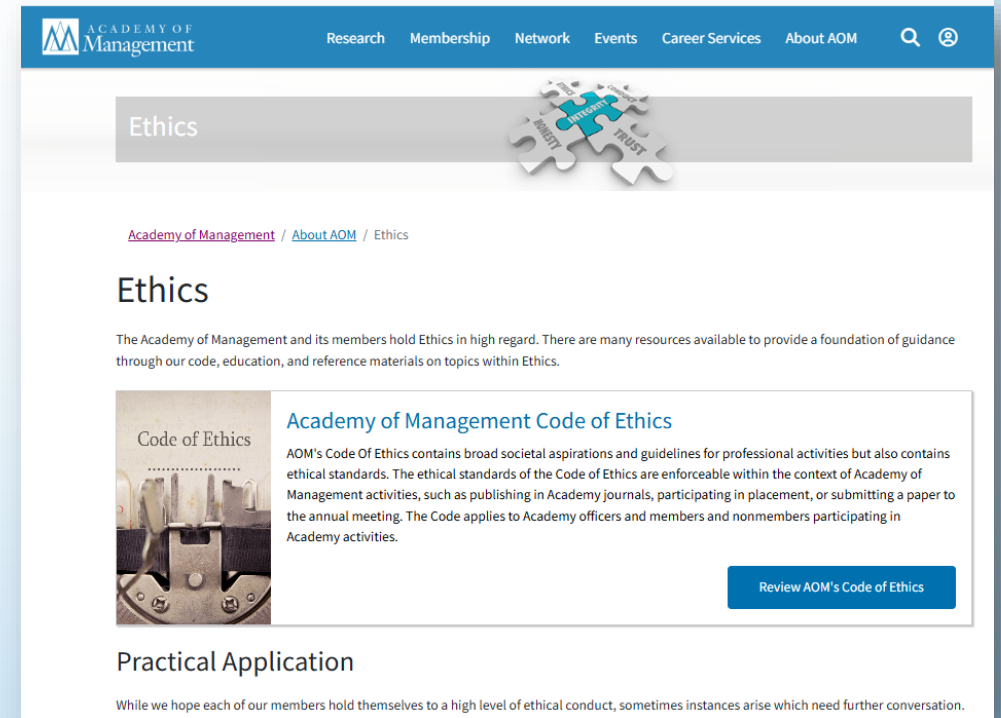


▼
The ERC is responsible for dispute resolution and enforcement of AIB's ethics codes.

Ethics@AIB: <https://www.aib.world/about/ethics/>
Mission, Vision and Values: https://www.aib.world/aib_mission-vision-values/

Why Ethics Matters

- Ethics is the foundation of trust, credibility, and legitimacy in management research, teaching, and practice.
- Ethical behavior strengthens the Academy's mission to advance knowledge and improve management education and practice.
- The Academy of Management (AOM) plays a key role in setting ethical standards for scholars, educators, and practitioners.
- Ethical conduct ensures fairness, accountability, and integrity in research, publishing, leadership, and professional interactions.
- Fostering an ethical culture enhances the Academy's global reputation and long-term impact.



