

The University of We: Value-Sensitive Design for an Ethical University

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ABSTRACT. In this article, the authors propose the ethical university may be manifested as the *University of We*: a university of character and care. We define the ethical university as a “value-sensitive design” that encapsulates and promotes certain virtues, values, habits of mind and practices while prohibiting and suppressing others. By combining value-sensitive design, with Aristotelian *phronēsis*, *care ethics* and the *ethical demand* of K.E. Løgstrup, we argue that “the ethical system” of the university goes above and beyond mere regulations, management, administrative law or codes of conduct. Such rule-structures only constitute “the surface layer” of what we refer to as *the ethical university*, and do not bear the ethical weight of the implicit or deeper layers of character, care, and the demand from the other.

Keywords: university; ethics; Value-Sensitive Design; *phronēsis*; Løgstrup; care ethics

Introduction: The Ethical University?

The university is a complex system entangled with a manifold of professional, cultural, political, and societal practices and spaces. This system can assume a multitude of forms depending on how the university is conceptualised. In *Imagining the University* (2013), Ronald Barnett identifies 112 such forms as they are described in higher education research literature and points towards how they among other things implicate certain ethics. We would argue that for the university to manifest itself in the image of an *ethical being*, it – and its diverse inhabitants (researchers, teachers, students, etc.) – need to be closely connected through the

deeper ethical structures and virtues of the university. To distinguish between the surface layer and the deeper structures of the university as an ethical system, we draw on Shulman's (2005) and Horn's (2013) work on signature pedagogies to consider the university system as having an *ethical signature*. The suggestion is, that like professions (Shulman, 2005) and disciplines (Horn, 2013), universities can have certain ways of practicing which are intrinsic to the ethics and habits of thoughts within the university system.

Shulman (2005) distinguishes in his *Signature Pedagogies in the Professions* between surface layer, deep layer and implicit layer as dimensions of a system. Translating these dimensions to the university as an ethical system, we may recognise the surface layer as the concrete operational acts (rules, policies, documents, regulations, etc.) of ethics, the deep layer as the composition and structure of ethical practice, while *the implicit layer* consists of the virtues, dispositions and inner being of the system and its character and relations. Together, the three dimensions organise the fundamental ways in which the inhabitants of the university become and are ethical beings. In this way, signature ethics – like signature pedagogies – come to define what counts as ethics in a particular system and what characterises thinking, doing and being as ethical. As Shulman (2005, p. 56) states, the signature of a certain profession (or ethical system) comes together to create the habits of the mind (thinking), the habits of the hand (doing) and the habits of the heart (being).

When closely and coherently connected, the layers of ethics allow the inhabitants within the system to act ethically and make ethical judgments when in states of uncertainty. Through this, the university has the possibility of an ethics of formation. Conversely, when the university is unable to create intimate connections between the implicit and deep layers and the surface layer it runs the risk of compromised work (Gardner, 2005); practice in which the fundamental ethical principles of the academic profession are violated. Consequently, the ethical system of the university is compromised whenever the implicit or deep layers are unduly subordinated or oppressed by the surface layer. As such, compromised ethical work might arise when there is a tension between acting in the service of “the rules of the system” and acting in a manner that upholds the “virtues of academic practice” (Nixon, 2008). The university must, as a responsible ethical system, ensure that the implicit and deeper layers of ethical academic practice can be observed on the surface layer, and that it provides academics with the capabilities to deal with tensions between the layers when they occur. In the cases where there are ruptures or conflicts in the system, the university is obliged to make adequate changes in its signature, and modify its system accordingly.

