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Students' Perceptions of Their Moral Growth in College: A Case Study of Moral Influences

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Abstract

Research describing students' perceived moral growth, instead of research based on a scholar's pre-determined vision of moral growth, is sorely lacking. What do students themselves perceive as the nature and extent of their moral development or regression during their college years? What do they identify as the major positive or negative influences on their moral growth or decline? These two research questions guided this qualitative case study at Baylor University. Through interviews with a 69-person representative sample of undergraduates in their senior year, we asked students to describe what factors stimulated the moral growth they experienced during their years at Baylor. Interestingly, students pointed to their peers and the co-curriculum as the primary sources of moral influence. Through a variety of college contexts, they learned to practice various virtues and acquired new moral mentors and models from whom they gained "moral expertise." Campus student organizations and other student groups helped students engage in service, acquire leadership virtues, and find older moral mentors. By contrast, the curricular domain was seen as less influential, providing mainly limited cognitive moral knowledge relevant to their professional lives.

Keywords: Virtue, Mentors, Higher Education, Co-curricular, Moral Expertise

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Moral education research in higher education typically relies on neo-Kohlbergian studies that use a predetermined definition and measure of moral development such as the level of moral reasoning (see Mayhew et al., 2016) instead of methods that explore *students' own perceptions* of the moral influence of higher education. Yet, without an assessment of student perceptions of their own moral growth, higher education scholars and institutions are missing a key source of data that should inform their own conceptions of moral growth

Unfortunately, as Colby et al. (2003) found in their major study of moral education in higher education, "programs to foster students' moral and civic development are seldom assessed…" (p. 258). Thus, to shed light on how university students might perceive their own growth, we conducted exit interviews with seniors at one university over a period of three years, from August 2018 to April 2021. Our two major research questions underlying our diverse interview questions were: (1) How do students describe their personal moral growth or regression? and (2) what do they see as the influences that stimulated either their growth or regression? Such knowledge is clearly important for informing how the university conceptualizes college-level moral development at its institution (does its vision encompass the full range of opportunities?) as well as how it goes about trying to enhance its effectiveness in promoting students' growth in this domain.

Literature and Theoretical Framework

One of the major divisions in contemporary moral education research concerns the conflict between those Narvaez (2008) describes as the particularists (virtue ethicists) and the universalists (deontologists). Particularists, often inspired by MacIntyre (2007), are concerned with helping students develop a good life and recognize that "nearly everything in a life has moral meaning from friend selection to leisure activities" (Narvaez, 2008, p. 310). In higher education, this approach is most typical of religious, military, gender, or

other identity-focused institutions that have a specific focus on developing particular virtues within particular identities (e.g., Colby et al., 2003; Glanzer & Ream, 2009). In other words, they rely upon this more specific identity to frame and guide moral excellence (e.g., an excellent Muslim, an excellent officer, a gentleman, etc.).

Most of the previous research on moral education in higher education, however, has tended to focus on the universalist approach, historically rooted in Kant and finding modern expression in Kohlberg (1981). According to this approach, the moral domain primarily relates to using moral principles to resolve moral conflicts. The downside of limiting the moral domain largely to reasoning about moral conflicts is that it leaves many student choices out of the moral realm. For example, neo-Kohlbergian scholars have, to their credit, explored what does or does not lead to the development of particular levels of moral reasoning in varied collegiate contexts: the curricular (e.g. Cummings et al., 2010; Mayhew & King, 2008), the co-curricular (e.g. Lies et al., 2012; Mayhew et al., 2012), and the social (e.g. Mayhew & Engberg, 2010). Despite these research efforts, a leading scholar in this area maintains, "The effects of most aspects of the co-curriculum (e.g., leadership positions) on morally-related outcomes remain largely unexplored" (Mayhew et al., 2016, p. 352). An approach that focuses on case studies of moral dilemmas neglects whole swaths of students' moral lives.

In contrast, an approach to moral education that focuses on developing what Narvaez (2008) and others (cite withheld for review) have called "moral expertise" overcomes the divide between the particularist and universalist approaches by integrating aspects of both into one conceptual framework. Think of moral expertise as moral "know-how," the micro-skills and micro-habits that enable us to be effective in the different roles and relationships that make up our moral lives. This view of moral growth does not reduce expertise to becoming expert moral reasoners and choosers or more advanced moral reasoners although that element certainly is still one component. Instead, a view of moral growth focused on expertise is comprehensive, incorporating the need for virtue development, advanced principled moral reasoning, moral exemplars, and more (Glanzer, 2013; Zagzebski, 2017).

Becoming an expert in anything requires immersing oneself in a narrative-shaped endeavor guided by a particular telos or end (e.g., what it means to be an excellent tennis player, violinist, or psychologist) (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). There are important rules to learn and virtues to acquire and although the rules are easily learned cognitively (not necessarily always easily followed), the virtues are best acquired under a mentor who helps one engage in a particular type of deliberate practice to achieve increasingly high levels of performance and expertise (Ericsson & Pool, 2016). An expert mentor possesses the wisdom needed to make difficult decisions amid practice, decisions not simply made through a general knowledge of moral rules, principles, or virtues, but instead acquired through long periods of participation and mentoring toward obtaining particular moral virtues and ends. Indeed, the expert can "perceive the world differently noting underlying patterns and discerning necessity where novices see nothing remarkable…. Experts have highly developed intuitions as well as explicit knowledge" (Narvaez, 2008, p. 312). Thus, experts can imagine new ways of doing things better. Mentorship aims to establish particular virtues using deliberate practice within a narrative and telos structured domain with rules. Engaged over time under a helpful mentor/teacher, one develops the sophisticated mental representations needed for complex moral reasoning. However, one cannot achieve such reasoning without the virtues, practices, mentors, models, and moral imagination necessary for excellence (Brandt et al., 2020; Zagzebski, 2017; cite withheld for review).

This understanding of moral growth that relies upon the notion of moral expertise, however, must recognize an important reality. Moral expertise is something developed within particular human "identity domains" that must be woven together and prioritized by the individual. This task itself takes a particular kind of moral expertise. One must not only learn how to be an excellent friend, citizen, neighbor, professional, etc., considered separately, but also how to compose a good life that weaves together and prioritizes these various pursuits of identity excellence.

The recent work by Jason Baehr (2017) in the area of virtue development recognizes this point in that he points out that we must distinguish between civic, intellectual, moral, and performance virtue (i.e., what it means to be an excellent citizen, learner, neighbor, and performer). Baehr notes that such categories could likely be extended. We agree and contend that these categories are best understand as our multiple identities.

In other words, virtues such as love, patience, and self-control must be learned in particular identity contexts. Being patient with a spouse, a student, a child, or another driver, all exhibit something in common, but they all must be learned with unique practices in particular contexts (the lesson that Hartshorne & May (1928-30) should have recognized but did not).