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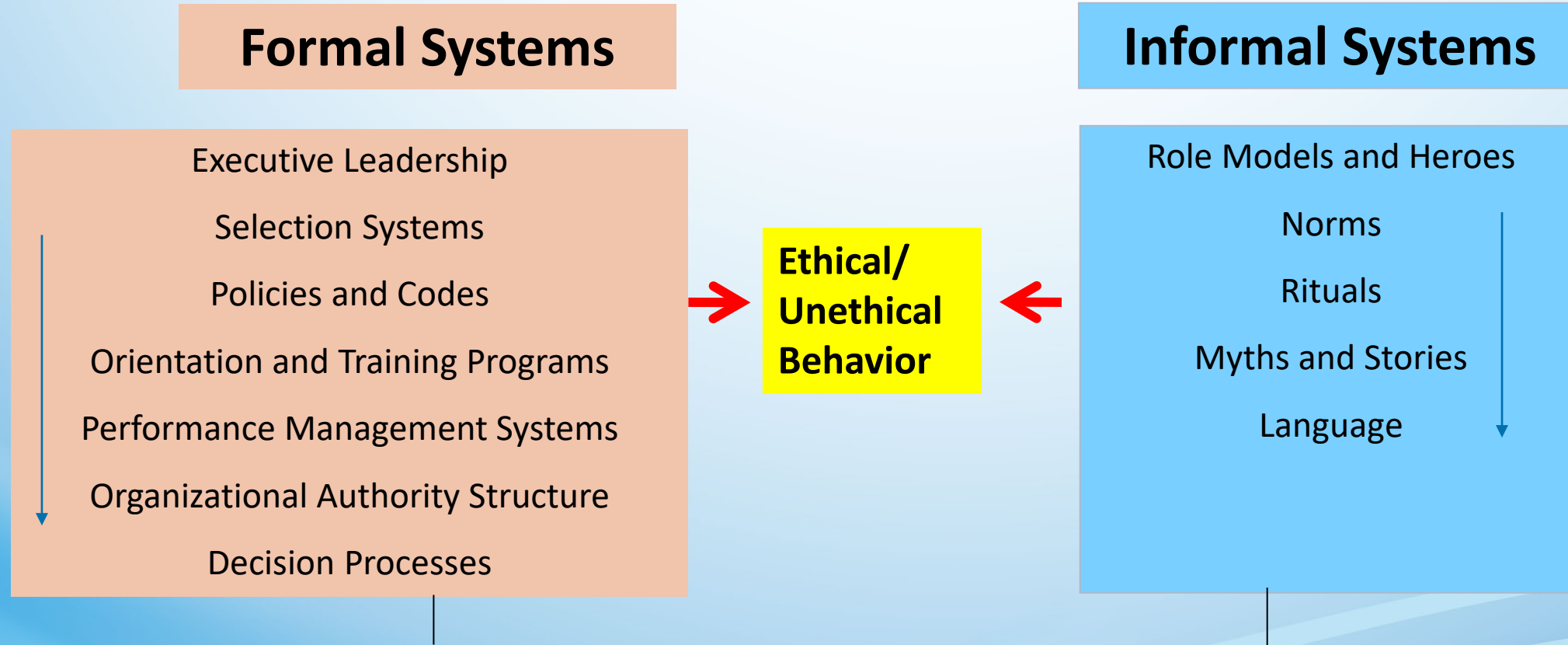
Lorraine Eden, Texas A&M University

7. Q&A with the Audience and Wrap-up

Sybille Sachs, University of Applied Sciences Zurich

Ethical Organizational Culture – What Is It?

The “slice” of broader organizational culture that affects *how employees think and act in ethics-related situations*



Assessment Methods

- Conducted by whom? (“Trusted insider or outsider)
- Surveys of employees and other stakeholders (e.g., customers, suppliers)
 - Need to be substantive
 - Assess knowledge, attitudes (e.g., fair treatment)
- Focus groups – if trust is high enough – conducted by whom?
- More “objective data” – Calls to helpline or hotline
 - Number of calls – how to interpret
 - Content of calls
- Data from other sources – e.g., Glass Door

A Few More “Must Haves”

- Resources
 - Concern for ethical culture must be someone’s job because initiating and sustaining ethical culture is NOT EASY!
 - Involves ongoing communication with multiple stakeholders, regular messaging, rituals, designing/administering assessments, communicating results
 - Investing resources in impediments to cheating (technological or otherwise) – says “we mean it!”
- Ease of reporting violations – empower faculty reporters, protect student reporters
- Transparency – regular reporting about violations and actions taken
- Relentless attention – can’t let up or it will unravel