In this article, we aim to bring to light some of the deeper ethical structures of university systems through combining Aristotelian ethics and the concept of *phronēsis* with Løgstrup's ethical demand and the field of care ethics. Based on this, each of the three main sections of the article addresses one of the following aspects: 1) the ethical character of the university; 2) the university as subject to

ethical concern in relation to the people it contains and impacts; 3) the university as practicing ethical relationships. Together they form what Jon Nixon (2008, p. 31) calls the moral bases of academic practice, which

must be a profession of *values* – recognising, respecting, and critically engaging with the often conflicting values of a radical pluralist society. Universities must be seen, therefore, not only as civic spaces and as places for learning, but as deliberative spaces in which people work towards shared understanding, common purposes, and concerted action from a position of difference and divergence.

We propose that the intimate intertwining and deep interdependence of the implicit, deeper and surface layers of university systems is what constitutes a decent institution. Initially, we build on Nixon’s *The Virtuous University* (2008), and define decent institutions as:

- Institutions that are respectful, have an ethical character and intentionally express wisdom and virtuosity (*phronēsis*).
- Institutions that are merciful, show concern for the other and are empathic and decent towards its members (ethical demand).
- Institutions that are dialogic, uphold reciprocal relations of care and are just in their commitment to combat social inequality (care ethics).

The questions then become: How to bring to light unethical elements in the implicit, deep and surface layers of the university system? How to (re)configure university systems so they (better) integrate and express ethics in the implicit, deep and surface layers of their structure? In other words, how do we make manifest a university where academic professionalism is fueled by ethical character, care and relations rather than regulations and rule-book ethics? How do we foster a professionalisation based not on doing what one is “supposed to do,” but rather on asking why one does it (character), who benefits from it (others), and how it might foster enduring relations between the other and the self?

In this article, we take on the notion of creating a more “virtuous university” through critically reflecting on the potentials of connecting and integrating three different ethical stances – *phronēsis*, the ethical demand, and care ethics – to form a value sensitive ethical system between character, care and demand. To this end, we draw on the fields of *Value-Sensitive Design* and *Values in Design* as described below, to initially frame these deeper layers of the ethical system before describing them in depth.

Value-Sensitive Design for the Ethical University

Value-Sensitive Design (VSD) is a framework adopted and used within a range of disciplines that acknowledges that values are embedded within systems,

technologies, institutions, etc., either reflectively and intentionally or unconsciously and unintentionally (Knobel & Bowker, 2011). VSD stresses that systems could be designed in compliance with ethical ideals and is a design approach particularly focused on the moral and ethical dimensions of system design:

Value-Sensitive Design is a way of engaging ICT [and systems] that aims at making moral values part of technological design, research and development. It assumes that human values, norms, moral considerations can be imparted to the things we make and use and it construes information technology (and other technologies for that matter) as a formidable force which can be used to make the world a better place, especially when we take the trouble of reflecting on its ethical aspects in advance. (van den Hoven, 2007, p. 67)

In the wake of VSD, the design community has recently to a large extent become committed to ethical design practices, and scholars and designers are increasingly becoming engaged in capturing and drawing up what ethical considerations and principles should safeguard the design of systems (Chivukula, Gray, & Brier, 2019). The community proposes the integration of ethics into everyday design and system practices and that designers take up the position of “ethicist” through engaging the responsible persons of a system in ethical decision-making that include uncovering relevant values, scrutinizing the values, and working towards translating these values into system content.

Overall, VSD is an approach to the design of (un)ethical systems that stresses how systems can be viewed as “constitutive ethics” that partly impacts the ethics of direct and indirect stakeholders – including the ethics of the university to which it is applied (see Chivukula, Gray, & Brier, 2019). As such, the university system, and its surface, deep and implicit layers, shape the (un)ethical discourses, practices, experiences, interactions and institutions in important ways (van de Hoven, 2007, p. 68). Consequently, if the virtuous university is to be more than an empty promise, its ethics and values will have to be expressed in the surface, deep and implicit layers of its system, architecture and functionality. To achieve such internal coherence, van de Hoven (2007, p. 70) points to VSD as it

provides us with the opportunity to deal with these ethical issues in a new and fresh way: by “front-loading ethics” and by means of the pro-active integration of ethical reflection in the stage of design of architectures, requirements, specifications, standards, protocols, incentive structures, and institutional arrangements.

