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Teaching Sustainability and Environmental Justice in Engineering Ethics

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Abstract

Especially over the last 20 years, engineers have become far more attuned to the environmental impacts of their work. While engineers have a first order responsibility to follow environmental regulations, and to try to minimize raw material and energy consumption and limit pollution in their work as individuals, environmental issues have also become an important second order concern for engineers, i.e., a concern of how engineers and engineering as a whole change the world. In this webinar, Dr. Glen Miller explores two such second order concepts, sustainability and environmental justice, and how they relate to engineering. Sustainability has been a buzz word for about 30 years, codified as “sustainable development” in the National Society for Professional Engineers Code of Ethics, yet its meaning remains disputed and its implications vague. Environmental justice also has the potential to transform engineering work by broadening participation in technological processes and evaluating the fairness of the distribution of environmental harms and benefits, but it is often considered outside of the scope of engineering. Dr. Miller also touches on some of the opportunities and challenges that engineering ethics instructors, practicing engineers, and professional engineering

societies will encounter as they start to integrate these concepts into their practices. Dr. Miller is joined by Dr. Jennifer Richter, Assistant Professor in the School for the Future of Innovation in Society and School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University. The webinar is hosted by Dr. Caitlin Wylie, Assistant Professor of Science, Technology, and Society at UVA's School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Funded by the Program in Science, Technology, and Society at UVA.

Body

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