**Being an Ethical Job Candidate**

**1. What They Don’t Know Can’t Hurt Them**

Pedro struggled during his first two years in college. The best decision he made was to choose to focus on mechanical engineering. His GPA has risen steadily, and he now finds his studies and work, in the words of engineer Samuel Florman, “existentially pleasurable.” However, his early struggles have had their impact on his GPA which is currently at 2.9, just shy of the magic number 3.0. Now that he has started looking for work, he finds that the cut-off point for most job interviews in his area is 3.0. His GPA is just below that number, and his work of the last three years well above that level. Should he lie on job applications to get the interviews he so richly deserves? Does this violate the provision of full disclosure? Explain. Examine this in terms of the three ethics tests listed below.

Tests:

**Harm/Beneficence**: Does it do less harm and more good than the alternatives?

**Publicity Ownership**: Would I want to be publicly identified with this action? Would I want others to evaluate me as a person on the basis of this action?

**Reversibility**: Would I think this a good choice if I were among those affected by it? (Will this action treat stakeholders with respect?)

**Would fudging on the GPA violate the obligation of full disclosure?**

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**2. Too Much of a Good Thing**

Daniel has done exceptionally well in his studies in mechanical engineering. When his high GPA is combined with his broad work experiences and several glowing letters of recommendation, he turns into a highly sought-after candidate. Company A has recruited Daniel based on his internship work with them. So when they were the first to offer him a job, he immediately accepted. However, Company B has also offered him a job with much higher pay and more promising avenues of advancement. Daniel considers his situation. Since he has already done good work with Company A, he decides he deserves the better prospect. He accepts Company B’s job offer even though he has already verbally accepted A’s offer. He’s not too worried about this. “After all,” he tells a close friend, “my uncle’s a lawyer, and he tells me that my acceptance of the first offer is not legally binding.” What are the ethical issues associated with Daniel’s accepting Company B’s subsequent offer after he has already accepted A’s offer? Is there any harm in Daniel’s actions? Examine this act using the three ethics tests described below.

Tests:

**Harm/Beneficence**: Does it do less harm and more good than the alternatives?

**Publicity Ownership**: Would I want to be publicly identified with this action? Would I want others to evaluate me as a person on the basis of this action?

**Reversibility**: Would I think this a good choice if I were among those affected by it? (Will this action treat stakeholders with respect?)

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**3. Bring Your Friends**

Maria, a talented student in mechanical engineering has accepted an offer to work for a prestigious firm. Then she receives a call for an interview with firm X. She tells them that she has already accepted an offer from Y, but the caller says that doesn’t matter. “We want to interview you anyway so that we can document affirmative action compliance. In fact, if you have any friends who are similarly situated [i.e., women who come from minority groups] please give us their names. We will fly all of you to our central headquarters for interviews at our expense. It will be a good vacation. If Maria accepts the interview offer, does this satisfy the requirement of “serious intent?” Explain. Examine accepting the interview using the ethics tests described below.

**Does this satisfy the Serious Intent requirement?**

Tests:

**Harm/Beneficence**: Does it do less harm and more good than the alternatives?

**Publicity Ownership**: Would I want to be publicly identified with this action? Would I want others to evaluate me as a person on the basis of this action?

**Reversibility**: Would I think this a good choice if I were among those affected by it? (Will this action treat stakeholders with respect?)

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**4. Working for Mega Weapons**

Jorge is an unemployed computing professional. He is also a pacifist. Antonio, a friend, has a job prospect. Mega Weapons is looking for someone with Jorge’s expertise. Yes, he will be spending time developing the guidance systems for “smart bombs.” But the accurate, smart bombs will be less likely to go astray and kill innocent civilians. Jorge, however, remains unimpressed by this. “They’re still bombs,” he says, “and their primary purpose is to kill human beings. Besides, I would compromise myself by even accepting an interview. What if they ask me about my views on war? I would have to tell them the truth and then they would dismiss me as a candidate.” Jorge tells his wife about the job prospect. While she supports his pacifism, she tells him that she can’t continue indefinitely as a waitress; her job is preventing her from completing her college degree and keeps her away from the children. She asks Jorge if there is any way he can reconcile this job with his pacifism. What should Jorge do? Do engineers have the right of conscientious objection? How strong is this right? Examine the action of accepting the interview using the ethics tests described just below.

**Do engineers like Jorge have the right to Conscientious Objection?**

Tests:

**Harm/Beneficence**: Does it do less harm and more good than the alternatives?

**Publicity Ownership**: Would I want to be publicly identified with this action? Would I want others to evaluate me as a person on the basis of this action?