Higher education explicitly and implicitly addresses identity excellence in a few domains and explicitly sets forth various types of prioritizations. For example, scholars have noted that two important outcomes of higher education are helping students learn what it means to be an excellent professional and helping them understand what is involved in being an excellent citizen (Bok, 2006; Colby et al., 2003). Academic classes have traditionally been the vehicle for teaching visions of excellence in the professions and citizenship. By comparison, campus residential life typically uses codes of conduct to teach and motivate students to refrain not just from illegal behavior but also the disruptive and inconsiderate ways one can be a bad neighbor in a residential community. What is often missing from code-of-behavior prohibitions, however, is helping students learn and live by a positive moral vision that specifies what it means to be an *excellent* friend or neighbor in, say, a campus dorm.

Our case study starts by recognizing both the multiple domains necessary for moral expertise and the different areas of human identity in which expertise can and should be cultivated. We used these to guide our questions and analysis as key areas for moral exploration.

Method

We utilized interpretivist philosophical commitments as the basis for the design of this qualitative case study. Case studies provide "an intensive, holistic, description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1998, p. 21). Relying on multiple forms of data collection, case study researchers provide "thick descriptions" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of a bounded system in order to produce new and confirmatory insight ". . . which can sometimes be transferred from one case to another based on 'fit'" (Hesse-Biber & Levy, 2011, p. 260). This paper reports on qualitative data that come from a larger longitudinal single-institution mixed-methods study of character and spirituality (cite withheld for review).

The larger project provided the additional insight required of our case study approach to studying student moral formation within the "bounded system" (Creswell, 1998, p. 61) of this single institution. We chose to begin with a faith-based institution in part because scholars (Colby et al., 2003; Glanzer & Ream, 2009) have designated faith-based institutions as some of the primary exemplars in moral education.

An interpretivist qualitative approach is particularly suited for our task given our specific interest in understanding moral development as described in the unique experiences of students (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Yet, the meaning students made of their experience, according to our constructionist epistemology, was inherently tied to a cultural heritage informing language and meaning making as opposed to having been created independently (Crotty, 1998). Thus, while our study explores the unique stories and meaning shared by our participants, we aimed to interpret their conclusions to uncover cultural patterns in the data, particularly those that could be triangulated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and confirmed through secondary data sources and the experiences of other students. The themes we share in our findings reflect the themes present across multiple students and sources.

Case Study Site: Profile of Baylor University

Baylor University, the setting for this research, was founded as a Baptist liberal arts college in 1845. It is presently a Christian research university of 19,297 students, including 14,400 undergraduates and 4,900 graduate students. Its mission— "to educate men and women for worldwide leadership and service by integrating academic excellence and Christian commitment within a caring community"—contains expected moral outcomes (Baylor University, 2021d). We found multiple indicators that these expected moral outcomes were not mere platitudes but influenced the everyday life of the institution. In fact, the cultivation of a Christian environment and a morally transformational education were the basis for two of four pillars in the institution's strategic plan, "Illuminate" (Baylor University, 2021c).

Thus, like many of the faith-based institutions Colby et al. (2003) and Glanzer & Ream (2009) found to be exemplary in moral education, Baylor University prioritizes its Christian identity and attempts to create a particular cohesive moral culture through a variety of means. These means include unique hiring practices

(faculty must be either Christian or Jewish), required chapel for first-year students, two required undergraduate religion courses (Christian Scriptures and Christian Heritage), and a co-curricular ethos that prioritizes Christian faith and practice. Neither faculty nor students, however, are required to sign a statement of faith. Consequently, the majority of the student population is Christian (average of 88% affiliated with some form of Christianity over the course of our study), though substantial numbers of non-Christian students are also present. Moreover, Baylor recognizes a plurality of Christian traditions and denominations (for a complete summary of Baylor University student and faculty demographic information see Baylor Office of Institutional Research, 2020). The student body is 60% female and 39% of students identify as persons of color (Baylor Office of Institutional Research, 2020).

Researchers, Study Participants, and Recruitment

The authors' primary identity as related to this research is that of a Christian professor and a post-doctoral researcher with expertise in moral education and qualitative analysis. We are both currently employed by Baylor University. Although some may see this as a possible source of bias (when we interpret our findings, for example), we believe the additional insight we have as insiders provides the background knowledge and nuance required to accurately understand and interpret student responses and understand students' conceptions of moral growth and influence—across a wide range of moral components—in the terms used by the students themselves.

Participants and Recruitment

After obtaining Institutional Review Board approval for the study, the authors and graduate students trained in qualitative methods used purposive sampling to recruit undergraduate students in their final year. Over the course of three academic years (2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21) interviewers sought and found 69 unique participants, largely representative of the campus population with regards to gender, ethnicity, religion, and major fields (see Table 1). The students were recruited by the graduate students in a course entitled moral and faith development who worked twenty-hour apprenticeships in student affairs.

Insert Table 1 Here

Comparing our sample with the Baylor population, the percentages of students identifying as Christian and non-Christian were almost the same. However, whereas almost half of Baylor's non-Christian students do identify with another religious background, the non-religious students in our sample skewed toward the atheists, agnostics, and nonreligious.

Participation in this study was voluntary and not incentivized. We obtain informed consent verbally on audio record, as well as in writing prior to interviews. Participants were asked to complete a consent form, either in-person or digitally, depending on the location of the interview. Interviews took place as part of a larger longitudinal study of faith and moral development (citation withheld for review) over the course of three academic years including some in 2020 and 2021 that were conducted over Zoom due to Covid-19. In addition to adding to the number of participants, interviewing the senior members of three consecutive graduating classes provided data on the institution's persisting effects on moral growth rather than the single slice of effects that would be captured from interviewing only seniors graduating in one year.

Data Collection Procedure

The primary form of data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews beginning Fall 2018. The interview guide consisted of twenty-five open-ended, exploratory questions (see Table 2). As shown in Table 2, the interview protocol included seventeen different lines of questioning (a total of 25 discrete questions) encompassing broad aspects of personal moral growth such as "purpose in life" as well as more specific aspects such as habits helpful to becoming "a better person."

Insert Table 2 Here

Our interview protocol was designed to steer a middle course between an approach too open-ended and unfocused, such as "Describe your moral growth at Baylor and experiences that influenced it," and an approach too restrictive and reductive, such using a preconceived measure of moral reasoning to assess development as if that were the only meaningful outcome. Our varied lines of questioning reflected our own

theoretical conception of the important components of college-level moral development, but at the same time were intended to be varied and far-ranging enough to give students ample opportunity to describe their moral growth as they experienced it.