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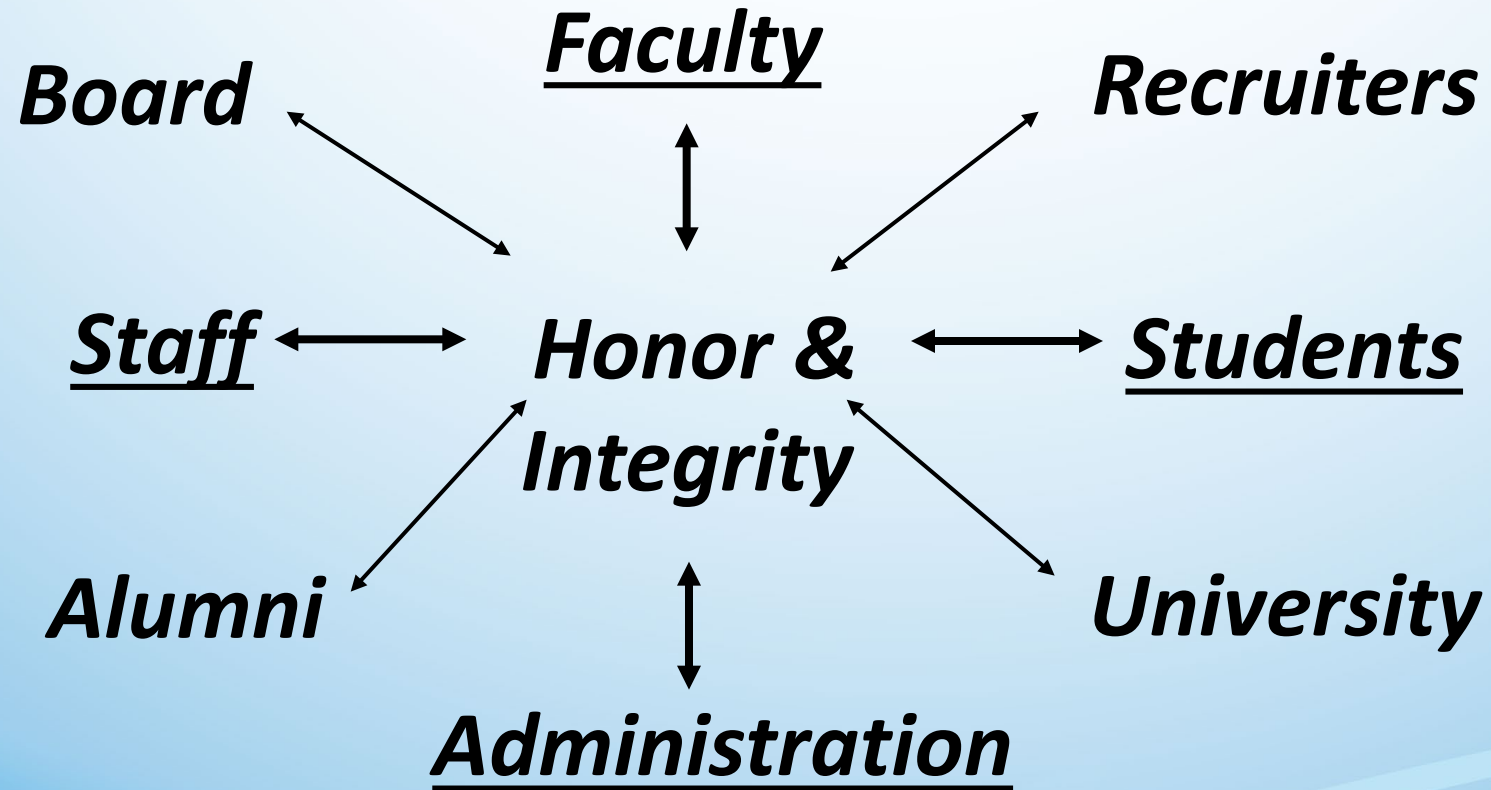
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Sybille Sachs, University of Applied Sciences Zurich

Evolution of the Ethics Program at Smeal

- Board Involvement & Dean Transition/Support
- MBA Students & Faculty (pilot program)
- Undergraduate Students & Faculty
- Leadership Integrity Director
- Honor and Integrity Program Office & Dean Transition
- Staff, Alumni, & Recruiters
- Continues to evolve...