The proposition of “having value” can be linked to economic or ideological views while the proposition of “being of value” can be linked to ethical or human worth – that is, what the university as a system brings to its users in regards to “being of value.” The framework of value-sensitive design has three dimensions: *conceptual*, *empirical* and *technical* investigations (Friedman, Kahn, & Borning, 2002;

Albrechtslund, 2007; Borning & Muller, 2012). These three dimensions are integrated and work together within the value-sensitive design approach:

- *Conceptual investigations* denote philosophically informed analyses of the central constructs and issues under investigation. Questions include: How are values supported or diminished by particular institutional systems? Who is affected? How should we engage in trade-offs among competing values in the system, implementation and use of the system?
- *Empirical investigations* involve social-scientific investigations on the understandings, contexts, and experiences of the people affected by the system.
- *Technical investigations* involve analyzing current systems and designs to assess how well they support particular values, and, conversely, identifying values, and then identifying and/or developing systems and designs that can support these values.

Norbert Wiener, founder of cybernetics, pointed out that people developing systems have an ethical responsibility to account for likely positive and negative consequences and effects of that system (Wiener, 1948, p. 40). Drawing from VSD methodology,

the stakeholder criteria emphasizes the range of effects of a technology [or system], both on those who are in direct contact with a technology (direct stakeholders), and on those who might not be direct users, but whose lives are nevertheless affected by various interactions around the technology (indirect stakeholders). (Nathan et al., 2008, p. 3)

The relationship between the value-laden system and stakeholders can take different forms: Designers or people in charge of the system can integrate their own intentions, values and virtues into the system, making them endogenous. This then impacts, shapes or determines the experience, actions and behaviors of people coming in contact with it. The context, culture or indirect stakeholders surrounding the system can impact the system and its use, changing the underlying intentions, values and ethics, so that the values of the system are more or less exogenous. Finally, the values, virtues and ethics can emerge from the reciprocal interactional connection between system and direct stakeholders, creating a dialogic two-way relationship. Considering the university as a system then, its ethics can relate to an endogenous value-system or inner character of the system, to an exogenous value-system or the other's impact on the system, or to a reciprocal value-system or the ethical dialogue between the two.

However, no matter the value-system, designers as well as everyone responsible for the system, need to be aware and take responsibility of the system, its values and ethics as well as be able to reflectively and critically address and negotiate the role that values play in the system and how it impacts the direct and indirect stakeholders as well as the system itself. To become and remain sensitive to values, the university as a system needs to be aware of its own values, as well as the values

of its stakeholders. According to Hofstede (2001), values are the deepest manifestation of a culture or system, and the core of a system's ethics will be formed by values. As such, the values are the most stable parts of a culture or system. In this way, Value-Sensitive Design highlights the fact that a system is never value-neutral.

The consequence of all this is, that rather than implementing “ethics as rules or regulations” into a system or making sure that no direct stakeholders are violating the “instrumental ethics” of the system, the responsible parties must seek to understand and proactively take into account the ways in which the system influences the human worth and values of its direct and indirect stakeholders. The aim must be that the university, as an ethical system, contribute to better academic practice (in the deeper structural understanding of this), and thus making the design of university systems a matter of politics (Knowles & Davis, 2016).

Value-Sensitive Design is based on the premise that the design of systems should fundamentally be grounded in human dignity and human rights (Buchanan, 2001). According to Buchanan this marks a shift in the principles of the design of systems:

we are better able to discuss the principles of the various methods that are employed in design thinking than the first principles of design, the principles on which our work is ultimately grounded and justified. The evidence of this is the great difficulty we have in discussing the ethical and political implications of design [...] The implications of the idea that design is grounded in human dignity and human rights are enormous, and they deserve careful exploration. (Buchanan, 2001, pp. 36–37)

Importantly, the principle for human dignity and human rights cannot, according to Buchanan (2001), be reduced to usability, user experience, user rights or user requirements. Rather, they relate to human values and human worth.