**Reversibility**: Would I think this a good choice if I were among those affected by it? (Will this action treat stakeholders with respect?)

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**5. We Protect Our Property**

You are leaving Computing Systems, Inc. to work for Compware, Inc,. a competitor. Before you leave Computing Systems, you are debriefed by the Personnel Office and a company lawyer on the proprietary information you have had access to while working with Computing Systems. They have itemized the information that you cannot divulge to or use in your work with Compware. It is your professional judgment that they are including information that is general knowledge and should not be considered confidential or proprietary. It is also information that would be useful—even essential—for what you will be doing in your new job. You feel that this confidentiality agreement is overly restrictive and would handicap you in your new job. Suppose you decide to accept this job anyway. Examine this action using the ethics tests given just below.

**What are an engineer’s duties touching on confidentiality? What are their employment rights? Do these conflict?**

Tests:

**Harm/Beneficence**: Does it do less harm and more good than the alternatives?

**Publicity Ownership**: Would I want to be publicly identified with this action? Would I want others to evaluate me as a person on the basis of this action?

**Reversibility**: Would I think this a good choice if I were among those affected by it? (Will this action treat stakeholders with respect?)

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**6. You Can’t Sue Us**

Marta, a student at an Hispanic university has just accepted a job with a major U.S. corporation. The job seems ideal. However, she notices that her employment contract includes a clause to the effect that she cannot sue the corporation for wrongful dismissal should she be fired or laid off. Instead, the dispute would be resolved by an outside arbitrator. The arbitrator’s decision would be binding on both parties. Moreover, the arbitrator would be chosen by the company. Marta suspects that this agreement represents a “hard line” stance that the company has taken on wrongful dismissal suits. Suppose she accepts these conditions anyway. Examine this action using the ethics tests described below.

**Do engineers have due process rights when it comes to their jobs?**

Tests:

**Harm/Beneficence**: Does it do less harm and more good than the alternatives?

**Publicity Ownership**: Would I want to be publicly identified with this action? Would I want others to evaluate me as a person on the basis of this action?

**Reversibility**: Would I think this a good choice if I were among those affected by it? (Will this action treat stakeholders with respect?)

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**7. Oh, By the Way…**

Pedro, who will graduate at the end of the current semester, is a student at a well known Hispanic serving university. He and two of his classmates are flown by Comp-Org for an interview at company headquarters. During a phone conversation with the company representative setting up the interview, he asks if there is anything he should do to prepare for the interview. The company representative answers, "No." Pedro receives a faxed itinerary of the interview--it looks routine. So Pedro and his classmates board the plane and arrive at their destination, the company headquarters. The company official who meets them at the airport tells them that the first item on the interview agenda is a drug test. When Pedro objects--"Why weren't we told about this before we agreed to the interview?"--he is told that if this is unacceptable to him, he can get right back on the plane because the interview is over for him. Examine this action on the part of Comp-Org using the ethics tests listed just below.

**Does this testing for drugs violate the candidates’ right to privacy?**

Tests:

**Harm/Beneficence**: Does it do less harm and more good than the alternatives?

**Publicity Ownership**: Would I want to be publicly identified with this action? Would I want others to evaluate me as a person on the basis of this action?

**Reversibility**: Would I think this a good choice if I were among those affected by it? (Will this action treat stakeholders with respect?)

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**8. Two Very Different Interviews**

A recent graduate from University X, Marta has a strong and successful interview with a representative from a local, respected company. She discussed her skills, experience, and asked several perceptive questions about working conditions, job responsibilities, and benefits. The interviewer, obviously impressed, asked Marta back for a second interview with his supervisor. The second interview followed a different course. The interviewer, an older man, did not ask her about her skills or experience. Instead he reminisced about his days as a college student. He talked about his children--what they were studying and their career plans. He mentioned his wife in passing. Then he told Marta that the people who do well in his company are hard workers. "The strongest person," he said, "will do whatever is necessary to survive in a harsh, competitive environment." Then he looked at her hands and asked if she was single and if she still lived with her parents. Examine his actions using the ethics tests described below.

**Is this second interviewer guilty of sexual harassment?**

Tests:

**Harm/Beneficence**: Does it do less harm and more good than the alternatives?

**Publicity Ownership**: Would I want to be publicly identified with this action? Would I want others to evaluate me as a person on the basis of this action?

**Reversibility**: Would I think this a good choice if I were among those affected by it? (Will this action treat stakeholders with respect?)