

Academy of
International Business

The Ethical Professor: Sharing some thoughts about ethics in the academy

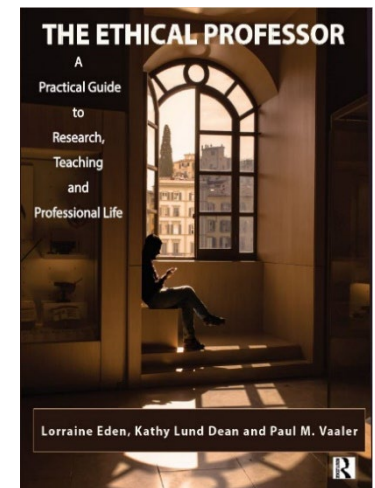
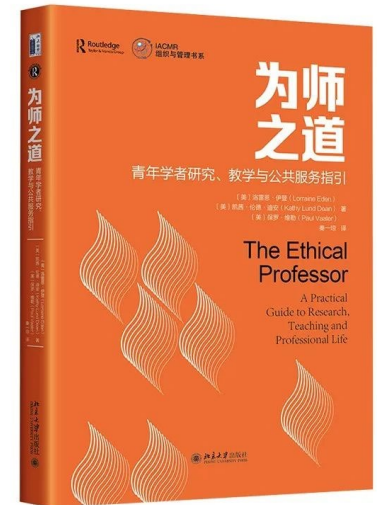
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Presentation to the AIB Asia Pacific Regional Chapter Conference
December 2022

Welcome and introduction

Hello! My name is Lorraine Eden and I'm delighted to be here participating virtually in the AIB Asia-Pacific Chapter's conference. I am Dean of the Fellows of the Academy of International Business, a former president of AIB, and a former editor-in-chief of the *Journal of International Business Studies*, the premier publication of the Academy of International Business.

I have been invited to provide a brief introduction to my book, ***The Ethical Professor: A Practical Guide to Research, Teaching and Professional Life***, coauthored by Kathy Lund Dean, Paul Vaaler and myself. Our book was originally published in English by Routledge and has been translated into Chinese and published by Peking University Press in July 2022. The book is now available in both English and Chinese editions.



Background

I would like to share with you a little about our goals for writing *The Ethical Professor* and the audience we hoped to reach with our book.

My primary interest has been in **research ethics**. I have been interested in research ethics as long as I've been a journal editor, now more than 20 years. I started worrying about research ethics when I read papers submitted for review where it looked to me as if the author may have engaged in unethical behavior, typically plagiarism or self-plagiarism. As an editor, the possibility that a researcher may have engaged in unethical behavior was disconcerting. No one wants to accuse an author of behaving badly! I started to research the question “**Why do scientists behave badly?**” and wrote my first JIBS editorial on this topic in 2010.

Letter from the Editor-in-Chief: Scientists behaving badly, *Journal of International Business Studies*, 41: 561–566 (2010). <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/jibs.2010.9>

