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“DAKOTA ACCESS PIPELINE”

BUS 434: Ethical Leadership

Professor Joseph Williams

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In 2018, the Case Study: Dakota Access Pipeline was presented by Dr. Elisa Warford, Senior Lecturer at the University of Southern California's, Engineering Writing Program to her scholars. Dr. Warford suggested they use multiple ethical theories, analyze the ethics of the pipeline, and design a conclusion of what should happen next. What I found interesting though, Dr. Warford, advised them to be creative in solving the dilemma and asked, "Is there a solution that could satisfy all or most of the stakeholders ethically" (Warford, E. Ph.D., April 18, 2018. *Case Study: Dakota Access Pipeline*)?

The **Energy Transfer Partners** began a pipeline construction project that would carry 470,000 barrels of crude oil per day from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota to refineries on the Gulf Coast. For success of this crude oil to reach its destination the pipeline would be built and routed through the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and important cultural and ancient burial grounds in Standing Rock and other tribal nations. The Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) would also cross the Sioux water supply and with this concern, the natives conducted protests and a lawsuit (Haper and Ingulli, P. 32).

I understand the corporation has a great demand to transport its product throughout the country to supply a need. What I do not understand is their unethical approach and total disregard for the natives' outcries. Over the years, there are well-known and documented cases of oil spills, contaminated drinking water, and other chemical leaks, reported throughout underserved and impoverished communities, throughout the United States. This is just another one of those times when a big corporation attempts to bully their agenda on those who do not fit into their social class. But not this time, the Natives are protecting and defending their land, heritage, monuments, and right to healthy drinking water.

During peaceful protests and standoffs, the Army Corps of Engineers, Energy Transfer Partners, and local authorities found it okay for the Natives, human beings, to be hosed in the cold weather and assaulted by attack dogs. I find this corporation, the Energy Transfer Partners, practices unethical, deplorable, disgusting, and despicable.

The point, I need to make regarding Dr. Warford's question is if there is a solution that could satisfy all or most of the stakeholders ethically. To suggest an ethical solution to this dilemma to please the stakeholders, for me, is unethical. The Natives' drinking water and living environment could be subjected to an oil leak and other contaminants in their beautiful Lake Oahe, backyards, and communities, and yet the concern is how the stakeholders remain profitable. I believe had this pipeline project been suggested within a community of well-doers and a different social class this would not even be a topic of discussion.

For the **Energy Transfer Partners** to be regarded as ethical and of good character I suggest an Ethics committee, that practices people over projects, educates, and offers a safe space to discuss prejudices and biases, to share thoughts, morals, and virtues without judgment, and to boost morale. I believe when we practice people over projects we will make profits.