

To (Each Board Member Of CSE),

This quarter we enrolled in CSE 490E (Ethical Automation) and found that the skills we learned to be extremely valuable. This 2 credit course exposed us to ethical reasoning, and allowed us to engage in ethical debates surrounding the tech industry. In addition, we all took the time to critically analyze our own opinions about these topics.

The need for this type of conversation is increasingly paramount. With the emergence of Big Data, we've seen numerous companies land in hot water due to poor choices - Even Facebook's underlying business model itself is troublesome: offer free services, collect user's private information, then monetize that information by selling it to advertisers or other entities. In addition, as the buzz and interest in Machine Learning and AI continues to grow, we worry that that many are unaware of the biases that could be unknowingly incorporated in the technologies that are being integrated in today's society. For example, a team of researchers from Indiana University, UCLA, and Louisiana State University found that predictive policing, a "smart policing" tool that trains an algorithm to predict where crime will happen, has shown to not only not to eliminate human bias from the police but reinforce racial implicit bias.

The goal of a required ethics course is not to teach aspiring engineers *what* to think. Rather, the goal is to teach us *how* to think with a critical mindset. In this way, we can make informed decisions about the impact of our work, and consider the communities who are affected by those decisions.

There are a few more practical benefits that students can gain by taking such a course. Firstly, this course could also serve to inform us on important public policy surrounding the tech industry. As full time engineers, it is imperative that we are aware of the laws Secondly, as it stands, there is a surprising lack of discussion-based classes in CSE curriculum. Even though soft skills—namely verbal communication and presentations—are invaluable in industry *and* higher education, students aren't ever challenged in this area, and thus are not given opportunities to improve in those areas. A discussion-based ethics course would address both of these problems.

Thank you for your time and consideration
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