



Ex-con shares his lapses in ethics

One-time broker details his mistakes to business students

By Darren Dunlap
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Patrick Kuhse wanted University of Tennessee business students to remember the sound, so he walked over to the lectern and rapped it five times with his knuckles.

"If you get five knocks on your front door, it's the FBI," said Kuhse, a stockbroker-turned-fugitive and convicted felon who came to the University Center on Wednesday to share his story.

Kuhse is an ex-broker and financial planner who comes from a small Iowa farming community and had a "values shift" when he went to Arizona State University. He didn't have a lot growing up and discovered at ASU that he wanted things: money, houses, expensive trips. He felt entitled, he told the packed auditorium, and that was his first mistake, he said.

Kuhse detailed the other mistakes that lead to his taking part in a bond trading scheme involving the state of Oklahoma. In 1994 Kuhse, then owner of a successful financial services company in San Diego, would be charged with 32 counts of conspiracy, money laundering and bribing a public official.

As his partners in the scheme were arrested, Kuhse went on the lam, taking his wife and two sons to Costa Rica. Kuhse would eventually turn himself in 1997, spend more than four years in prison - some of it in Costa Rica and some in the United States. He said he had time to think about what he'd done wrong, talk to other inmates about what they had done wrong, and had been sharing his lapse in ethics with universities around the country since 2001.

Kuhse said he wanted the students to know why it happened to him and why the same thing could happen to them.

Ethics surfaces frequently in accounting classes at UT, said Alina Kirillina, a senior majoring in accounting and finance, and president of Beta Alpha Psi, the group sponsoring Kuhse's presentation.



"In accounting, we hear quite a bit about it," she said.

Faculty adviser Karyn Valades said teachers try to use examples of fraud and theft found in the day's headlines, national stories such as the Enron and WorldCom scandals, for example. Valades and other faculty look for local crimes in the news as well - such as the case of the bookkeeper who pleaded guilty in Anderson County two years ago to theft of thousands of dollars from a Clinton church - to illustrate the point.

Having a convicted felon in the room telling the story also helps, Kirillina said.

"I think mostly what resonated with the students is that he was the person involved," she said.

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