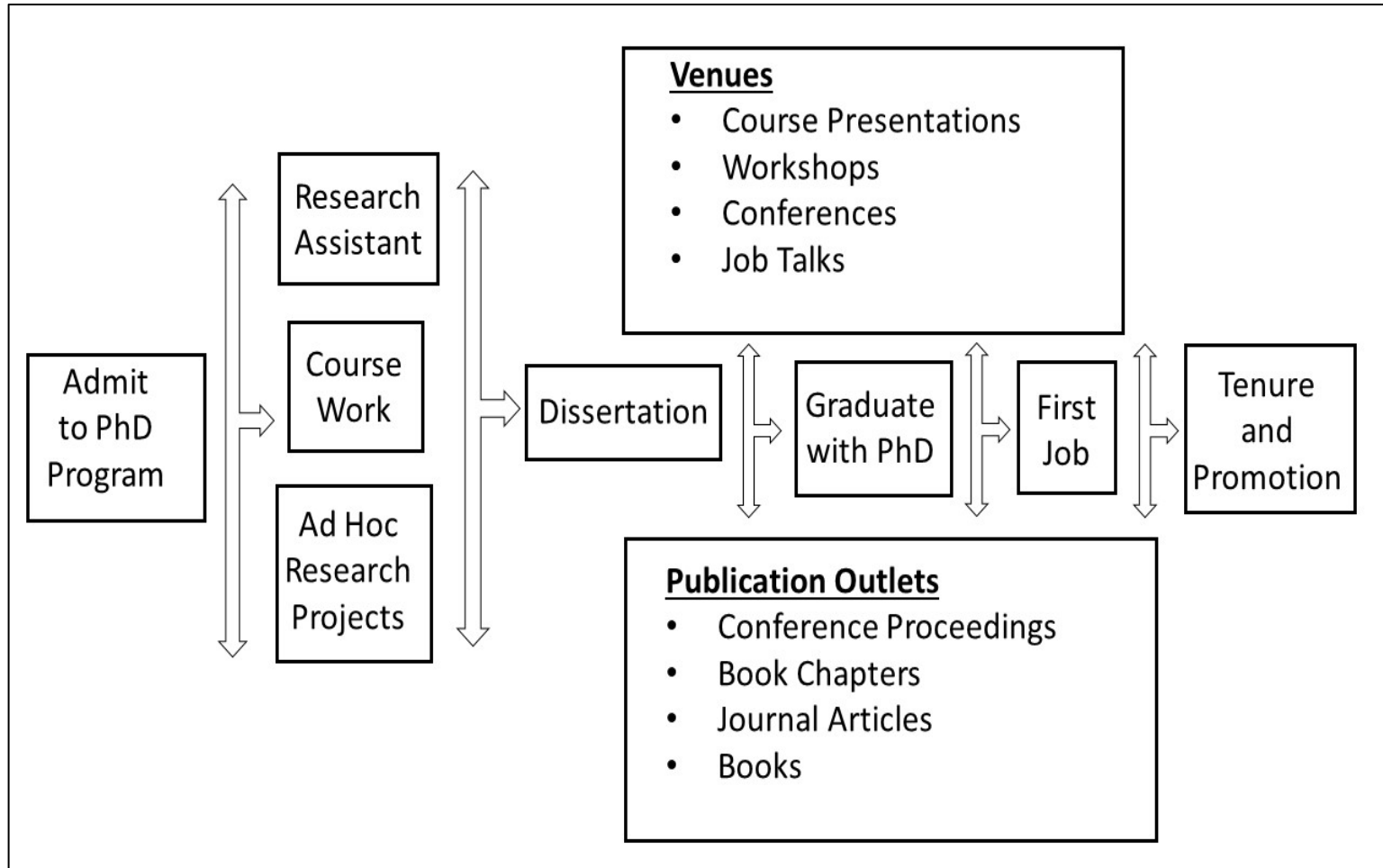
In 2011, I proposed a “Strategic Doing” project to the Academy of Management, which was accepted and led to the creation of *The Ethicist Blog*. Kathy, Paul and I were the blog's co-authors from 2011 through 2015. The Ethical Professor emerged from that blog. You can read some of our blog posts by clicking [here](#). Each of us was the lead author of one section of the blog, with the others offering comments: Research (Lorraine), Teaching (Kathy) and Professional Life (Paul).

Book organization

The Ethical Professor is organized in the same three sections as *The Ethicist Blog*, with updated versions of our earlier articles plus new chapters. Each section has multiple chapters that describe specific ethical dilemmas and provide examples, mini-cases, and real scenarios for readers to think about and discuss.

- The Research section discusses common ethical problems such as number and order of coauthors and “slicing and dicing” of research projects.
- The Teaching section shares common dilemmas as they relate to professors working with students, such as social media, letters of reference and student evaluations.
- The Professional Life section is a broad grab bag of issues that include “everything else”, such as institutional politics and engaging with external stakeholders.

