

# Rules for the IIT IPRO Ethics Bowl (2010)

## Rules, Format, & Significance

### **I. How Ethics Bowl is Played:**

In Ethics Bowl a moderator asks two teams of three to five undergraduate students questions that pose ethical problems on topics ranging widely over areas such as the classroom (e.g. cheating or plagiarism), personal relationships (e.g. dating or friendship), professional ethics (e.g. engineering, architecture, business, the military, law, medicine, etc.) or social and political ethics (e.g. free speech, gun control, health care, etc.) In an Ethics Bowl competition two teams are asked different questions. Each team answers its question according to the following format. After the moderator poses a question to a team the team gets one minute to confer, after which it must state its answer. (The team does not respond completely cold, however, because prior to the Ethics Bowl each competing team receives a set of cases that present ethical issues upon which the questions a team must answer at the Ethics Bowl are based.)

After the team states its answer to the question posed by the moderator the judges then have an opportunity to ask the team brief follow-up questions to elicit a teams' viewpoint on ethically important aspects of the question, or to seek clarification of a team's response. After the judges have asked their questions, the opposing team then has one minute to present a response to the first team's answer. The first team then has an opportunity to respond to the opposing team's comments.

The judges have been instructed prior to the Ethics Bowl concerning the criteria they are to apply in evaluating the teams' answers, which are the following:

**Clarity and Intelligibility:** Has the team stated and defended its position in a way that is logically consistent and which allows the Judges to understand clearly the team's line of reasoning?

**Focus on Ethically Relevant Factors:** Has the team identified and discussed the factors the Judges consider ethically relevant in connection with the case?

**Avoidance of Ethical Irrelevance:** Has the team stayed on track by avoiding preoccupation with issues that the Judges do not regard as ethically relevant, or as only having minor ethical relevance, in connection with a case?

**Deliberative Thoughtfulness:** Does the Team's presentation of its position on a question indicate both awareness and thoughtful consideration of different viewpoints, including especially those that could loom large in the reasoning of individuals who might disagree with the team's position?

### **II. Format :**

In the IIT IPRO Ethics Bowl participating teams will compete in two matches in the morning. The two top scoring teams will compete in a final round to decide the winner.

### **III. The Educational Value and Significance of Ethics Bowl:**

Starting in 1993 as a small intramural event at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), organized by IIT's Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions (CSEP), the IEB has grown to become a national competition in which so many schools wished to take part that it became necessary to reorganize and expand it into its current format, involving ten regional ethics bowls throughout the United States, and a national ethics bowl in

which the top scoring teams in the regional ethics bowls compete with one another. Here are some of the reasons why we believe that the IEB has appealed so strongly to educators in the area of practical and professional ethics.

Participating in the IEB develops students' intellectual abilities and capacities, deepens their ethical understanding, and reinforces their sense of ethical commitment. With regard to the development of intellectual abilities and capacities, the most salient ethical issues for college and university students are complicated and ambiguous. Contrary to the implied message of a best selling book published several years ago, everything one needs to know about ethical issues on topics such as cheating, plagiarism, personal relationships, gender inequality, campus political controversies, and business or professional ethics in a future career can't be learned in kindergarten. Dealing with such issues places heavy demands upon students' abilities to discern, analyze, and evaluate, as well as upon their capacity to maintain a well organized mental focus under conditions of intellectual (and emotional) uncertainty. IEB participation brings all these abilities and capacities directly into play.

Furthermore, students deepen their ethical understanding of complex, ambiguous, and highly viewpoint dependent questions through participating in the IEB. Ethical understanding in connection with such issues consists largely of the capability to view from the inside ethical positions with which one disagrees, so that one understands the concerns motivating those positions, and, to some extent, appreciates their force. In this regard, students report that when discussing IEB questions before a competition, team members often begin from sharply divergent positions, but as discussion proceeds one or the other of two outcomes tends to result. Sometimes differences of opinion narrow with further discussion. In many instances, however, this does not happen, and yet the students still succeed in reaching agreement upon what their response will be to a given question if asked it at the IEB. This is because the team members who personally disagree with the response have come to view it as a defensible position that a reasonable and responsible person could hold.

Finally, participation in the IEB, we believe, can reinforce a student's sense of ethical commitment. Although the natural competitive inclination of students undoubtedly sparks their interest in the IEB, in our experience this factor has not dominated the event. We like to think that at the conclusion of the IEB the contestants, judges, moderators, and audience experience a sense of coming together, characteristic of joint participation in a significant and valued activity, guided by shared standards with which the participants deeply identify. This is the way it ought to be in our judgment, and the way we want to keep it.