To understand this deeper structure of ethical systems, Schwartz's (2012) theory of basic values and value framework might be helpful in underpinning the basic requirements of the university as a value-sensitive design. Overall, Schwartz (2012) finds a “value hierarchy” cutting across cultures, societies and contexts regarding the importance of some values over others. Here, benevolence (preserving and enhancing welfare, concern for the welfare of others, sense of belonging, cooperative and supportive social relations), universalism (tolerance, understanding and protection of all, social justice) and self-direction (independent thought and action, autonomy and independence) are “universally” ranked the most important to humans while power (social status and recognition, authority, wealth, dominant position) and stimulation (excitement, novelty, challenge in life) are “universally” ranked the least important. According to Schwartz:

Seeking success for self tends to obstruct the actions aimed at enhancing the welfare of others who needs one's help [...] the] dimension contrasts “*self-enhancement*” and “*self-transcendence*” values. This dimension

captures the conflict between values that emphasize concern for the welfare and interest of others (universalism, benevolence) and values that emphasize the pursuit of one's own interests and relative success and dominance over others (power, achievement). (Schwartz, 2012, p. 8)

(Re)configuring the university as an ethical system based on the direct and indirect stakeholders' values requires a system that has benevolence and universalism at its core while displacing power and stimulation. Creating a university system that is built upon "self-enhancement" rather than "self-transcendence" will also have the effect of scaffolding and promoting an academic culture and a system ethics manifested through "anxiety-based values" rather than "anxiety-free values," "prevention of loss goals" rather than "promotion of gain goals" and "self-protection against threat" rather than "self-expansion and growth" (Schwartz, 2012, p. 13). As such, value-sensitive design highlights the ethical foundation of the university through its own institutional *phronēsis*, which constitutes a particular "ethics of care" (Dall'Alba, 2012; Held, 2005; Noddings, 1984).

A University with Ethical Character: Value-Sensitive Design and *phronēsis*

Approaching the emergence of the University of We, there is firstly a need to better understand what *phronēsis* "looks like" in both theory and practice. *Phronēsis* as a concept stems from an aristotelian tradition and often translated as "practical wisdom," is first of all a *virtue (arête)*. A virtue is a capacity or ability that (a) must be acquired and practiced – "cultivated" – over time, as (b) it is skill or capacity essential to achieving both individual senses of contentment (*eudaimonia*) and larger social harmony in shared lives of flourishing (Ess, 2016). Primary examples of such virtues are patience, perseverance, and empathy, which are all both cognitive and affective virtues necessary to human communication, friendship, long-term intimate relationships – indeed, loving itself (Ruddick, 1975; Vallor, 2009; Ess, 2016).

Shannon Vallor (2016, p. 120) lists ten such "techno-moral virtues" – i.e., virtues specifically tuned to and required for good lives in a technological era – namely: honesty, self-control, humility, justice, courage, empathy, care, civility, flexibility, perspective, magnanimity, and technomoral wisdom – the last of which incorporates *phronēsis*. Fostering and practicing such virtues has defined humanistic education from Plato's Academy through the Renaissance University – and into the modern era with the founding of Humboldt University in Berlin (Jordheim et al., 2011, pp. 63–73). "The university" is not simply an institution charged with conveying knowledge of different sorts: in addition, the university – as constituted by all of its participants, from students and teachers through administrators and other stakeholders – is to *be* and continuously focus on *becoming* a "virtuous place"; a place where excellence in all of our functions and capacities are the central aim and practice (Jordheim et al., 2011).

