Choosing ethical partners: one institution’s efforts to engage in ethical partnerships

Dr Michaela Baker (PACE and Department of Philosophy)
Jacqueline Mackaway (PACE and LTC)
Participation and Community Engagement
PACE
The scope of PACE

*It’s more than just internships:*

- **Field trips** with a partnership component
- **Community panels** with project mentoring
- **Professional experience & practicums**
- **Internships and work-integrated-learning:** community development projects
- **Service learning by volunteering**
- **Project based learning**
- **Community-based research**
- **Mentoring and peer-assisted learning**

Projects are conducted locally, regionally and internationally.
Common elements

- **Rigorous academic framework** to develop key graduate capabilities
- **Community engagement** involving mutually beneficial partnership

**Orientation**
- Organisational/admin requirements
- MQ expectations
- Preparatory sessions
- Any preparatory assessment tasks

**Experience/project**
- Experience itself
- Assessment tasks including critically reflective practice if this is to be assessed

**Final wrap-up**
- Debrief
- Any post-experience assessment tasks

Scaffolding for skills development
Ethics and PACE

Fundamental to the PACE program are the requirements that:

- partners must conform to the University’s ethical standards and
- the activities undertaken by students must align with the PACE initiative’s overall aim of promoting the well-being of people and the planet.
Ethics and WIL/LTP

Literature review revealed four main areas:
1. High-level considerations
2. Research ethics
3. Doing WIL ethically
4. Teaching ethics/applied ethics through WIL

A gap: How to go about choosing ethical partner organisations?
This presentation has 3 main aims:

1. To examine how other organisations make choices (or advocate making choices) about ethical products or organisations.

2. To suggest how we might align our screening processes with Macquarie’s Ethics Statement.

3. To discuss what we are currently doing at Macquarie to ensure that we have in place sustainable policies and procedures to help to safeguard ethical alignment with partners.
Other organisations’ approaches

Common themes:
1. Ethics policies/Values statements/Principles
2. Transparency
3. Acknowledgement of complexity
Case study 1: Hunter Hall

- Australia’s largest dedicated ethical investment manager.
- Avoids investing in businesses that are involved in activities that do harm to people, animals or the environment.
- Utilise their two page, easy to read, Policy document to communicate these values and the high level processes they follow to support their ethical approach to investment.
Case study 1: Hunter Hall

Carefully worded policy.

- May be indicative of three things:
  1. the complexity and ‘grey areas’ that can surround the issue of ethics;
  2. acknowledgement that a Policy document functions as a guide and not a ‘rule book’; and,
  3. risk or risk management is an inherent aspect of ethics.
Case study 1: Hunter Hall

- Utilise both positive and negative screening.
- Approach relies on three things:
  1. people load company information into systems correctly,
  2. no changes occur within a company in terms of their ‘ethics’ status, and
  3. all information used to determine a company’s ‘ethics’ status is accurate, up to date and reliable.
Case study 2: Ethical Consumer Guide

- The Ethical Consumer Group is a community-based, not-for-profit network set up to help facilitate more sustainable purchasing practices for the everyday consumer.
- Utilise a ‘statement of purpose’ rather than an ethics policy as such.
Case study 2: Ethical Consumer Guide

The *Guide* makes information easily accessible in a couple of different ways, namely:

- Pocket-sized and therefore easy for people to keep on their person when they shop;
- a well laid out content page;
- clear instructions on how to use the guide; and
- laid out in a table format with many headings and subheadings
Case study 2: Ethical Consumer Guide

### How to Use This Guide & Icon Menu

**BRAND**

- Toilet Paper: Ensure logging (chose recycled)
- EcoSoft
- Delray, Kleenex, Wondersoft
- Pams, Xerolent
- Cottonsoft, Heritage
- Quilton, Softy
- Avoca, Syrio
- Meeno, 360°
- Pams