### **Rules of the IIT IPRO Ethics Bowl**

1. In an Ethics Bowl match each team will be questioned by a moderator on a case. A few weeks before the competition, each team will receive six (6) cases. Each of the cases will be 1 to 2 pages in length. The cases on which teams will be asked questions at the Ethics Bowl will be taken from these six cases. The teams will not know in advance which of the cases they will be asked about at the Ethics Bowl or what the questions will be. **JUDGES AND MODERATORS WILL ALSO RECEIVE THE SIX CASES BEFORE THE COMPETITION. LIKE THE TEAMS, THEY WILL RECEIVE COPIES OF THE CASES BUT NOT COPIES OF THE QUESTIONS. THE JUDGES AND MODERATORS, LIKE THE TEAMS, WILL NOT BE INFORMED IN ADVANCE OF THE SPECIFIC CASES TEAMS WILL BE ASKED ABOUT AT THE ETHICS BOWL.**
2. Teams can be any size but only 5 or fewer can be active participants at any time. Substitutions cannot be made once the initial 5 or fewer are seated and ready for action. Substitutions CANNOT be made once the case is announced. Team members must be undergraduates.
3. During competition books and notes will not be allowed, however, scrap paper to jot down thoughts is permissible. The teams will be given a copy of the case and the question to which they must respond. Teams should wait to use the scratch paper until the case has been announced. Students are permitted to pass notes to one another at any point. At the halfway point in a match teams will be

instructed by the moderator to clear notes taken during the first half of the match from the table, and placed out of sight of all participants.

4. The Moderator will indicate the case with which the team that goes first (hereinafter Team 1) will deal, and then read Team 1's question about the case. (The Moderator will not read aloud the entire case).
5. Team 1 will then have two (2) minutes to confer, after which the team will have up to seven (7) minutes to respond to the Moderator's question. More than one team member may present, but only one team member may speak at a time. The team has the option of requesting two time notifications from the moderator.
6. The opposing team (hereinafter Team 2) receives one minute to confer, and then may use up to five minutes to comment about Team 1's answer to the Moderator's question. More than one team member may contribute to the commentary, but only one team member may speak at a time. The team has the option of requesting two time notifications from the moderator.
7. Team 1 receives one minute to confer and then may use up to five minutes to respond to Team 2's commentary. More than one team member may respond to the commentary, but only one team member may speak at a time. The team has the option of requesting two time notifications from the moderator.
8. The judges then may ask questions to Team 1. EACH JUDGE MAY ASK NO MORE THAN ONE QUESTION WITH A BRIEF FOLLOW-UP QUESTION. THE ENTIRE PERIOD FOR JUDGES QUESTIONS SHALL LAST NO MORE THAN TEN (10) MINUTES. Before asking questions the judges may confer with one another to discuss briefly areas that they want to cover during the question period. Different team members may respond to the questions of different judges. Teams may huddle briefly to discuss their answers to the judges' questions.
9. The judges will evaluate Team 1 and Team 2 on score sheets provided to them (see scoring rules below). AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, THE JUDGES WILL NOT ANNOUNCE TO THE TEAMS THE SCORES THEY HAVE GIVEN THEM.
10. Team 1 and Team 2 will reverse roles for a second round with a different case.
11. At the close of the second round the Moderator will ask the judges to announce the teams' scores for the match (**see scoring rules below**).
12. The team with the highest total number of points is the winner of the match.

### **Scoring Rules**

1. Judges shall evaluate the responses of teams solely in terms of the following criteria:

**Clarity and Intelligibility:** Was the presentation clear and systematic? Regardless of whether or not you agree with the conclusion, did the team give a coherent argument in a clear and succinct manner?

**Avoidance of Ethical Irrelevance:** Did the team avoid ethically irrelevant issues? Or was the team preoccupied with issues that are not ethically relevant or are of minor ethical relevance to the case?

**Identification and Discussion of Central Ethical Dimensions:** Did the team's presentation clearly identify and thoroughly discuss the central ethical dimensions of the case?

**Deliberative Thoughtfulness:** Did the team's presentation indicate both awareness and thoughtful consideration of different viewpoints, including especially those that would loom large in the reasoning of individuals who disagree with the team's position?

2. The judges will score each team as follows:

**0-40 for a team's answer to the Moderator's question (40 best); In evaluating a team's answer the judges will give the team a score of 0-10 relative to each of the four evaluation criteria indicated above and total the sum.**

**0-10 for the opposing team's commentary (10 best);**

**0-10 for the response to the opposing team's commentary, and for the response to the judges questions, by the team that answered the Moderator's question (10 best).**

**Both in evaluating a team's commentary, and the other team's response to the commentary, the judges will take into account the four evaluation criteria indicated above, but give the teams an overall score, rather than a separate point score relative to each of the criteria.**

3. The team with the highest score will be declared the winner. In the case of a tie, first place will be awarded to both teams.