Stakeholder Involvement



Inspired by Treviño, L. K. & Nelson, K. A. (2021). Managing business ethics: Straight talk about how to do it right. Eighth edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Examples

Formal Systems

- *Dean*
- *Admissions app.*
- *Honor Code*
- *Orientation programs*
- *Student Evaluations of Teaching*
- *University Hotline*
- *The Dean is In*

Informal Systems

- *Award recipients*
- *1st day of class “talk”*
- *Honor Code signing*
- *Honor Code story*
- *Building signage*

Assessment Mechanisms

- ✓ University-wide Values & Culture Survey (2x)
- ✓ College-wide Ethical Culture Survey
- ✓ Ethical Culture Focus Groups
- ✓ College-wide Disclosure Notices
- ✓ Honor & Integrity Dashboard
- ✓ Honor & Integrity Program = Resource

Challenges of Sustaining a Culture of Honor & Integrity

- High turnover
- Slow process
- Ongoing care and attention

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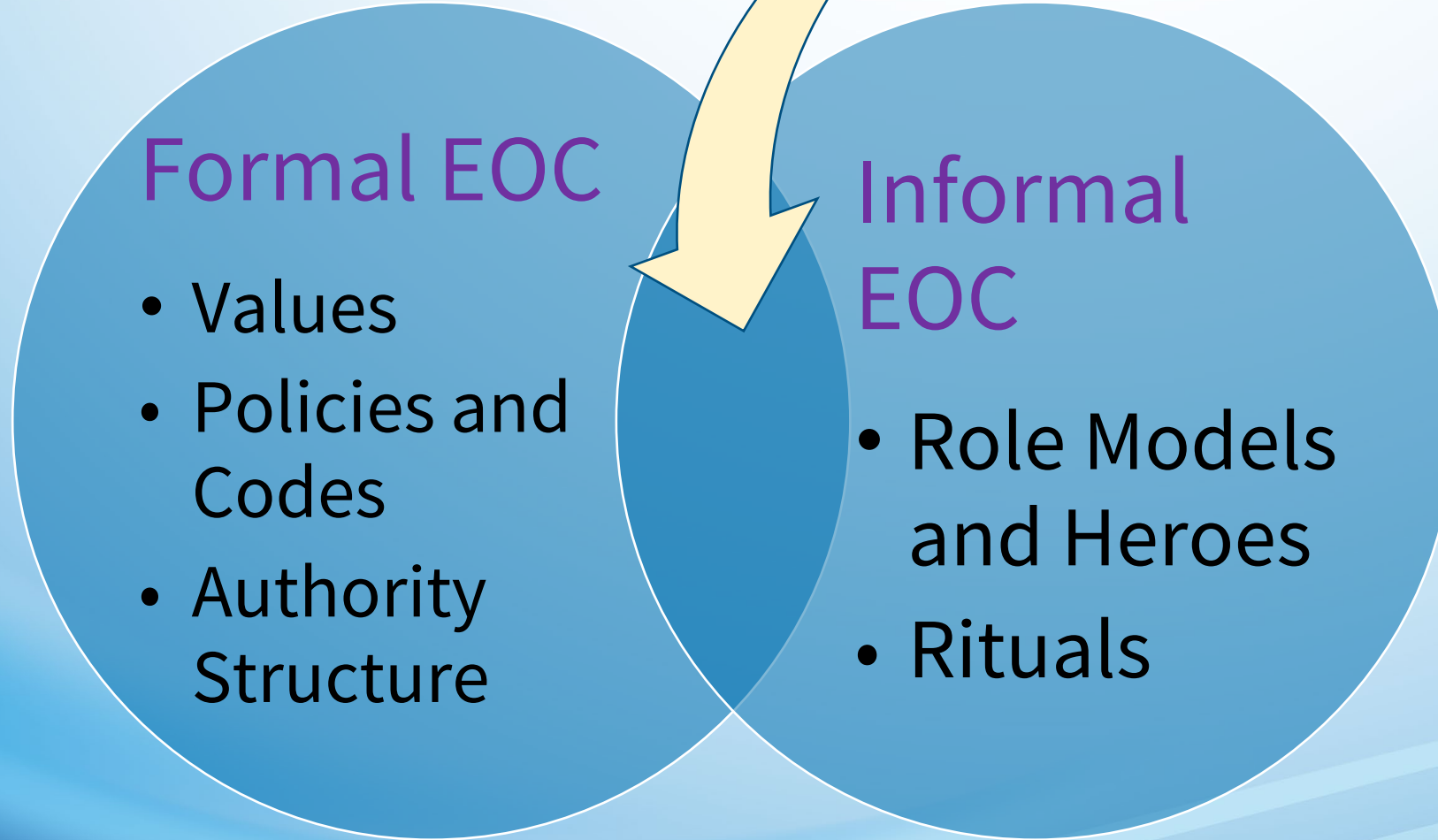
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EOCs in our Scholarly Journals: Lessons from Journal Editors