Phronēsis may be argued to be a keystone virtue – one that helps hold together and discern how to exercise and apply these virtues in our daily lives. It is a specific form of judgment – namely, what Kant called reflective judgment, in contrast with determinative judgment (Ess, 2013, pp. 28–30, 239). Determinative judgment works “top-down”: it begins with general principles, norms, or values, and applies these in a deductive (sometimes algorithmic) fashion to a specific instance or case to conclude the right thing to do. “Do not kill,” for example, can be generally applied to many specific situations using determinative judgment – so much so that we hardly ever need to further reflect upon killing as a possible choice. *Phronēsis* works differently – “from the ground up,” within specific, fine-grained and often dynamically changing contexts (Ess, 2013). Our common sense of facing an ethical decision in which we don’t immediately know what to do, but must struggle to reflect and decide, is an index of *phronēsis* at work. The first difficulty is to discern just which more general norms, principles, values, etc., may apply to the particulars of this case, and then to determine which of these take priority over the others. The radical diversity of possible contexts vis-à-vis possible norms, values, and principles appears to make a determinative/deductive approach simply impossible.

Take the fraught issue of abortion. “Do not kill” *may* apply to the foetus/unborn baby, but only if we are certain that it enjoys rights of personhood first – itself an enormously complex set of issues. And even if we grant that, all other things being equal, we *ought* not take away the life of the foetus/baby – all other things are *not* always equal: additional norms, principles, may apply as well – and perhaps in greater weight. Another compelling ethical principle is “ought implies can”: we cannot impose upon others an ethical obligation that is practically beyond their capability. Abortion seems clearly justified when a foetus/baby is so seriously deformed that it threatens the life of the mother. What about when the foetus/baby is less seriously deformed (e.g., with spinal bifida or similar problems) – but the mother and/or her family circumstances make clear that she/they will be incapable of offering the needed care? That multiple “answers” – better, judgments – are possible here is again a mark of *phronēsis*. These difficult ethical decisions end with judgment calls: we acknowledge that different persons in more or less identical circumstances can legitimately make different judgments. No single ethical decision – in contrast with determinative judgments – fits all. *Phronēsis* further implicates forms of knowledge that are both affective and tacit – lessons we have learned in life that are encoded in our bodies. So phronetic judgments are behind such phrases as “my gut feeling,” “following my heart” – or, more directly, to know or understand something relevant “in our bodies.”

How can we learn such judgment, i.e., how can we acquire and cultivate such judgment as an excellence or capability? The many classical systems of education affiliated with both the Medieval and Renaissance universities – specifically, the seven “liberal arts,” the arts of free people – may be argued to be efforts to cultivate *phronēsis* and/or its components. Consider the kinds of careful and

reflective judgments in play in hermeneutics: our efforts and disciplines for attempting to properly interpret and understand a text, a play, etc., are excellent practice for ethical *phronēsis*. And in contrast with more determinative “rule-book” ethics such as utilitarianism and deontologies – phronetic ethics is a form of casuistics as developed in law, i.e., using specific cases as primary examples, coupled with marking out similar or analogous cases (where analogy further requires careful hermeneutical and critical judgments). In particular, *phronēsis* and virtue ethics turn on moral exemplars – the *phronemoi* or exemplary persons whose words and deeds literally embody what it means to be a good human being. Hence, the importance of learning – deeply – the stories (whether more legendary or more factual) of such exemplary persons via history, literature, poetry, theatre, and music. These narratives give us concrete examples that we can draw on.

At the same time, however, the cultivation and practice of such judgment is also clearly central to more professional disciplines and the natural sciences – including the specific disciplines of design, whether, e.g., in architecture or ICTs. Indeed, one of the most remarkable developments in the past few years is the emergence of virtuous design. The point here is to take these elements of *phronēsis* and seek to apply, develop and transform them in ways that meet our contemporary realities and future probabilities in system and university design. In the article at hand, we suggest value sensitive design as it has emerged over the past two decades or so within the highly technical and demanding fields of ICTs, is a strong case study for developing further suggestions and judgments as to how the contemporary university may become a more mindful and virtuous character in turn.

