Comparing Code Of Ethics By Michelfelder, Bauer, And Luegenbeihl

Do you agree with Luegenbeihl or Michelfelder or Bauer?

In the previous paper, I determined that I agreed most with the ideology that Michelfelder had about the code of ethics. In the grand scheme of the article, the article came down to one question for the reader. If the codes of ethics are supposed to protect the public, should that not include the safety for the environment as well? Another way to ask this question is, does sustainability or environmental just include social justice? Or is it the other way around. Michelfelder believed that some of the top engineering organizes focused more on the production and progress of engineering and less on the impact or protection of environmental sustainability. She defined sustainable development in the article as, "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (241). Even though she defined sustainable development, she says that all professions have or make their own interpretations for what sustainable development is. In the article Michelfelder sees that two problems are affecting the design process for incorporating sustainability. The first problem that was described was that social and economic impacts are not considered during production. Secondly, sub populations are also not considered during production. I think the main point that Michelfelder brought as a solution to the issue of the code of ethics was education undergraduate students on how to incorporate the sustainable development topic.

I chose to side with Michelfelder because I think when it comes to justice, if you were to center a decision on environmental justice, social justice would be incorporated into the decision. An example that comes to mind is about the disposal of waste products. You about the improper ways that which companies sometimes dispose of their waste products and the chemicals or decomposition of material can get into soil or water ways. This corruption or contamination of water or soil can get back to people or communities that inhabit the area or use those public spaces. My thought is that if the engineering ethic codes to solve that issue targets how companies disposed of their waste, it would be like killing two birds with one stone. The ethic codes would be helping the companies properly take care of the waste that they produce and in turn, that also protects the communities that may have been using that water or soil that had the potential of becoming contaminated. In my mind, this example illustrates how even though the target was environmental protection, it in fact, hit on social protection as well. In her article she gives some tips or guidelines that one should follow that help keep the codes in focus for sustainable development. One suggests that engineers should be committed to improving their

communities. Another is whether or not the engineer believes another organization isn't following rules or is in some sort of violation. So it helps organizations check one another for honesty. There are a total of five guidelines that she mentions to keep the scope of her vision for environmental justice. I also like Michelfelders solution to focus on more early education into the undergraduate programs for engineering. As an engineering student myself, I have never had a course on engineering ethics, social justice, or environmental justice. If the education system were to have some courses to educate on the importance on sustainability and social justice, then I think it wouldn't be as much as a obvious issue. If we were to start educating students now, I think that would prove to be impactful as older engineers begin to retire and new engineers with sustainability backgrounds come in to change the scene. Currently in the profession there just isn't enough awareness or enough evidence for people to care about the issue.

With the current system for the code of ethics, I think that the codes are pointless. There is just no enforcement in the matter. Companies can just find loop holes or employees that don't particularly care about the environment or the public. Even if they are caught, the punishments are not severe enough for companies to take any measures to correct their habits. Luegenbiehl's guidelines for the engineering code of ethics are very poorly designed as well. Guidelines mean that they are sort of like suggestions. There is nothing enforcing his guidelines on to people who use the code of ethics. It relies to much on a honor code or honor system to become effective in reality. Now if there was some way to have a third party company or system that would help enforce these rules or hand out punishments, then it might be another story. I do not think that the replacement of the code of ethics for a system that relies on people to use guidelines for making decisions would be a suitable solution. A big issue that comes to mind with guidelines is that they are not all black and white. Rules or codes that you have to follow can be pretty rigid. If the rules or codes were to get replaced, then guidelines can potentially be up for interpretation from the reader or vague. Guidelines may differ from codes in that they can be more flexible or more changeable from place to place. Maybe some company's guidelines are more robust than other, but there would be a big issue there in that all professions wouldn't have to follow the same guidelines. I think that in the system for the code of ethics there is a lack of will to use the codes. There just isn't enough punishment or enforcement to take the codes seriously enough.