

DFEI at UCCS 2021 Ethics Essay Contest Prompt



CASE STUDY

McCOMBS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
The University of Texas at Austin

Full Disclosure: Manipulating Donors

Jenny, a university student studying public relations, accepted an internship position in the fundraising department at Casa Tia Maria.* Casa Tia Maria is a non-profit organization in the United States that provides shelter for Central American immigrants while they look for permanent housing and employment. In addition to shelter, Casa Tia Maria provides food, clothing, and English classes. Most immigrants stay at the shelter for several months before securing permanent housing.

After Jenny had worked at Casa Tia Maria for two weeks, Mary, the director of development, asked Jenny to accompany her to a fundraising dinner at a luxurious downtown hotel. Many wealthy and influential individuals were in attendance. After most of the guests had left, Mary and Jenny were approached by Robert, a Texas oil baron and one of the state's biggest philanthropists. Robert was known to donate to almost any cause as long as he found it to be what he considered "morally sound" and to the benefit of "hard-working Americans."

Mary and Robert talked for a few minutes about Casa Tia Maria and its specific needs. Jenny noticed, however, that most of Mary's answers to Robert's questions about the shelter's clients were vague. When Robert said that he was happy to lend a hand to any poor American citizen, Jenny knew he clearly did not understand that immigrants, who were not U.S. citizens, were the shelter's clientele. Mary said nothing to correct Robert's misperception.

Robert pulled a checkbook out of his jacket and wrote a substantial check. As he handed it to Mary, he said, "I am so pleased to be able to help hard-working Americans." He then turned quickly and walked away.

Author:

Minette E. Drumwright, Ph.D.
Stan Richards School of Advertising & Public Relations Moody
College of Communication
The University of Texas at Austin

**This case study is based on actual experiences of a university student. Names and situations have been changed, but the case study reflects the key ethical dilemmas the student faced.*

Questions to Consider

1. What are the issues in this scenario that create an ethical dilemma for Jenny?
2. What should Jenny do in this situation? Assess the situation using the Daniels Fund Ethics Initiative Principles for the best manner for Jenny to manage this situation.
3. Have you ever been an intern or employee in a situation similar to Jenny's? What was the situation? What did you do and why?

Please attach separately from the essay, a short biographical sketch or resume; include school activities, community activities, hobbies and interests, and employment or volunteer experiences. Please also include your major, college, and anticipated graduation date.

Note: This is not included in the 1,000-word essay count.

Submit online by end of day (11:59 PM MST) March 31, 2021.