A University of Ethical Concern for the Other: Value-Sensitive Design and the Ethical Demand

Expanding the “ethical character” or *phronēsis* of the university towards including concern for the other, we are inspired by the understanding of ethics described by the Danish philosopher Knud Ejler Løgstrup (1997). And even though the point is not often promoted, there *are* links between Løgstrup’s ethics and Aristotle’s virtues, which Løgstrup was aware of himself but never pursued and explored fully (Andersen, 2007, p. 30). Where universities today are more often studied in relation to their teaching and learning practices, leadership cultures, and forms of knowledge creation, it tends to be forgotten that on a primordial level, universities are an arena of “we” – of co-existence, interdependability and deep relational entanglement and influence. As Løgstrup underlines, a person “never has something to do with another person without also having some degree of control over him or her,” and even if it may most times perhaps only be in relation to “a very small matter, involving only a passing mood, a dampening or quickening of spirit, a deepening or removal of some dislike,” it may also in fact “be a matter of tremendous scope, such as can determine if the life of the other flourishes or not” (Løgstrup, 1997, pp. 15–16). The daily atmosphere and mood of the university is

an “ethical ether” that its direct and indirect stakeholders breathe in, oftentimes without noticing.

As Løgstrup mentions, by our very attitude to one another we are constantly shaping one another’s world and inspire energy, motivation, or disappointment and perhaps even fear. The ethical dimension is not solely located within the isolated subject or individual, just as it is not far removed unto a transcendent spiritual plane. For Løgstrup, it is by our very “attitude to the other person we help to determine the scope and hue of his or her world; we make it large or small, bright or drab, rich or dull, threatening or secure” (Løgstrup, 1997, p. 18). The ethical demand arises from this very “responsibility” in which we are “faced with the choice between either taking care of the life thus placed at our mercy, or destroying it” (Fink, 2007, p. 15).

To ensure the general well-being of its members, university HR units are responsible for laying down the ethical surface layer for the individual institution, just as legal assistance is offered to the students and members of staff who might need it. Even though such rules, guidelines and forms of aid are highly valuable and necessary for the smooth operation of everyday institutional life, they – as we mentioned in the introduction – do not ensure ethical care and responsibility. Løgstrup (1997) argues that it is important to distinguish between social norms (surface layer) and the ethical demand (deep layer). The ethical demand is stronger than, and more fundamental to, any social, political, or even legal rules set up by universities. In that sense, the ethical demand is radical and absolute, and therefore not something that can be included into policy documents or legal advice reports. It is the very responsibility of the university to respond to the ethical demand in being concerned with the other (its stakeholders) – also when it conflicts with political or legal advice. As Løgstrup 1997, pp. 62–63) writes, in a central passage:

In short, the social norms are simply not adequate. [...] Moreover, the guidance of the social norms may fail altogether. We may be doing great harm if we continue to defend the social norms after the psychic content of the particular human relationships and institutions have changed while the norms themselves remain unchanged. The more our motive in following the social norms is concern for the preservation of the social order, the less alert we will be to the fact that the social norms may no longer be consonant with the psychic content of those institutions which they were supposed to protect, and hence instead of protecting persons they may actually be doing violence to them.

Generally seen, the social norms and laws should, of course, guide our actions and behaviour, which is why they have been set up in the first place. Typically, the norms, laws, and customs make sure that learning, teaching, research activities, and wider academic practices are performed in a civil, proper and honest manner.

To become a University of We requires responding not only to social norms and guidelines, but more fundamentally to the deeper ethical demand that is constituted among us in our daily interactions, studies, and research collaborations with the

other. Above its focus on league tables, ranking systems and metrics, the university should prioritise its ethical responsibility and concern with the other – its ethical demand – also in relation to research activities, learning and teaching practices, and institutional strategies. To become a University of We, the university needs to see its deeper ethical role and responsibility as going beyond its character, as ethical acts towards the other.