The theoretical basis of the interview guide came from our previous theoretical work formulating a theory of moral excellence (cites withheld for review). In fact, the questions are an attempt to (1) develop a *new and more comprehensive moral theory*, one focused on the acquisition of moral expertise (especially expertise in the competencies needed to function well within particular identities), and (2) brings a *new research methodology* to bear on the study of moral development—one that uses a qualitative approach with questions designed to capture a wider range of college's effects on students' moral growth than has hereto been revealed by more narrowly focused theories and research methodologies. The digitally recorded interviews lasted approximately 45 to 75 minutes. Minor adjustments to the interview protocol were made over the three years to provide more theoretical insight into categories that emerged after analyzing year-one data.

Secondary data collection involved conversations with institutional staff, observation of the institutional context, and analysis of institutional documents. The larger project (cite withheld for review) from which this was derived was partly motivated by the desire of student life staff to assess the sources of moral influence at their institution. These initial and ongoing conversations informed questions in our interview protocol which we used to prompt student reflection on particular areas these professionals had intended to be morally influential (e.g., residence life and chapel). Observations included institutional responses to various student events and our analysis of institutional documents included reviewing the student newspaper, institutional planning documents, and weekly "presidential perspective" emails. Observations and document analysis, while not cited directly below, were used to help focus the interview protocol over time and to provide the institutional context needed to help make meaning of student interview responses.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study occurred iteratively and inductively. We utilized the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2014) for what Yin (2017) calls "explanation building" (p. 154). This method allows patterns to

arise inductively from the data to explain what we found to be true in our given case study. To do this, we manually coded the student interviews line-by-line using *microanalysis*, also known as *open* or *initial coding* (Saldaña, 2013). We coded students' responses to the interview protocol in their entirety. We did not separate out certain questions for analysis and avoid others. Next, we employed *pattern coding* to group the cultural patterns in students' descriptions of the content of moral influence (Saldaña, 2013). Finally, we used *axial coding* to help connect emerging groups of moral content to the contexts from which students said they arose. These patterns were overlayed with themes we found in our analysis of institutional documents to make further connections, hypotheses, and meaning of the case as a whole. Although the coding for this paper was conducted by only one of the authors, the data comes from a dataset that both authors had analyzed for other projects. Given both author's familiarity with the data, we bolstered trustworthiness for this paper by discussing the codebook between the pattern coding and axial coding stages. This conversation led to the structure of the findings presented below and—where mutual insight added clarity—a revised interpretation of the finding. This approach is in line with our epistemological commitments and the qualitative methodology we utilized in that we were not aiming to discover one particular objective reality, but instead, the socially constructed meaning presented in participants responses (Crotty, 1998).

This particular paper analyzes the codes dealing with particular sources of moral influence at Baylor. Of the instances of influence, 202 were from off-campus sources not related to Baylor. Given this paper's focus on moral education provided by the university, we focused our analysis on 1,050 mentions of influence that were categorized in 167 pattern codes under 65 axial codes (see Appendix A codebook). To help organize our description we categorized these larger axial areas within four dimensions within the university: the social and co-curricular, the curricular, chapel, and the general campus ethos. These dimensions were derived from previous research (Colby et al., 2003).

We should note that when coding students' experiences as "positive" or "negative," our codes reflected the students' own evaluations rather than our own views of what was positive or negative. In other words, we defined a *positive influence* as a positive experience defined by the student, such as receiving good guidance from a friend or mentor that had a *positive effect on students' moral growth*. We defined a *negative influence* as one that

students defined as having had a *negative effect* on their moral thinking, attitude, or behavior, such as making them angrier, less forgiving, more self-centered, less respectful, or in any other way less virtuous. In short, a positive influence was an influence students perceived as leading to their moral growth, whether in the moment or eventually; a negative influence was an influence they perceived as affecting their moral growth adversely.

Limitations

Our study faced the major limitation of being conducted at a single, religiously affiliated institution. We know of no similarly designed studies at non-religious institutions to which we can compare our findings. That said, we align ourselves with Lincoln and Guba's suggestion (1985) that a "thick description" of a particular context (such as Baylor) increases the applicability of findings to other contexts that are similar (e.g., they both serve college students) but also different (one is religiously affiliated, the other not). For this reason, we believe the choice to prioritize context over comparison is justifiable.

Findings

The findings presented in this paper focus on the answer to the research question as it relates to moral influence. For example, when asking students about how their moral knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors changed, we coded what they saw as the impetus for that change.

Sources of Influence

In our analysis of over 1,000 pages of transcribed text, we identified 1,252 instances of influence—both positive and negative from the interviewee's perspective—on the moral knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of students. By far, the greatest influence on students' moral development, judging by the absolute number of instances both positive and negative), came within social and co-curricular forums (580 sources total; 460 positive and 115 negative), followed by the curricular arena (278 sources total, 47 negative) and then the general Baylor ethos (126 sources total, 33 negative) and chapel (66 references total, 45 negative or neutral). In what follows, we describe the moral expertise students learned in these forums (see table 2 for a summary).

Insert Table 3 Here

Social and Co-Curricular Forums

Overall, 75% of the social and co-curricular influences that participants mentioned were from friends, roommates, and nonresidential peers (47%--219 positive, 60 negative), student groups (18%--89 positive, 17 negative), or student residence life leaders (7%--39 positive, 8 negative). The other major influence came from staff or faculty in residence (18%, 91 positive, 17 negative).

Friends, Roommates, and Peers

Students talked about the influence of friendships, roommates, and peers in two ways. First, they saw the relationships as the context in which they were challenged to practice particular virtues related to what it means to be a good friend or neighbor. Second, they saw these relationships as vital sources of mentoring and modeling.

Virtue. The most frequent virtue cited by students was either an experience of love or learning to practice love, as interpreted by students, in difficult situations. Both were transformative. For instance, Lance (all names are pseudonyms) learned to navigate loving someone despite possible wrongdoing by that individual:

A friend of mine . . . was accused of sexual misconduct. And pretty much every person he was close to at the time just turned against him immediately. Usually, I would do the same thing, because they are all friends with the person who accused him. You side with the victim. That's what you do.

I was not privy to the situation until he came to me and was like, "This is all going on in my life. I have no one to turn to." And I was like, "Alright, cool, I guess we're friends again." But then hearing about the story from his perspective, knowing there was another perspective that I wasn't getting, and knowing that either someone was lying, or someone was mistaken. And there was no way to know which was the case … I still had to figure out: how can I love this guy who might have done something awful? I don't know. But he's still

someone who's made in God's image. He's still a sinner like me, and he's asking for a listening ear. And figuring out how to do that. That was a difficult, difficult thing.

