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A Christian Business Perspective on the Development of Student Character

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Motivation

• Prior study assessing 21st century workforce talent (Halley et al., 2012)
  – Key finding: 26% of executives describe the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities for most pressing issues facing their organizations as personal attributes
    • Includes descriptors such as character, honesty, integrity, morality, and respect

• Highlights a desire by business professionals for virtuous employees
Motivation

• Simultaneous desire by core business faculty to be more intentional about character formation
  – Ongoing discussions about how students can “Be Known” at our university
• Felt a need to better understand whether we were shaping students in a way that fit the “market” demand
• Led to a key question for our participants:
  – How do we go about the business of developing student character in our classrooms?
Practicing What We Preach

• Wanted to practice thoughtful self-reflection
• Opportunity to explore deeply held convictions (our calling)
• Chance to collaborate and encourage one another
• Desire to spur deeper thought and conversations about our role as faculty
What We Did

• Invited 5 business faculty members to participate
• Represents 4 distinct disciplines
• Four open-ended questions were asked
• Key limitation:
  – Does not address our roles as a mentor or advisor
  – Limited scope
The Questions Asked

• What are the top three virtues you are trying to impart to your students?
• What activities, assignments, or discussions are you using to encourage these virtues?
• Reflect on reasons why virtues you try to encourage have been successful/unsuccessful?
• How might you unintentionally encourage vice in your students?
Takeaways

• This form of reflection:
  – Is an excellent way to practice departmental reflection
  – Gives us a common bond that transcends disciplines
  – Sharpens the lives of the faculty participants

• The results imply:
  – Developing character is intentional and requires plenty of practice
  – Virtues must be protected, expected, and planned