A University of Ethical Relationships: Value-Sensitive Design and the Ethics of Care

Building on *phrōnesis* (character/I) and ethical demand (other/you) above, and fusing them through the field of care ethics, we in this section come to see how a University of We calls forth an ethics where institution and its direct and indirect stakeholders “value each other equally and have their own and each others’ best moral interests at heart. Such friendship is neither provisional nor instrumental, but unconditional in terms of what is good for oneself and the other; it is both inward-looking and outward-reaching” (Nixon, 2008, p. 115). The field of care ethics highlights ethical systems and actions as grounded in reciprocal relationships of *care*, *benevolence*, *empathy* and *compassion* through establishing a care-focused and feminist ethics (Gilligan, 1982). A capacity to care and engagement with human goodness is highlighted as a strength of a system, and Noddings (1984), one of the founders of care ethics along with Gilligan, argues that caring is the foundation of ethics and as such take precedence over any instrumental ethics or legal document. In care ethics, the ethical relationship between system and stakeholders is highlighted as a reciprocal commitment to each other’s well-being as interchange between the “one-caring” and the “cared-for” (Noddings, 1984). Within care ethics the one-caring receives the cared-for without judgment or reservations, in effect adhering to Løgstrup’s ethical demand. Importantly, though, care ethics narrow the ethical demand from universal to relational, as Noddings (1984) highlights two criteria that must be in effect for the ethical demand to take hold within a system or between people: 1) the relationship with the other must exist, and 2) the relationship must have the potential to grow into a mutually caring relationship. From the fusion of “I” and “you” in care ethics we see the emergence of ethical relations in the University of We:

Those who conscientiously care for others are not seeking primarily to further their own individual interests; their interests are intertwined with the persons they care for. Neither are they acting for the sake of all others or humanity in general; they seek instead to preserve and promote an actual human relation between themselves and particular others. Persons [and systems] in caring relations are acting for self-and-other together. Their characteristic stances are neither egoistic nor altruistic; these are the options in a conflictual situation, but the well-being of a caring relation

involves the co-operative well-being of those in the relation and the well-being of the relation itself. (Held, 2005, p. 12)

As a consequence, care ethics sees persons or systems as relational and interdependent, both ethically and epistemologically. We are born into the world caring and in need of care, and we remain fundamentally interdependent on each other. While a system based on an instrumental ethics or an ethic of justice will focus on questions of fairness, rights, equality, guidelines, rules and the application of them, care ethics focuses on attentiveness, responsiveness, trust, magnanimity and cultivating caring relations. Where ethic of justice focuses on the protection of equality, rights and freedom, care ethics aims at fostering mutual care, solidarity, sensitivity and empathetic responsiveness (Held, 2005). Or, as Nixon puts it:

We are, indeed, responsible for one another's well-being as academic workers and for ensuring that individual well-being relates positively to institutional purposefulness. Collegiality can all too easily be defined in terms of professional self-interest. Collegiality conceived as a relationship of virtue is, however, outward looking and gregarious. It looks to the interest of those whom our collegiality is intended to serve: students, policy makers, practitioners across a wide range of occupational groups, local and regional communities, community activists and representatives, etc. (Nixon, 2008, p. 127)

Based on care ethics we might say that rather than clear rules or “contractualism,” ethical systems put forward the flourishing of its direct and indirect stakeholders and the development of caring relations as its most important task.

Conclusion: Materialising the University of We

Virtuous institutions that take seriously their stewardship of the good society are necessarily costly institutions [...] In the case of universities these requirements would entail, among other things, a recognition that the virtues of academic practice hang together through the constituent activities of that practice. The virtues of truthfulness, respect, authenticity and magnanimity can only cohere in practice through the related activities of research and scholarship, teaching and collegiality. The moral integrity of academic practice relies upon the complementary and interdependence of these activities. (Nixon, 2008, pp. 132–133)

In conclusion, attempting to draw all of the above together; value-sensitive design, *phronēsis*, ethical demand and care ethics, we might – building on Nixon – finally ask: How might this be put into action towards the formation of more ethical systems?