The catalyst for moral growth in this difficult situation certainly involved a moral conflict, but we think the process of acting and growing morally in this case is best described not as conflict resolution but rather as discerning how to put into practice the virtue of love with a friend accused of doing something seriously wrong. What does it mean, in terms of specific behaviors, to be a good friend in such an uncertain and trying situation? Is a listening ear enough? What else might be required? We can see that the struggle for character in such challenging life circumstances involves applying and developing moral expertise, which includes practicing and growing in relevant virtues such as compassion, fairness, and humility in the face of being unable to know the truth about the matter at hand.

Of course, friendship was not the only testing ground for virtue according to students. Often, experience in trying to be a good neighbor with roommates or residence life peers provided opportunities to enact virtue, sometimes through religious practices. Maddie's story provides a helpful example of this process:

My experience with my suitemate was very difficult, because she would almost use being a Christian against me…. There were times she'd be like, "If you're not mean to me, I'll probably go to church with you again." And I was just like, "Well, I want her to go to church with me again but like she's being incredibly mean to me, and all I'm asking is for her to not sleep in my bed when I'm in class or not steal my Capri Suns."

…And so that was a very difficult time morally of like, "What is the right thing to do?" Because on the one hand like I am supposed to be showing Christ and His love to everyone around me but at the same time she is using the fact that she knows I need to do that, to hurt me and do things to me.

Although Maddie posed this question as a cognitive moral challenge, she went on to note that the challenge related more to her will: "If someone gave me that situation as a hypothetical I would be like, 'Yes this is the right thing; this is what you do.'" Yet, she concluded, "[L]iving through it in those moments was really difficult and filled me with a lot of doubt if I'm being honest. Because I know the way I know I should live is the way that it's hurting me right now. And I really just struggled a lot with, 'How do I treat this person who's

hurting me?"' Certainly, experiencing such moral challenges versus just talking about them in a case study in an ethics class proves much more memorable, challenging, and educational. She had to learn the mean necessary for sacrificial love versus simply being abused or taken advantage of.

Mentors and Models. Amid trying to practice love and numerous other virtues cited by students, including self-control, wisdom, forgiveness, humility, and others, students also found mentors and models among fellow students. Susan shared about learning to forgive—with the help of her friends—after a difficult dating relationship:

I've had a really hard time forgiving him and holding a lot of anger and bitterness in my heart…. It was my friends who also helped move forward...Because they never shamed me for feeling the way I did. If anything, they were like it, "Makes perfect sense. We understand where you're coming from. This is normal to feel this way. Right. But you have to do what the Lord says." They always point you towards Christ…. I think the Lord has really helped me understand what forgiveness is. It's not a one-time thing…. It's literally just sometimes you have to say it over and over again like, "I forgive you."

In many ways, these friends served as expert teaching mentors or coaches that encouraged her to practice a virtue that she already cognitively knew but had difficulty practicing. Similarly, James shared about a friend who modeled self-control and taught the wisdom to practice it.

Another habit that my friend has taught me is the art of getting away from circumstances in which he knows he can't respond in a right way, and I think he is a very clear example of someone who has the self-control…. So that, yeah, the act of pulling away and reflection and of admitting where our flaws are is something that he has encouraged me to do.

Students often reported that mentoring and modeling by other friends taught them moral virtues much more than a particular class or professor did.

It is important to recognize that being manipulated by one's roommate or hurt by one's boyfriend, for example, was a stressful or painful experiences, and in that sense "negative," but those experiences led to

moral growth—such as interpersonal expertise in knowing how to deal with a roommate's unfair manipulations or learning how to forgive a boyfriend's hurtful behavior ended up being interpreted by students as positive influences. In short, we did not interpret negative feature of the moral environment, such as bad behavior, as a negative. We let the students' responses and evaluations determine whether it was understood as morally positive or negative.

Student Groups

Student groups also proved uniquely morally influential. In addition to the virtue development associated with being a good friend or neighbor and finding peer moral mentors or models, students articulated three additional morally educative elements within student groups. They provided: 1) a context for serving; 2) a place to develop leadership virtues; and 3) a place to find older moral mentors.

First, volunteering through a student group often proved transformational. Betty described her experience tutoring lower-income students, "Nutrition Club honestly was morally developing because I just learned how to care for people outside of myself, care for people in different socio-economic states, and how to be passionate about something that might be draining for me . . .." Other students similarly noted how volunteering with student groups helped them look beyond themselves.

Second, students emphasized learning the distinctive virtues demanded by leadership roles within these groups. For example, Kim spoke of how she grew in knowing how to balance discipline and compassion as a leader:

[Leadership] made me a lot wiser… I was an exec for my sorority and I was kind of in a disciplinary role. So that was really different for me because I have to be everyone's friend and make everyone happy, and I like everyone to like me. So, I just gained a lot of wisdom: like how to have hard conversations and how to give discipline but with grace and compassion.

Third, students talked about how student groups provided opportunities to find older student mentors (and not just peer mentors). Since only first-year students live on campus at Baylor, student groups provide the

most likely forum for students to engage socially with students from other years, specifically older students. Natalie shared how her religious student group helped facilitate such relationships:

I have been able to go on mission trips with them . . . And they encouraged me to give my testimony for the first time. Some senior girls, and I was a freshman. We sat down, and they kind of helped me just talk through my entire life at like 1am so that I could understand what to write down for my testimony. And that was really special.

Writing a testimony is a particular theistic practice Natalie learned from older mentors.

Co-Curricular Faculty and Staff

The residential life staff and faculty in residence were mentioned 95 times (12 negative). As expected, some previously discussed categories (e.g., helping facilitate the practice of virtues and modeling) were also noted here. However, these student and professional staff members contributed uniquely to students' virtue education in two ways: 1) demonstrating the virtues of acceptance, care, and support (25) and 2) offering expert wisdom (25). These moral elements of influence came from either Residence Life Staff and Community Leaders (commonly called Resident Assistants elsewhere) (31), or residential life chaplains (19)

First, here's an example of a common occurrence among students with their community leaders, resident chaplains, and others:

When my grandma died, [the CL] reached out, and was like, "let's meet one on one." It felt really awkward because I don't like talking about stuff like that, but it was really kind to know that "hey, someone's like checking in to see how I'm doing… like we care about you."

Second, staff provided sources of moral wisdom for students. Helen shared her experience receiving wisdom from a residential chaplain regarding her parents:

But there was a lot of family drama going back to where I'm from, with my parents, and it was something that I wasn't looking forward to. It ended up turning into this whole big thing, and I was able to reach out to both [residential chaplains] and just seek really good advice from them.

Gaining such wisdom was mentioned noticeably more frequently when students were describing relationships with older staff versus peer relationships.

Conversely, some students thought residence life staff did not go far enough when it came to proving wisdom and guidance. One student observed, "I think a lot of people in leadership there are moderately unwilling to say what they believe. . . . There's a balance to strike but I think it is dangerous sometimes to not be willing to share what you believe with another person."

