The Center for Leadership Ethics (CLE) at the Eller College is answering those questions and more through a growing body of research. CLE funds ethics-focused research projects across academic departments. “Most of the work is conducted in management,” said Aleks Ellis, Nelson Professor of Management and research director of CLE. “But we have funded projects in MIS and marketing. There’s a lot of room for multi-disciplinary work in this field.”

The work has attracted funding from multiple organizations, including Walgreens, which has made a multiyear commitment to the research arm of CLE, which also hosts the annual Collegiate Ethics Case Competition and the High School Ethics Forum. “What really gets me excited about these programs is that Eller is doing a great job of teaching critical thinking skills,” said Matthew Sesto, market VP for Walgreens. “Decisions aren’t always black and white, and sometimes it’s about making the right business decision versus the easy one.”
Corporate ethics scandals are often described as a slippery slope, in which small infractions gradually escalate. “We wanted to isolate the phenomenon in a lab setting,” said Dave Welsh, assistant professor of organizational behavior at the University of Washington, who did just that with professor Lisa Ordóñez while he was a doctoral student at Eller. “We were able to demonstrate how moral disengagement can reduce ethical behavior over gradually increasing indiscretions,” Welsh said. “We also found that this effect can be moderated to some extent by encouraging people to think about ethics.” The resulting paper was published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

**premeditation and perception**

“Despite our increased understanding of ethics, there is little reduction in unethical behavior at work,” said doctoral student Mike Mai. His dissertation starts with the assumption that unethical behavior is an immutable fact, then examines its outcomes. “I argue that premeditated unethical acts will result in higher degree of perceived unethicality and more severe punishments,” he said.

**have another cup**

Lack of sleep can lead to unethical behavior in the workforce, but the equivalent of a large cup of coffee can help sleep-deprived employees control their behavior and resist unethical temptations, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. “Our study examines the role of caffeine in self-regulation and the ability to resist the negative influence of others when sleep deprived,” said Welsh, who coauthored the paper with Ellis and Michael Christian of UNC.

Keith Provan, McClelland Professor of Management at Eller, died in February after a battle with brain cancer. “He was not only was an outstanding scholar and an excellent teacher, but he also had tremendous impact within the health care industry,” said Eller dean Len Jessup.

Provan also held appointments in the School of Government and Public Policy and in the Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health.

His research focused on inter-organizational and network relationships, especially in the domain of health, mental health, and human services. “He was a scholar of the first order who was able to cross disciplinary lines and make seminal contributions to organization theory, public management, and health care,” said Brint Milward, director of the School of Government and Public Policy.

Provan was among the founders of the Arizona Health Care Leadership Academy, and served on its faculty and board of directors. The organization has made a $30,000 contribution to establish the Keith Provan Memorial Endowment in Eller’s Center for Management Innovations in Health Care. “The endowment will fund research efforts of doctoral students in the area of health care management, with a targeted emphasis on health care leadership,” said Stephen Gilliland, outgoing head of the Department of Management and Organizations.

Throughout his career, Provan mentored dozens of Ph.D. students, who have gone on to successful careers throughout the world. He considered these relationships his most meaningful professional legacy. “Keith was a superb scholar, but he was also a very humble person. He wanted to make a difference, and health care was the industry that he chose to focus on,” said Betty Falter, who served as executive director of the Arizona Health Care Leadership Academy for a decade.

“He was a visionary, and an extremely kind and gentle human being,” said Pal Evans, retired chief medical officer at Tucson Medical Center. “He was also very unassuming, considering the reputation of his work.”