Date: November 22, 2013

To: Cindy Sheehy or Supporting Advisors

From: Brad Bender

Subject: Ethics Assignment

In this past meeting we discussed ethics and code of conduct for students of Iowa State College of Engineering including ethics in the work place. We chose to examine the Columbia Space Shuttle and the oversights and failures that ultimately lead to the destruction of the shuttle. This discussion then lead into a discussion about issues surrounding the Electrical Engineering Department and cheating within the student body.

Let's fist begin with the "Code of Ethics" and its purpose in the work place as well as in the college of engineering. This charter, for lack of a better word, was created to allow for the proper credit to colleagues as well as making sure that no one's intellectual or physical property is stolen and will give everyone an even footing on what's considered dishonest and/or cheating. Without it, it could create a large grey area in what people would consider copying, plagiarizing, or outright stealing other peoples work. However, if I wasn't already aware of a code of ethics or wasn't sure if I was crossing a "line" then I would address it in my own right.

There is one golden rule that I try to follow if I feel that something may be a possible ethical issue. If I have to ask someone or consult a guide to see if it's unethical, then it probably is. It may seem straight forward and rather obvious, but that's because to me, it is. If I were in the work place and had my own, and in my opinion original idea, I would spend hours, on my own time if necessary, to make sure that I wasn't infringing on someone else's idea. If it did come from someone else or another company, then any improvement or change to that idea or item would receive the proper credit from where it came from. I would then also approach my legal department to make sure we weren't opening ourselves up to a possible lawsuit from my work. After addressing this issue of how I would handle an ethical issue in the work place, I then return back to our group discussion on our case study.

The case study we chose to address in our group was the Columbia shuttle disaster in 1981. This discussion although it started here quickly turned to a discussion about students of the College of Engineering, especially in the discipline of electrical, and the issue of cheating within the student body. We discussed several things while talking about this issue; everything from what we've seen, how the professors are handling it, and possible solutions to the problem. I personally have never noticed an issue of outright cheating that was discussed among my peers, but I have seen issues with communication between students in quizzes as well as professors making sure that students are properly separated deter issues of wandering eyes among peers. Most of my group members, however, have seen issues where professors have issued several verbal warnings to students caught cheating, but nothing was ever done about it. Ultimately from our discussion we decided to have students sign copies

of the Academic Code of Conduct and keep them on file each semester. This way a professor can reference each student's signature on the document if they are accused of cheating. This will also possible help in keeping students honest by at the very least, making them accountable for signing it.

Finally, I will reference the "Virtue Ethics" provided by the Blackboard link and choose the three of the six that most pertain to the discussion that we had. I chose these three because they feel like the most logical to what we discussed.

- **Integrity**
  Defined in the document as being of strong moral principle and having good judgment, this virtue is specifically related to a personal trait that I would never intentionally try to pass someone else's work as my own. It's not worth losing my professional reputation because I didn't do enough background research before starting a project.

- **Honesty**
  This one seems pretty straight forward. Mistakes will happen and when they do it's best to own up to them and learn from them. Most companies will value your honestly and intern will help with your long-standing reputation and integrity with them.

- **Self-Discipline**
  This virtue to me basically states that one should have the self-control, especially academically and during a test, to not cheat by looking on another peer's test or talking to someone during said test to gain an unfair advantage.

In closing, I feel we were very productive in our group meeting and our discussion of ethics. Dr. Ramamoorthy was very engaged and eager to hear what we had to say about the situations. As far as other virtues we could add to this topic, none come to mind at this time. However, I feel the three presented above are at the very least, a good start on this topic.