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WORKERS NEED MORE ETHICS TRAINING, PANELISTS CONTEND
Thunderbird Ethics Day celebration draws

(GLENDALE, Ariz.) Sept. 11, 2008 — Covering the policy manual during new employee orientation is nice, but Valley business executives said Sept. 11 at Thunderbird School of Global Management that workers need additional ethics training to help them navigate the many gray areas they will encounter in the world of global business.

The panelists spoke during Thunderbird Ethics Day, which included a private luncheon to honor Thunderbird Trustee David Lincoln and his wife, Joan. The couple pledged $2.6 million from their family foundation to further the work of Thunderbird’s Lincoln Center for Ethics in Global Management, which they helped found in 2005.

The panel was moderated by Lincoln Center director Gregory Unruh, Ph.D. Panelists included David O. Braaten, Ph.D., former Thunderbird professor and president and CEO of The Williams Institute for Ethics and Management; Rick Hamada, chief operating officer of Phoenix-based Avnet; and Dan Schweiker, CEO and founder of China Mist Tea Company in Scottsdale.

The companies represented on the panel were diverse. The Williams Institute promotes ethics in the community through research, education and leadership, by helping young people and adults judge what is right, care about what is right, and do what is right. China Mist Tea Company has only 30 employees but distributes throughout the world. And Avnet does business in 70 nations and has 13,000 employees.

Questions asked during the panel discussion we’re formulated by Thunderbird’s Honor Council, a student organization responsible for fostering ethical behavior on campus.

“Most people know inherently the difference between right and wrong,” Schweiker said. “With our company we distilled it down to one simple way to look at issues. Our take is, whatever the issue is, how would we feel if our discussions and decisions were in the headlines of tomorrow’s newspapers? It all goes back to the golden rule.”

Panelists also discussed whether a universal set of ethical rules applies across all cultures, and how organizations can engage employees in expected ethical behavior.

The panelists agreed that companies do not provide enough ethics training during new employee orientation. They said legal, policy and code of conduct training is about all that new employees receive. But Braaten said the major areas discussed during orientations don’t cover the gray areas that businesspeople find themselves in.

The luncheon honoring the Lincolns preceded the open panel discussion. The Lincoln Foundation contribution will fund the operations of Thunderbird’s Lincoln Center and create a permanent endowment to support faculty, scholarships and research efforts. The center was created in 2005 with a $300,000 donation from the Lincolns. That seed money was followed by additional donations totaling more than $1 million in support of the center and special projects.
Upon being recognized at the luncheon, David Lincoln said and his wife are humbled by the honor and thankful for the opportunity to be supportive of an institution that can make a difference in the world.

“Ethics is important, and Thunderbird has done a great job advancing ethical practices, especially through its students,” he said. “It is the students who make ethics work here and in the outside world, which is where we need them.”

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About Thunderbird

Founded in 1946, Thunderbird is the first and oldest graduate management school focused exclusively on global business. It is regarded as the world’s leading institution in the education of global managers and has operations in the United States, Latin America, Asia and Europe, including Russia. Ranked No. 1 in international business by the Financial Times, U.S. News & World Report, and The Wall Street Journal/Harris Interactive 2007 Business School Survey, Thunderbird is dedicated to educating global leaders who create sustainable prosperity worldwide. The school’s programs facilitate the development of the global mindset, which is critical to managing effectively in different social, economic and political environments. More than 38,000 students have graduated from Thunderbird, and its alumni live and work in more than 140 countries. For more about Thunderbird, please visit: www.thunderbird.edu.