Co-curricular staff involved in programming unrelated to residence life were mentioned 61 total times by the students (11 negative overall), yielding the same two emphases on care/support and wisdom. One of the more inspiring moments of support was reported by Monique, an African-American student working in admissions:

I will never forget this day. This one kid walked in. I was up on front desk, and he walks in with his mom, and he's from Tennessee. And we were just making small talk. And he goes, "Are there a lot of people that look like you at this university? Because I'm not about that." And [my supervisor] literally comes from like running behind in the office and was like, "Actually, if you're going to do that, and if you are going to be a person that is like this, we don't want you here." I think that was just really super nurturing because it was like the office had my back. And I wasn't alone in this situation, I didn't even have to explain the situation, they were just listening in. . . . I didn't even have to explain anything, I did not have to show any emotions and Justin switched places with me.

Usually, staff were praised for the virtue of hospitality, but in this case, staff were praised for being inclusively *intolerant* by rejecting racism on campus.

Curricular Sources

Curricular influences emerged to a lesser extent than social and co-curricular influences (280 total, 43 negative), a fact that should humble faculty to recognize the importance of the co-curricular for moral growth and education. In addition to the themes already mentioned, four unique contributions of educators within

formal curricular contexts included: (1) teaching cognitive knowledge about ethics; (2) assisting with integrating ethical and professional practice; (3) helping students discern their vocational calling; and (4) negative class or faculty experiences, though far less common.

Transformative Cognitive Knowledge

First, several students found cognitive knowledge acquired in class morally transformative. Moreover, such transformation was not limited to ethics, religion, or humanities classes, as some might assume. Emphasizing his physical science courses, Brett shared:

I think my ecology class for one…respecting the Earth has been something that I've changed a lot and just my everyday day-to-day life, whether it's cutting down on red meat or just any meat at all or your plastic waste. And I think my molecular cell biology class really helped me develop my ethics, because before taking that class I was one of those people that really wanted to push cloning and like, let's build a baby. And I thought that kind of research was so innovative and interesting, but just taking that class and kind of looking at the ethical aspects of it kind of pushed me away from it. I think like well, we can't really do that because if something goes wrong, we've essentially killed a human.

Sometimes, the practical implications of acquired cognitive knowledge were slightly less obvious, but important, nonetheless. For instance, thinking of sociology class, Frank reflected, "I took away a lot from like the marriage stuff that they had. There was research on what leads to good marriages, which I was just like, 'Dang.' I think it's important to find wisdom from many different places." For students like Frank, simply considering new moral perspectives when engaging class content resulted in increased moral wisdom.

Assisting with Integrating Moral Thinking into Professional Life

Second, students appreciated the moral wisdom professors provided within their professional contexts. One student relayed her positive experience after approaching her choir director for guidance when "there was someone in [the] choir program, who was being a little flirtatious in ways that made many of us very, very uncomfortable." The student, understanding the situation would "[involve] Title IX and things like

that and it was just a very hard situation," expressed cognitive and moral dissonance because of not wanting to get a friend in trouble, but also not wanting the inappropriate behavior to continue. She reflected, "It felt like telling the truth wasn't the right thing to do, even though telling the truth was the right thing to do." Upon realizing, "I don't know how to handle it," she sought guidance from the professor who advised, "[Y]ou should tell the truth, but do it with love." According to the student, this counsel was precisely what she needed to take appropriate moral action herself. Thus, she learned through the professor's advice how to act morally within the context of her current situation as well as her future profession.

Helping with Vocational Calling

Professors also played a key role in assisting students in understanding their vocational callings, often within the context of a caring relationship. Reflecting on her interactions with one faculty member, Maria shared,

I was a medical humanities major . . . but science was terrible, chemistry, biology, whatever. It was bad my freshman year. I was like, I don't know what to do with my life…. [My English professor for two classes] was always there to get a coffee or get a lunch. And she was like, "What do you like to do? This is what I hear from your papers. This is how I see this person, but you tell me what you want, and you are a really good writer." She was always very, very supportive. And she was like, "Well, have you thought about doing social work?" She was the one that motivated me to change the major. And here I am enjoying it. I think it was a very big highlight.

The professor's personal engagement with and genuine interest in Maria, both within her course assignments and outside of classroom—helped guide Maria's vocational discernment.

Negative Class or Faculty Experiences

Negative curricular experiences centered on three observations. First, students were frustrated when professors did not enforce the rules related to academic honesty in class, which students noted was more prominent in large science classes. Second, students commented on professors they perceived as lacking the basic virtue of care. One student complained, "My department just kind of seemed unhelpful in a way that I felt like they weren't caring for me when I was asking for help. I would just get shut down."

Third, students were quick to note when and where they perceived virtue was lacking in their courses. Students were particularly critical of apparent biases present within the formal curriculum. Tony shared:

Ah no, the B.I.C. [Baylor Interdisciplinary Core] was pretty terrible…. I felt like there was an agenda in the deck, politically, there was an agenda that I didn't agree with.... For instance, I'm not a libertarian by any means but one of my professors they were teaching us different political viewpoints and her point was "you should always treat everyone with respect" …. And then when she taught libertarian, she had a video of, I think, Bill Maher making fun of them by saying like they hate stoplights or something. And it's like, you just told us not to laugh at other political viewpoints . . . . It doesn't match up to me.... Yeah, it was interesting. She also offered us extra credit to go to a Beto [O'Rourke, a 2020 democratic presidential candidate] rally.

As such, students interpreted the inconsistencies they observed as moral failings within curricular contexts.

Chapel

One of the clearest findings from the data pertained to one historically honored piece of programming—college chapel. Chapel at Baylor is a credit-bearing "course" required for all students. Students are required to enroll in chapel for two semesters, and they can satisfy the requirement through one of five "options" (Baylor University, 2021a). Despite the recent addition of chapel "options" (including regular small-group prayer or the study of Christian practices), the majority of responses at the time of our research referred to traditional mass chapel gatherings—the chapel option selected by the vast majority of students at the time.

Of the 69 interviewees, only seven described the major mandatory programming as a positive source of moral or spiritual influence, while the rest saw it as neutral or undermining their moral and religious lives. Students complained it was irrelevant to their moral lives, boring, lacked clear purpose, failed to engage them in helpful practices, was overly politicized, and was an environment for vices of disrespect and disengagement. Regarding the politicization, John noted,

During that time, Colin Kaepernick was kneeling in the NFL, which, you know, personally, whatever, but then the praise team, or like the worship leader of chapel came out in like a Colin Kaepernick jersey with a Colin Kaepernick wig to sing like praise and worship songs. Like, I just think that's very inappropriate for the situation whether you agree or disagree with the whole kneeling during the national anthem thing.