**COMPANY**

- E Sime and Co.
- Kimberly-Clark
- SCA
- ABC Tissue
- Encore Tissue
- Aska Pulp & Paper (Sarri-Max Group)

**Icon Menu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Icon Menu</th>
<th>Company Ratings</th>
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<tr>
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<td>PRAISES, NO CRITICISMS</td>
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<td>🌟 🌟</td>
<td>LESSER PRaise, NO CRITICISMS</td>
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<td>🌟</td>
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<td>BOYCOTT CALL</td>
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**Product Features**

- AUSTRALIAN OWNED
- INDUSTRY ALERT

**How to Use the Guide**

- Use the Contents or Index to find the 'product type' you are seeking.
- Look in the left-hand column to find the brand you usually buy.
- See the right-hand column for the related company and parent company.
- Seek a best buy considering company ownership/rating and outstanding product features.
- If there are concerns about an entire industry, you will see an industry alert in the header bar for that category.

Visit our website www.ethical.org.au to give feedback to the companies on the choices you have made and why.
5 PRINCIPLES to guide a more sustainable purchase

1. EVERY PURCHASE MAKES AN IMPACT
   Remember, your choice makes a difference. For most of us, most of the time, cost and convenience are the main reasons for our shopping choices. There aren’t bad reasons, but they don’t reflect the true cost of our purchases to the environment and people.

2. ASK, “DO I NEED IT?”
   Avoid unnecessary consumption. About 70 per cent of all edible products end up as waste, on average, within just six months. How you buy will influence directly what you buy so it is important to think about the way you spend money. Make a preferred shopping list and keep to it.

3. LEARN ABOUT THE ISSUES
   Take on one issue at a time so you’re not overwhelmed. Start with the products that you buy. See the centrefold chart ‘what’s behind the label’ for some issues connected to common products.

4. SEEK OUT A BEST BUY
   Ask, “What do I value?”. There are no right or wrong purchasing decisions. What you value will determine the criteria you see as most important. Prioritise your values knowing you’ll have to make trade-offs. You might decide to buy local over organic, or choose to buy with minimal packaging over companies with a poor track-record.

5. MAKE LASTING CHANGE
   Celebrate good choices, create good habits!
   Once you’ve found a best buy, remember it and move onto the next product. Share your discoveries. Let the related companies know, via letter or email, of the choices you have made.
Macquarie University’s Ethics Statement

From the case studies it became clear that we needed to examine:

1. *What* constitutes (in a given context, for a given organisation) an ethical partner, and

2. *How* to go about determining whether or not a potential partner counts as an ethical partner, given the answer to 1.
Macquarie University’s Ethics Statement

Framed in terms of acting with integrity:

- ‘consciously informed by a framework of core values and principles that are given consistent, practical effect’.
- Respecting the intrinsic dignity of all persons
- Neither initiating nor colluding in harmful acts.
- PACE criteria: ‘promote the well-being of people and the planet’.
Macquarie University’s Ethics Statement

In line with negative screening, we might begin by defining an ethical partner as one which does not violate any of these principles. (The University has a policy of not engaging in any activities or partnerships involving the tobacco industry, so any organisations that are part of that industry may be immediately eliminated as potential partners.)
A role for professional judgement

There is a clear role for professional judgement in individual cases. In order for that judgement to be exercised, the following are required:

• adequate resourcing,
• support and
• assurances.
Some concerns

- Length of agreements
- Number of units and students
- How to get the requisite information
- How much can we legitimately be expected to know?
- How to evaluate available information
- What level of alignment is sufficient?
Were we’re at

- Drafting a policy and procedure
- Developing a checklist and guide
- Embedding information about ethical status into partnership database
- Establishing a consultative group to support decision-making
- Possibility of distinguishing between long and short term partnerships
- Possibility of including ethics in partnership agreements.
Ethics in PACE overall

• Choosing ethical partners
• Ethical practice module (ethical theory, applied ethics, research ethics, ethics in community engagement)
• Generic PACE ethics approval protocol.