I'd like to talk a bit about the **Ethics in Research** section, which is the area I know best. In that section, we argue that the research lifecycle for new entrants to academia provides many opportunities but also pitfalls for the unwary. Here is a general picture of the research cycle from entrance to a PhD program through tenure and promotion as a fulltime professor.



I believe that life in the academy generates a variety of **ethical pitfalls in research** that can derail plans for advancement and career success, which can be traced to three different hazards to which doctoral students and junior faculty are especially susceptible:

1. **Unfamiliarity hazards**: the costs of being new entrants and not knowing the rules of the game. Unfamiliarity hazards arise from the **liability of newness**. Not knowing the rules of the game leads to mistakes and lower performance. Doctoral students and junior faculty typically have little research experience, are unfamiliar with rules of the game, and are apprentices in a new institutional environment.
2. **Relational hazards**: where new entrants depend on senior professors for resources and legitimacy. Relational hazards arise from the **liability of resource dependence**, from being dependent on one's trading partners. Resource dependence generates vulnerability, which encourages opportunistic behavior (the powerful taking advantage of the weak). PhD students and untenured faculty are at a power disadvantage relative to tenured faculty and are dependent on them for resources. Juniors face pressures to perform and publish quickly (tenure clock). This vulnerability can be exploited by opportunistic senior faculty who know new entrants are unlikely to be whistle blowers.
3. **Discriminatory hazards** where new entrants may face stereotyping and discriminatory behaviors. Discriminatory hazards arise from the **liability of outsidersness**, from being an outsider and not a member of the group. Being an outsider closes doors to opportunities and encourages stereotyping and discriminatory behaviors. PhD students and junior faculty are outsiders to academia, seeking acceptance and respect. They do not have tenure or security. Discriminatory hazards can be higher for minorities (color, ethnicity, gender, etc.).

This was the **key goal behind our writing *The Ethical Professor***: to make these invisible but consequential ethical pitfalls -- which could derail a career in the academy – more transparent and open for discussion and shared resolution. Helping others understand these hazards and the likely ethical dilemmas they generate would better prepare doctoral students and junior faculty for successful careers in the academic world.

To explain this in a bit more detail, let me talk about research, the first section of our book. The **types of unethical behaviors in research** fall into three main categories:

1. Academic misconduct
2. Questionable research practices
3. Breaking the implicit rules of the game

I view the first two categories of unethical behaviors (academic misconduct and QRPs) to be “hard” ethical mistakes whereas the third category (breaking the “unwritten or invisible rules of the game”) includes “soft” ethical mistakes. In addition, international norms are clearer for the “hard” rules, which tend to be written down, but less so for “soft” rules, which are often not codified and can vary across departments, universities, and countries.

Scientists behaving badly #1: Academic dishonesty

Category #1: Engaging in academic misconduct/dishonesty (FFPs)

- Academic misconduct happens when researchers do not tell the truth in their scientific communications, by engaging in:
 - **Falsification** – manipulating or distorting data or results
 - **Fabrication** – inventing data or cases
 - **Plagiarism** – copying without attribution



Consequences of FFP

FFP corrupts the research process and damages public trust in scientific literature → doubts re findings → treatment as “fake news”.

FFP, if discovered, can also have serious negative consequences for the researchers:

- Retraction of the published work – see <http://retractionwatch.org>
- Financial and reputation costs
- Negative spillover costs on one’s colleagues, coauthors and students

Scientists behaving badly #2: QRPs

Category #2: Questionable research practices (QRPs)

- QRPs are the gray area between academic integrity (best practices) and academic misconduct (dishonesty) → SLOPPY SCIENCE!
- **Six forms of QRPs**
 - HARKing (hypothesizing after the facts are known)
 - Selectively reporting hypotheses
 - Excluding data post hoc
 - Selectively including control variables
 - Falsifying data
 - Poor reporting of p values.
- QRPs can happen at any research stage. QRPs may be harder to catch than FFPs but can have the same negative consequences as FFP:
 - Correction or retraction of the published work
 - Financial and reputation costs (being viewed as a “sloppy scientist”)
 - Negative spillover costs on one’s colleagues, coauthors and students

Scientists behaving badly #3: Breaking the rules of the game

Category #3: Not following the implicit rules of the game

In addition to FFP and QRPs, there are a wide variety of implicit and unwritten “rules of the game” that can lead to scientists behaving badly. These rules vary across disciplines, countries and organizations.