- Orientation/Training Program
- Performance Management
- Decision Processes
- Norms
- Language



Culture Shapes Practice between Formal & Informal

Orientation/Training

- Technical in nature
- Onboarding with current EIC varies
- No lag time: Authors are waiting!

Unnecessary OJT and mistakes that matter
Liability of foreignness

Performance Management

- Who reviews the editors? [Lund Dean & Forray, 2019, JME]
- Technical in nature
- Complaint-based; no news is good news

Metrics, not behavior
“The black box” of editorship

Decision Processes

- Gatekeeping takes many forms
- Power & information asymmetry
- COI & Friends

Publication decisions have *inherent* ethical aspects

Norms

- Plagiarism screening
- Outreach resources and priorities
- Developmental or summative focus

Potential ethical issues dependent on interpretation or preference

Language

- Accurate and honest at the author's expense
- Global assessments
- Nonactionable feedback with declarative conclusions

Toxic, hostile or personalized language debilitates & paralyzes

“A key argument in Treviño and Nelson (2021) and Eury and Treviño (2019) is that the formal and informal ethics components must not work at cross-purposes.” [Lorraine]

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EOCs in Academic Associations: Lessons from the Academy of International Business *

- **Academic associations** such as AOM and AIB are member-benefit, professional associations of individuals who study, teach and conduct research in a particular discipline or field of study; the association brings them together to foster progress in the scholarly community.
- The technique of **autoethnography** (personal storytelling) can be used to assess the formal and informal components of an academic association's ethical organizational culture (EOC).
- Autoethnography uses the personal experiences of the author to fill in gaps in existing research by providing an insider's perspective, with the goal of providing particular, subjective knowledge that contributes to existing research.
- Autoethnography = “auto” (personal experience) + “ethno” (reflexivity or self-reflection) + “graphy” (analysis).
- In Eden (2024), I use autoethnography to study the EOC of AIB, drawing **research insights** for IB scholars and **practical policy insights** for journal editors, leaders and members of academic associations.
- The policy insights for leaders and members may also be applied to other types of organizations.

* See L. Eden. 2024. Virtuous Circles in the Academy: Insights from AIB's Ethical Organizational Culture. *Journal of International Business Policy*, Sept. doi.org/10.1057/s42214-024-00198-z.

