

NOTRE DAME ETHICS INITIATIVE

2025 YEAR-END UPDATE

The Ethics Initiative is establishing Notre Dame as a premier global destination for the study of ethics, offering superb training for future ethicists and moral leaders, a platform for engagement of the Catholic moral tradition with other modes of inquiry, and an opportunity to forge insights into some of the most significant ethical issues of our time.

“The Notre Dame Ethics Initiative’s second year was a period of exceptional growth and strategic development, and we look forward to building on that in the year to come.”



Meghan Sullivan

Director, Ethics Initiative; Wilsey Family College Professor of Philosophy; Founding Director, Institute for Ethics and the Common Good

THE ETHICS INITIATIVE pursues its mission through two main strategies: supporting departments and colleges in faculty hiring and academic programming, and operating the **Institute for Ethics and the Common Good** (ECG), launched in July 2024. The Institute facilitates interdisciplinary research in foundational and applied ethics, coordinates projects that cross departments and units, and supports ethics-related education and public engagement efforts.



INSTITUTE FOR
**Ethics and the
Common Good**

UNPRECEDENTED SUPPORT FOR THE ETHICS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ECG received a **\$50.8 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.** in December 2025 to support The DELTA Network: Faith-Based Ethical Formation for a World of Powerful AI. The largest grant awarded to Notre Dame by a private foundation in the University’s history, this will fund the development of a robust network centered around DELTA—a shared, Christian-inspired ethical framework for understanding and applying AI.

This work began in 2024 with a \$539,000 **planning grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc.**, which funded **200 focus groups and benchmarking interviews** with scholars, industry experts, and faith leaders, culminating in the **ND Summit on AI, Faith, and Human Flourishing** in September 2025.

DELTA

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH TECH LEADERS

The Notre Dame – IBM Technology Ethics Lab, a key component of ECG, hosted **Raise the Bar: The Responsible Deployment of AI for Large Enterprises** in October. This annual gathering drew close to 200 industry leaders and scholars, taking place at IBM’s headquarters in Manhattan. Over the past year, the Lab has supported more than two dozen **cutting-edge research projects** involving 19 Notre Dame faculty members from a variety of disciplines.

DEEPENING ETHICS EXPERTISE

The Initiative partnered with the Department of Philosophy to recruit two **postdoctoral fellows** and a senior faculty member, **Douglas Portmore**, who will also serve as one of five new **ECG program chairs** this academic year. The Initiative also expanded its Ph.D. fellowships and supported **six faculty fellows**. Enhancing undergraduate opportunities, the ECG launched the **Apprenticeship in Virtue-Rooted Leadership** and the **On Purpose immersion program**.

APPOINTING 5 NEW PROGRAM CHAIRS

As Program Chairs, these faculty will receive \$100,000 per year to develop research programs that align with and enhance the Ethics Initiative.



Emily Grubert

Associate Professor
of Sustainable Energy
Policy in the Keough
School of Global Affairs



Meng Jiang

Frank M. Freimann
Collegiate Professor of
Computer Science and
Engineering



Douglas Portmore

Professor of
Philosophy



Paul Scherz

Our Lady of
Guadalupe Professor
of Theology



Tim Weninger

Associate Professor
of Computer Science
and Engineering

LEADING WITH LOVE

In June, the new **Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., Center for Virtue Ethics** secured a **\$10 million grant from the John Templeton Foundation** to advance the love ethic — an approach that grounds moral worth in human dignity, centers interpersonal love in moral reasoning, and promotes love-oriented policies and ways of life. In November, Ethics Initiative Director Meghan Sullivan delivered a **TEDNext talk**, inspiring her audience with “Loving Strangers,” her latest research on the love ethic.



\$60M+

received in external grants

\$3.3M

invested in research across the
University through 113 awards

18

**Signature Course
Fellows**

working to **develop high-
impact undergraduate
courses** on human
flourishing

5

**doctoral
students**

advanced research in
ethics through the ECG's
Wilsey Distinguished
Graduate Fellowship

13

**campus partner
collaborations**

initiated involving 5
colleges/schools and
2 University
institutes

RESEARCH WITH NATIONAL REACH

With support from the Ethics Initiative, Keough School of Global Affairs Professor **Yong Suk Lee**, ECG's inaugural program chair in technology ethics, launched the **Future of Labor Lab**, published five peer-reviewed articles, applied for multiple grants, and hosted an **AI and labor policy workshop** in Washington, DC. Lee's research — at the intersection of technology, labor, society, and governance — is gaining national attention, advancing Notre Dame's leadership in shaping ethical approaches to emerging technologies.