Examples include:

Authorship

- Who should be included (or excluded) as a co-author on a paper
- What is the appropriate order of authors

Slicing and dicing

- How to “cut up” a research project into separate publishable papers
- Whether it is OK to publish the same material in more than one publication outlet

Relationships with co-authors

- What to do if a co-author engages in QRP or FFP?
- Quid pro quo relationships

Presentation of research

- Is it OK to present the same research at more than one conference?
- The “rule of four” or “rule of three” at a conference

Publication stage

- Double blind review
- Does it matter if my Google Scholar page is wrong?

Why do scientists behave badly?

Reasons given for why scientists engage in bad behaviours include:

- Time pressure for publishing (short timeline to tenure)
- Financial and professional incentives (promotion, cash amounts for A journal publications, reduced teaching load)
- Desire for status (at journals or in academies)

- In my JIBS 2010 editorial, *Scientists Behaving Badly*, I argued that the three components of the fraud triangle (motivation, opportunity and rationalization) could provide an explanation.
- In our book *The Ethical Professor*, I argued that the group most likely to fall into the ethical pitfalls are new entrants to academia – doctoral students and junior faculty. And the reasons why they are more likely to engage in unethical practices arise from the hazards of unfamiliarity, resource dependence and discrimination.

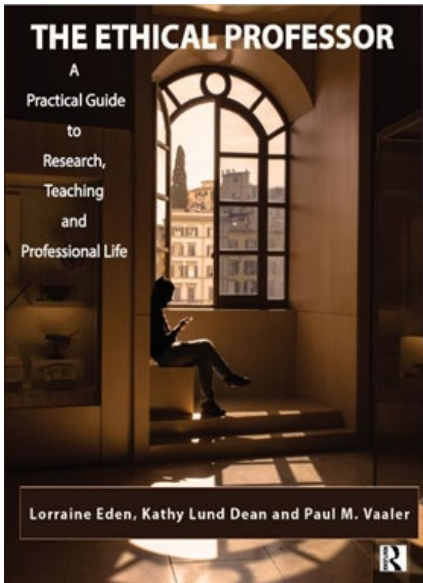
How can we avoid these ethical pitfalls?

- Learn and use the best and most current practices in qualitative and quantitative research methods
- Study and follow AIB's Codes of Ethics
 - COE for AIB Members
 - COE for AIB Leaders
 - COE for AIB Journals
- Read broadly about ethics in academia
- Participate in workshops on ethics (like this one!)
- Check out my ethics in the academy page at:
<http://www.voxprof.com/eden/eden-ethics.html>

Ethics workshops

Kathy, Paul and I have held multiple “Ethics in Academia” workshops, using chapters in our book to motivate the group discussions. These workshops have been filled with fascinating conversations - regardless of how long the participants have been in academia - brand new PhD students right through chaired professors.

I would therefore like to end this presentation with an invitation for YOU connect with YOUR colleagues. Hold your own “Ethics in Academia” workshop in your department or university and use our book to motivate the discussions.



Thank you for listening!

To share comments or ask questions, you can reach me at Lorraine Eden, leden@tamu.edu

The Ethical Professor
(Routledge, 2018; Peking University Press, 2022)

- https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/I2hzH5P_FgRn5o9MZgeDTg
(Chinese version)
- <https://www.routledge.com/The-Ethical-Professor-A-Practical-Guide-to-Research-Teaching-and-Professional/Eden-Dean-Vaaler/p/book/9781138485983>
(English version)