Formal and Informal Components of an Ethical Organizational Culture *

- An organization's culture summarizes “how we do things here.”
- Its ethical organizational culture (EOC) “how we do things around here in relation to ethics”.
- An EOC consists of formal and informal ethical components.

Formal Components

- Executive Leadership
- Selection System
- Values
- Policies and Codes
- Orientation/Training Programs
- Performance Management
- Authority Structure
- Decision Processes

Informal Components

- Role Models
- Heroes
- Norms
- Rituals
- Myths
- Stories
- Language

* Eden (2024) based on Treviño and Nelson (2021: 202-203) and Eury and Treviño (2019: 489)

Table 2: Assessing AIB's Ethical Organizational Culture

Formal ethics components

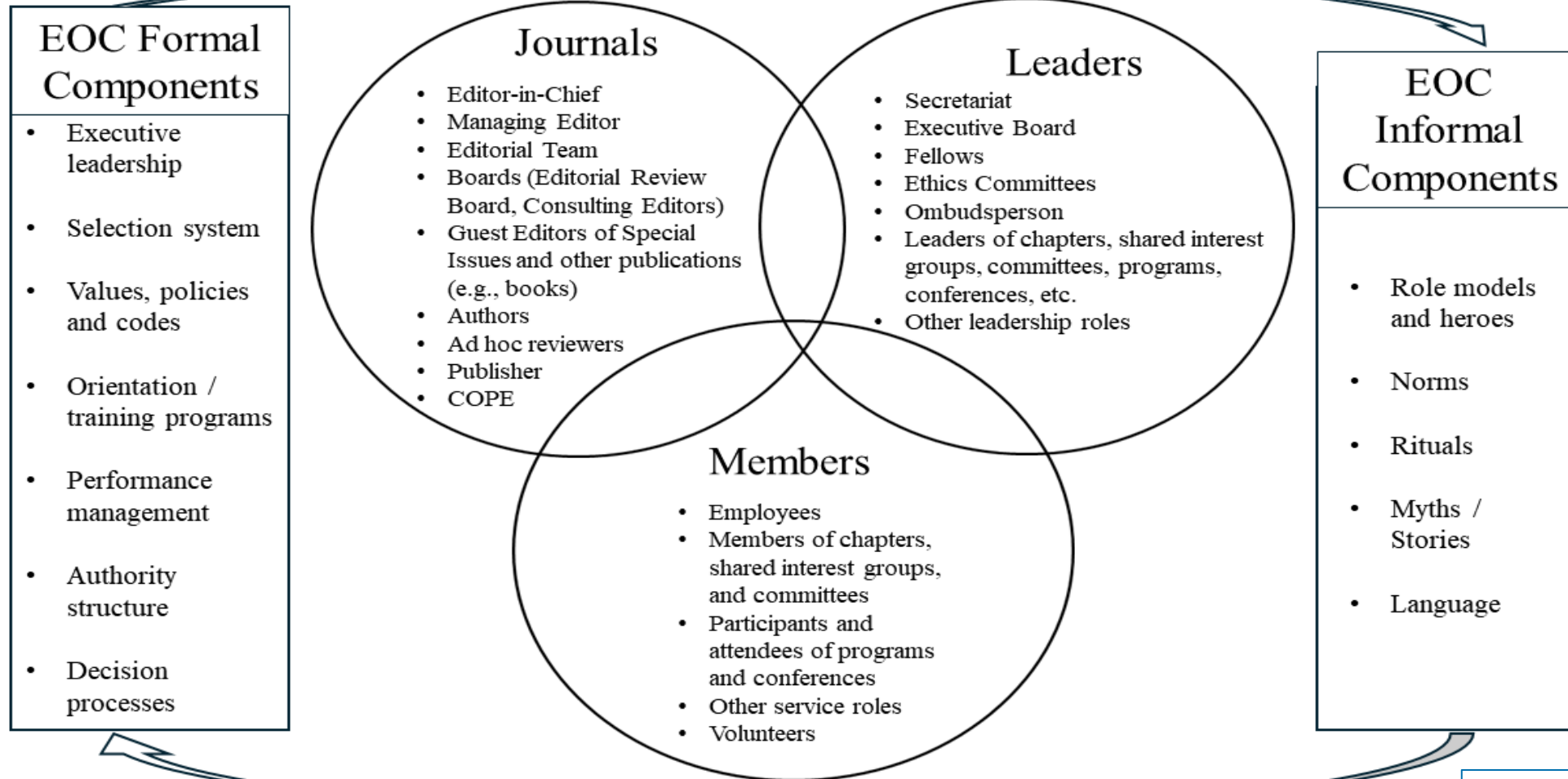
- **Leadership:** AIB Secretariat and Board are committed to promoting and communicating ethics in the organization. Each COE has its own leader responsible for the COE (journal, leaders, members). AIB Fellows in their constitution commit to being AIB's ambassadors and upholding AIB's MVV statement.
- **Selection system:** Commitment to AIB's MVV statement is considered important for nominating Executive Board positions.
- **Values, policies, codes:** AIB has a MVV statement. AIB leaders sign a COE form. Authors sign a COE statement when submitting manuscripts.
- **Orientation/training program:** AIB offers ethics training at the doctoral and junior faculty consortia and in journal paper development workshops during AIB and chapter conferences.
- **Performance management:** ERC has policies for reporting and handling ethical violations of Leaders and Members COEs as do the EICs for AIB Journals.
- **Authority structure:** Reporting lines for ethical violations are reasonably clear and vary based on form of ethical violation (e.g., journals vs members)
- **Decision processes:** Journal editors offer ethics training and conversations; these also take place in AIB's Shared Interest Groups (SIGs) and Chapters. The Research Methods SIG has RRBm links with opportunities for training in (and possibly awards for) research using ethical research methods.