One way to put *phronēsis*, ethical demand and care ethics into action is through adapting the three-step process for value-sensitive design proposed in Flanagan, Howe, and Nissenbaum (2008):

1. *Discover* the ethical values and virtues relevant to the university and its direct and indirect stakeholders.
2. *Translate* those values into specific ethical design features and ethical system requirements.
3. *Verify* that the system and its value content supports and promotes the intentions, needs, dreams and desires of its stakeholders.

Another, even more concrete way is to use Jet Gispén's *Ethics for Designers* (<https://www.ethicsfordesigners.com>), where he provides a number of specific methods for incorporating ethics into the design of systems. Overall, the methods aim at embedding *moral sensitivity*, *moral creativity* and *moral advocacy* into systems.

Moral sensitivity contains methods for analysing ethical systems such as "Description" that helps analyse a given system created by others and understand the (un)ethical intentions and world-views of the designers. And "Ethical Disclaimer," which seeks to support the design of a new system based on selected ethical values at the outset by conjuring unethical situations and shine a light on what a system such as a university takes ethical responsibility for.

Moral creativity provides methods for creating ethical systems. One such method is "Moral Agent," where people responsible for the system receive different values on the basis of which they (re)configure the system and create (un)ethical system solutions. Another is "Design Noir," used to imagine two extreme ethical situations on the basis of which the responsible persons create design ideas for the system to achieve these situations. Also, there is "Normative Design Scheme" where people responsible for the system write down their system goals and evaluate these using three ethical approaches: virtue ethics, deontology and consequentialism to improve the overall ethical design of the system.

Moral advocacy promotes participatory methods for (re)configuring ethical systems. In "Moral Value Map" people responsible for the system work together with stakeholders to single out human values and virtues relevant to the system, and then translate them into ethical concern. Then connections between different concerns are mapped and conflicts between direct and indirect stakeholders discussed. Finally, the systems impact on each concern is mapped by using the words inhibits, supports, limits, enhances, prevents, enables, reinforces, undermines, challenges a certain concern. Based on this, the system is then (re)configured. "Ethical Contract" builds on top of the "Ethical Disclaimer." The unethical situations from the "Ethical Disclaimer" is explicated to all participating direct stakeholders that then discusses these and all-important ethical themes that are raised are collected. The ethical themes for the system are defined and responsibility for each unethical situation is delegated and recorded. Based on this, three ethical aims are formulated and discussed. These are then used to (re)configure the system goals with all direct stakeholders agreeing upon them. These are then put into an ethical contract signed by all stakeholders.

Through intentionally and reflectively employing such (or similar) value-sensitive and ethics focused methods, the university may (re)emerge as an ethical system – an ethical academy – based on ethical sensitivity, creativity and advocacy. This is accomplished through intimate connections between macro-philosophical framework (ethical character, ethical demand and ethical reciprocity) and micro-systemic layers (surface, deep and implicit) by way of value-sensitive design methods. Some next steps would be to put into contact philosophical framework (macro-), value-sensitive design methods (meso-) and university system (micro-) to uncover the (im)moral sensitivity, creativity and advocacy of the people responsible for designing, implementing and sustaining specific university systems.

In conclusion, we contend that rather than introducing a new standalone method, Value-Sensitive Design can be incorporated into established ethical approaches that thinkers, developers and practitioners within higher education and university research are already skilled in using. In order to be responsible developers of ethical university systems and support ethical academics, it is important to anticipate, support and account for the long-term implicit, deep and surface effects of a system's ethics. We suggest that addressing these (un)intended effects requires a shift in how the university frame and practice ethics – from the surface layer with rules, regulations and policies to the deep and implicit layers that consider and embody the long-term formation of “the ethical system” and the “ethical academic.” Value-Sensitive Design provides methods for the university system to work with the deeper structures of ethics rather than task- and rules-oriented functionality observed and implemented on the surface level. Phronesis, ethical demand and care ethics ensure and safeguard that the ethics in question is grounded in a heartfelt concern with human worth, virtues and well-being.

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