

# College students, teachers try to right business wrongs

Andrew Velazquez sounds disillusioned. He yearns for the days when businesses took responsibility for their decision-making and were accountable to their customers, community and country.

Mr. Velazquez, a senior international business major at Loyola College in Maryland and a lifelong Catholic school student, is not alone when he wonders if deception is the only way to succeed.

Professors at Catholic colleges and universities in the Archdiocese of Baltimore are attempting to answer such concerns with a definitive “no.”

“The world today is dog-eat-dog,” Mr. Velazquez said. “People are trying to do anything to get by. They’re doing away with normal business practices.”

One of Mr. Velazquez’s international business instructors, Dr. Roger Kashlak, says students are filled with questions, confusion and disappointment.

“Nobody’s vetting anything,” Dr. Kashlak told The Catholic Review. “It’s sometimes frustrating to see. If Tom Brokaw views his parents’ as ‘the greatest generation’ and I’m the next generation, gee, my generation is not looking that great.”

Mr. Velazquez is aware of many business world scandals, including former energy giant Enron “cooking” accounting books, investor Bernard Madoff allegedly orchestrating a Ponzi scheme, the Federal Reserve bailout of insurance corporation American International Group and the collapse of the housing market.

Economics and business professors at Loyola and Mount St. Mary’s University in Emmitsburg watched recent events with keen interest and an awareness they must serve as moral compasses for future leaders.

“Most students don’t come in with an understanding of economics at all,” said John Larrivee, associate professor of economics at Mount St. Mary’s and a parishioner of

St. Anthony Shrine in Emmitsburg. "I take my faith pretty seriously, so there's a fair amount of integration. You work with what has managed to reach their heads."

The professors hope prior lessons didn't come from Gordon Gekko, the main character of the 1987 movie "Wall Street," who coldly advised "greed is good."

Dr. Larrivee said there was "a massive outbreak of greed" from top executives to the working man. Low interest rates caused a change in perspective, he said, and distorted people's view of what they could afford.

The collective actions of many individuals resulted in the perfect economic storm.

Dr. Kashlak, like Dr. Larrivee, feels compelled to tell his students that profit is good, especially if it is done properly.

"I think ethics is underlined in every single moment," Dr Kashlak said of his classes. "Nothing goes further without ethical, right behavior."

There is hope those lessons are taking hold. Mr. Velazquez said he and classmates routinely talk about the burden they face in the years to come.

"Business is supposed to be practiced morally," he said. "It's not 'how do I get ahead?' It's 'how do I profit and maintain my morals?' "