Another student recalled, "I think the only thing that I really did get to see in chapel was maybe the lack of respect that some people hold for chapel and things to do with God." Another student confessed, "It just made me feel highly disengaged with my faith while I was there." Overall, students shared a unique level of dissatisfaction with chapel.

Alternative chapel—students meeting in small groups focused on a particular major or style of worship—proved a noteworthy exception. Students found participation in alternative chapel to be morally helpful, identifying the benefits of opportunities to engage consistently with practices encouraging moral living. For instance, Ben noted, "We dug a lot deeper into hymns, we sang hymns every day, we prayed every day and had a topic of Scripture every day and so I know that that was a lot more developmental for me." The differences in how students perceived regular chapel versus alternative chapel were surprisingly stark.

General Ethos

Finally, some students spoke generally of the influential nature of their Baylor experience. In addition to the same general influences mentioned previously (virtues, mentoring, modeling, etc.), interviews revealed an important component of the greater campus ethos: diversity. Just like many institutions of higher

education in recent years, Baylor has regularly articulated its commitment to diversity and inclusion through events, board releases, and presidential updates. Baylor leadership has framed their commitments using the institutional mission (a caring Christian community) and the Christian concept of neighborliness (Baylor University, 2021b).

Students consistently spoke about the positives and negatives of campus diversity. In most cases (32), students perceived exposure to diversity positively prompting moral growth in the following forms of virtue: increased tolerance, open-mindedness, cultural humility, love, and cooperation. Synthesizing these themes, Laurie offered, "[I]t's been really good for me to learn better how to just interact with people that disagree with what I believe with, and to . . . love them regardless, but to still know like, this is what I believe and that's okay." Similarly, another student recalls, "[Exposure to diversity has] given me many opportunities to practice communicating with and cooperating with people many of which have been from a lot of different places."

At times, students referenced diversity as a loose concept, as in the quotes above, and at other times as specifically tethered to religion, race, culture, and worldviews. Sarah's account of her experience yields insight into why some students may perceive diversity negatively—particularly initially—and simultaneously provides a salient example of the mechanism by which diversity promotes moral development:

[T]he people . . . I grew up around, and my family were all from a typical Hispanic culture…. And then I came to Baylor and met people from so many different cultures . . . [and] places around the world . . . and I think just becoming aware of other people, other people's cultures, and kind of the issues that they deal with that may be, you know, some prejudices they experienced. And things that I didn't know before that might have sounded really arrogant towards them that I may have said . . . has made me wiser, just because now I'm more aware of other people's backgrounds and what they've experienced before and it's something I probably would have never considered before in my life.

Sarah's experience demonstrates an expansion of the moral imagination common to the students we interviewed. Students often come to college with an assumed normative framework only to realize that it

came from a particular culture. What makes this student's experience distinctly *moral* was that as her imagination for different experiences increased, so too did her awareness of how cultural differences can lead to being a victim of prejudice. She reflects on how statements she herself has made may have sounded arrogant. Her eyes were opened to ways in which people might act thoughtlessly and hurtfully toward others who are different.

Discussion

Overall, one of the most obvious findings from our interviews was that students understood moral growth—or lack of moral growth—primarily in the language of virtue and its associated practice and mentoring. Considering this finding, Baylor would fit within what Colby et al. (2003) identified as the "Moral and Civic Virtue" approach to moral development, although among student groups, the theme that emphasized service was strong.

Our findings also support the scholarly observation that certain communities prioritize certain virtues (Kohlberg, 1981; cite withheld for review). In Baylor University's case, virtues such as love, forgiveness, humility, and care received the most attention versus virtues common to traditional educational contexts such as respect, responsibility, and tolerance (Glanzer & Milson, 2005). Contra Kohlberg, we attribute this difference not to a random "bag of virtues" approach but to the Christian tradition's prioritization of particular virtues.

Furthermore, our finding that students' moral education occurred primarily within social and co-curricular dimensions of campus, and particularly through the influence of peers is consistent with what we know about other moral topics. For example, scholars have demonstrated the significant influence of students on other students' academic honesty (McCabe et al., 2012). Still, our results reinforced that non-peer positions are worth investment when it comes to moral influence. Community Leader (RA) Training, Residential Chaplains, Residential Staff and Faculty, and Counselors all played important moral mentoring roles for students.

In other words, our findings bolster the claims of previous scholars who argue that effective moral pedagogy involves engagement with mentors, important moral communities, and engagement with moral practices related to those social groups (Hunter, 2000; Narvaez, 2008; cites withheld for review). The moral wisdom students acquired from their models and mentors, we think, is best understood as moral expertise needed for growth in excellence in specific identity domains: friend, neighbor, Christian, etc.

Regarding the curricular dimension, our finding that moral expertise offered in those contexts was primarily related to one's profession and not one's whole life is not surprising in light of the narrowing focus of moral education during the history of the American university (cite withheld for review; Reuben, 1996; Sloan, 1980). Over time, American universities have reduced the moral formation offered in the curricular domain to the professional identity of students, and, despite Baylor's religious identity, our findings suggest it is no exception. If a university, through its academic curriculum, hopes to offer moral education beyond a students' professional identity, it will likely need to engage in a major revision and refocusing of its general education requirements (cite withheld for review).

Finally, our findings indicate there is one major feature of Baylor University life that had little moral influence on students despite being designed to do so. Chapel has received little mention in previous large-scale studies of moral education in higher education (Colby et al., 2003; Glanzer & Ream, 2009). Perhaps this gap is related to our finding that even at a Christian university like Baylor, most students found chapel as traditionally offered to be minimally, and some felt negatively, influential in their lives. This was not true, however, of "alternative forms of chapel" such as small-group formats, which students in our study typically found to be a positive experience and influence.

Lessons Learned for Baylor

Certainly, our findings have revealed the effectiveness of some of Baylor's institutional investments. First, considering our findings about the negative influence about chapel, Baylor has completely revamped their chapel program to emphasize smaller and more numerous chapel options from which students can

choose. Initial assessment has demonstrated that these changes have addressed the problems we found (Baylor University, 2021a).

Second, since Community Leader (RA) Training, Residential Chaplains, Residential Staff and Faculty, and Counselors played such important moral roles for many Baylor students, Baylor has expended its continued investment in education and staffing within these areas, since they clearly contribute to moral formation on campus. For example, they have expanded the number of resident chaplains. Other institutions, including those not religiously affiliated, would also likely be wise to consider these investments. If the mechanisms of moral maturing—notably, growth in the moral expertise needed for excellence in important human identities—are true for Baylor students, we think them likely to be true for human development more broadly despite variations in context.

Similarly, investments in a robust student civil society with numerous student organizations has continued because student organizations uniquely support aspects of moral formation in ways not typical of other campus environments. In addition, a follow-up study is targeting the moral influence of Greek life (both positive and negative aspects).