Informal ethics components

- **Role models and heroes:** No evidence of ethics-based recognition awards.
- **Norms:** Ethical norms are discussed in EPC and journal editor presentations at consortia and paper development workshops.
- **Rituals:** AIB leaders sign a COE form but is more compliance based than a ritual.
- **Myths/stories:** An ethics@AIB website exists with some blog posts and ethics resources.
- **Language:** The overall strategy for communicating AIB's commitment to ethics is primarily through the Ethics@AIB webpage, which provides information on the EPC and ERC, the ethics codes, and various links.

Figure 1: Virtuous Circles Can Build an EOC in an Academic Association

An academic association's EOC can be viewed as **three interlocking “virtuous circles”** (journals, leaders and members), guided by the principles of academic integrity and the norms of ethical behavior.



Eden, 2024

Practical Policy Insights for Building a Strong EOC in an Academic Association

Journal Editors

1. Editors are ethical guardians.
2. An in-house Code of Ethics builds commitment.
3. Partnering with the journal's publisher and COPE provides benefits.
4. Journal editors can speak with one voice.
5. Journal editors can foster 2-way ethics conversations.
6. Managing Editors matter.
7. Adopt best practices for research integrity and ethics.

Members of Academic Associations

1. Ethics conversations must involve all members.
2. Ethics should involve both top-down and bottom-up initiatives.
3. The “four D’s (differences, diversities, distances, disparities) matter.
4. Ethics starts “here” (where is here?).
5. Ethics starts with the individual.

Leaders of Academic Associations

1. Build a coalition of the willing.
2. Ethical leadership starts at the top.
3. Executive/Managing Directors matter.
4. Create an Ethics Leader (Chief Ethics Officer) role with responsibility for the EOC.
5. Ethics committees are critical components of the EOC infrastructure.
6. Pay attention to both formal and informal EOC components
7. Ethics as an ongoing conversation.
8. An EOC audit is important for successful evidence-based policymaking.

Want to Learn More? Some Reading Materials

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Q & A and Wrap-up

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