Although not always apparent, students clearly appreciated informal mentoring opportunities and connections. Consequently, we recommend institutions explore and encourage mentoring connections beyond those already present on campus. Collaborating with external civic, professional, or religious organizations to this end may prove an interesting avenue for increasing student access to moral mentors and models.

Larger Lessons

Although it is always dangerous to derive larger lessons from a singular case study, we do think there are three important implications to consider. First, our findings lead us to question whether—at Baylor, other faith-based institutions, or even at secular institutions—conceptualizing moral development as "self-authorship," or a pilgrimage toward autonomy and general moral principles (Baxter-Magolda 1999, 2001; Kohlberg, 1981), is really the best way to understand moral growth. This universalist, and we would add liberal democratic,

approach to morality has defined the ultimate end of moral development as principled moral autonomy. In contrast, one of the main markers of mature moral development, as experienced and articulated by the students in our study, was the wisdom gained from the coaching and modeling of good moral mentors, whether peers, faculty, or staff. Rather than a threat to their autonomous moral reasoning, students saw these mentors and models as how they gained valuable moral expertise—a higher level of knowledge of, love for, and practice of key virtues such as love, forgiveness, service, humility, etc. Moral education for expertise in any institution will not require self-authorship but co-authorship with mentors and wise guides.

Second, we must recognize that conceptions of moral expertise in particular identity domains, as well as the various moral elements considered important (e.g., ends, rules, virtues, practices, models, etc.) will vary by the larger meta-identity and meta-narrative guiding the institution.

Third, we should recognize that faculty and classes primarily influence only one identity domain (e.g., what it means to be a good professional) and that education for moral expertise in other identity domains (e.g., what it means to be a good friend) primarily occurs in the co-curricular domain of students' life. Thus, the efforts to shape character education in higher education that reach beyond a student's professional formation should focus primarily on the co-curricular domain.

For Further Study

Our findings reinforced the important role the co-curricular plays in the formation of moral expertise in students at Baylor. We need to see if this finding is replicated in other studies, and if it is replicated, to address the lack in scholarship on the co-curricular's influence on moral development (Mayhew et al., 2016). Second, because Community Leader (RA) Training, Residential Chaplains, Residential Staff and Faculty, and Counselors played such important moral roles at Baylor, we hypothesize that institutions with similar commitments to moral formation would benefit from investment in these areas. Additional studies could explore the extent to which such roles influence the development of moral expertise on pluralistic campuses as well.

Conclusion

Since we lack assessment of students' perceptions of the moral influence in their collegiate experience, we have little empirical knowledge regarding how students identify the factors influencing their moral growth or decline in college. To the extent that this knowledge is lacking, higher education institutions also lack an empirical basis for deciding how to try to increase their impact on students' moral growth. Our qualitative case study found that college students' moral change, as they described it, is best understood as a process of gaining moral expertise primarily through experiences with their peers and co-curricular activities. The moral expertise they gain from other professors or classes primarily pertains to professional moral expertise. Overall, of the various sources of influence students mentioned they identified peer or adult mentors as one of the most important.

This finding has important implications for character education in higher education beyond Baylor University. The fact that students described acquiring moral expertise from expert sources beyond themselves, calls into question whether self-authorship of one's moral journey and striving for greater moral autonomy are the main mechanisms of moral growth in a higher education community and, indeed, whether they are the main mechanism of moral growth for college students in general. Theoretically, this means that student affairs staff are led astray when their theory textbooks overemphasize the importance of self-authorship for students (Patton et al., 2016). Instead, student affairs staff likely need to learn how to help college students. Instead, the student affairs profession, as well as higher education leaders in general, need to understand the need to help students develop moral expertise that goes beyond professional moral development (cite withheld for review).

We hope that the findings of our single-institution study will provide a baseline for further empirical studies of students' perceptions of the moral influence of colleges and universities. We also hope that the moral expertise paradigm we used to interpret our findings will help to stimulate a robust debate about the most useful way to conceptualize what it means to grow morally in young adulthood.

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Appendix A

Partial Codebook for Sources of Moral Influence

- Academic Department Culture
  - Baylor Interdisciplinary Core
  - Communications
  - Engineering
  - General
  - Political Science
  - Social work
- Administration
  - Dean of Department
  - Financial Aid Office
  - General
  - Name – Senior Level Administrator
  - Name – Office of the President
- Baylor Culture
  - Academic
  - Christian
  - General
  - Moral and Ethical
  - Religious Social
- Bible Study
  - Church
  - On Campus
- Brother/Sister (on campus)
- Chapel
- Chapel (alternative)
- Chaplain
  - General
  - Residential
- Chaplain's office
- Church
  - Community

    - General
    - Outreach
    - Retreats
    - Small Group
    - Specific Church
- Class or Classes
    - Advertising
    - Applied Sociology
    - Bible Class with Professor from Church
    - Biblical Heritage
    - Biblical Heritage & Christian Scriptures
    - Biology
    - Business Classes
    - Chemistry
    - Christian Scriptures
    - Communications Course
    - Ethics
    - French
    - Genetic Diseases
    - Great Texts
    - History
    - Leadership
    - Microbiology
    - Music
    - Organizational Sociology
    - Philosophy
    - Political Science
    - Psychology
    - Public Health Courses
    - Science Courses
    - Sociology
    - Thermodynamics
- Classmates
- Co-curricular
- Community Group
- Community Leader (CL)
    - Culture
    - General

    - Training class
    - Working as
- Conversations
    - with Friends
    - with Peers
    - with Counselors
    - with CLs
- Counseling Center
- Counselors
- COVID rules
- Cross-Cultural Experiences (Study Abroad/Mission Trips)
- Diversity
    - Ethnic/Racial
    - Intellectual Viewpoints
- Faculty
- Faculty in Residence
- Faculty Mentor
- Friend (s)
    - Bad Behavior
    - Best
    - Boyfriend breakup
    - Boyfriend
    - Community Leader(s)
    - General
    - Girlfriend breakup
    - Girlfriend
    - Muslim
    - Rock Wall
    - Transfer LLC
    - Welcome Week
- Good study habits
- Greek Life
- Greek Life Peers
- Honor Council
- International Students
- Internship
- Job
    - Coworkers
    - Off campus

    - On campus
- Lack of
    - Adult Mentors
    - Church Community
    - Church Involvement
    - Class on moral development/ethics
    - Class on service
    - Class on world religions
    - Connection to Baylor's culture
    - Connection to college group
    - Connection to religious culture of institution
    - Conversation about sexual ethics
    - Conversations about mental health
    - Conversations about struggles
    - Discussion about moral culture
    - Encouragement to care for homeless population
    - Friend support
    - Interfaith conversations
    - Professor care
    - Religious involvement
    - Support from staff
- Leadership Opportunities and/or Role
- LGBTQ+ issues
- Major
- Mentor(s)
    - Church
    - General
    - Older adult
    - Older student
    - Professor
    - Residential College
- Peer culture
- Peers
    - Encouragement to be helpful
    - Residential College
    - in Small Group
    - in student group

    - outside of roommates
    - with different perspectives
- Professor(s)
    - Anthropology
    - BU1000 course
    - Business
    - Calculus
    - Chinese
    - Christian Heritage
    - Christian Scriptures
    - Communication
    - Finance
    - First year seminar
    - Great texts
    - LEAD Living Professor Teaching Assistant
    - Leadership Development
    - Leadership
    - Learning Community
    - Math
    - Men's Choir Director
    - Name, Religion
    - Professor Name A, History
    - Professor Name B, History
    - Professor Name, Education
    - Professor Name, Psychology
    - Professor Name A, Professor Name B, Sociology
    - Tech Writing
    - Professor in Residence
- Programming
    - Conyers scholars
    - LEAD Living Learning Community
    - Line Camp
    - Living Learning Community—TEAL
    - Mission Trips
    - New Student Orientation
    - Panel on Sexual Ethics
    - Talks about faith

- Regent(s)
- Relationships
- Res Hall
- Resident Hall Director
- Residential Community
- Roommate(s)
- ROTC (AF)
- ROTC (Army)
- ROTC leaders
- Small Group (campus)
    - Bible Study
    - Church
- Sorority
- Sorority Sisters
- Spiritual Community
- Spiritual Life
- Staff
    - Academic Advisor
    - Campus Living and Learning
    - Employee at campus coffee shop
    - Hall Director
    - Name, Res Hall Director
    - Name, Chaplains Office
    - Multicultural affairs office
    - Res Hall Director
    - Resident Chaplain
    - Rowing team coach)
- Student Org(s)
    - Active Minds
    - Baptist Student Ministries
    - Baylor Buddies
    - Christian
    - Climbing Wall
    - Cru
    - Greek
        - Fraternity
        - Sorority
    - LGBTQ+
    - Logos

    - Men's Choir
    - Nonreligious
    - Religious
    - Student Foundation
    - Student Government
- Students
- Study Abroad
- Study Group
- Title IX/Honor Code
- Transfer students
- Volunteering

Table 1

Demographic Information of Participants

	Count	Study %	Baylor %
Gender (*n* = 69)			
Male	29	42%	40%
Female	40	58%	60%
Race/Ethnicity (*n* = 69)			
White	48	70%	61%
Black or African American	5	7%	7%
Hispanic	7	10%	16%
Asian	5	7%	10%
Mixed race/Other	4	6%	4%
Age (*n* = 69*)*			
20	2	3%	
21	34	49%	
22	32	46%	
23+	1	1%	
Religious Identification (n=69)			
Christian	61	88%	88%
Baptist	10	14%	

Catholic		7	10%	
Nondenominational		9	13%	
Assembly of God/Pentecostal		2	3%	
Mainline Protestant (e.g., Lutheran)		2	3%	
"Believes in Jesus"/ "Bible-Believing"		2	3%	
Non-Christian	8		12%	12%
Nonreligious		6		
Agnostic		3		
Atheist		2		
Nonreligious		1		
Animist		1		
Spiritual		1		

Note: Not all categories add to 100% due to rounding

Table 2

Interview Guide

1. What do you think the purpose of college is?
2. Do you have a purpose in your life, or is this something you are still trying to figure out?
    a. If you have a purpose, what would you say it is?
    b. Did Baylor help you develop it? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. Ten years from now, what would living a "good life" or "flourishing" look like to you? How did you develop this idea of the good life?
4. To where do you typically turn for guidance about what is right and wrong or good and bad?
5. To where do you turn for motivation, strength, and/or support when facing a tough moral situation?
    a. Were there any particular courses, groups, communities, mentors, or teachers, etc. at Baylor that you found particularly helpful? If so, what or who were they? What made them so helpful?
    b. Were there any that you found particularly unhelpful? If so, what or who were they? What made them so unhelpful?
    c. Can you tell me a story about a time one of these supports was really helpful?
6. What are some habits at Baylor that you were encouraged to practice being a better person?
    a. Which ones do you still practice to try to help your moral development?
    b. Which habits do you find are especially helpful in your moral development? It may help to tell a story.
7. Are there any habits that you find particularly unhelpful? If so, what are they, and why are they unhelpful?

8. During your time at Baylor, can you tell me about a time you volunteered for something? Why did you volunteer?

9. Many people hope to become wiser as they grow older. Would you give an example of wisdom you have acquired and how you came by it? How do you think this wisdom has helped you during your time at Baylor?

10. Please tell me about a major moral challenge have you faced during your time at Baylor?

    a. How did you address and resolve it?

    b. What resources and/or relationships helped you address it and resolve it?

    c. Why do you think these resources/relationships were these so helpful?

11. Since you have been at Baylor, who have been some of your major moral heroes?

12. Can you describe a time when felt extremely loved and supported at Baylor? What helped you to feel this way?

13. Have you had an experience at Baylor that has made you morally frustrated or angry? Do you mind sharing about it?

14. Would you say that your roommate experiences have strengthened or weakened your moral growth? In what ways?

15. What courses at Baylor would you identify as courses that have been the most morally influential during your time at Baylor? What was morally influential about them?

16. What outside the classroom experiences would you identify as being the most morally influential during your time at Baylor? What was morally influential about them?

17. Are there certain types of moral education, conversations or support you wish you had at Baylor that you did not experience? If so, what?

Table 3

Contexts and Content of Moral Influence According to Students

General Context	Specific Context	Elements Necessary to Cultivate Moral Expertise
Social & Co-Curricular	Friends, Roommates, Peers	Virtue
		Mentors and models
	Student Groups	Virtue
		Mentors and models
		Context for service
		Context for leadership development
		Finding older moral mentors
	Co-curricular Faculty and Staff	Demonstrating virtues of acceptance, care, and support
		Offering expert wisdom
Curricular	Faculty In Class	Transformative cognitive knowledge
	Faculty (Professional context)	Integrating moral thinking into professional life
	Faculty (Caring Relationship)	Helping with vocational calling
	Negative Faculty Experiences	Failure to enforce academic honesty
		Lacking the basic virtue of care
		Biases and inconsistencies were seen as moral failings
Chapel	Chapel Gathering	Failed to engage helpful practices
		Cultivated vices of disrespect and disengagement
	Alternative Chapel	Learned practices conducive to moral living

General Campus Ethos	Diversity	Promoted Virtue Development (Tolerance, open-mindedness, cultural humility, love, and cooperation) Expanded Moral Imagination