



The Discussion Group Format

Small discussion groups meet each day to review cases and issue papers, which will later be discussed in general sessions with all of the seminar attendees.

Discussion groups are integral elements of the educational effectiveness of the seminar. They serve as a forum where participants test and refine their analyses of cases. This small group setting also provides an opportunity for participants to speak at some length and in greater detail about the case issues than may be possible in the general sessions. Over time, these discussions may be particularly useful for providing each participant with a sense of his or her increasing expertise in the application of the problem-solving skills and methodologies which are developed by case method learning.

Membership in discussion groups has been carefully planned to maximize the potential for conversations that fully leverage the variety of experience and knowledge held by attendees. Each 10- to 12-member group will meet in a prearranged study area throughout the entire seminar. You will receive your assignment upon arrival.

A discussion group leader is designated for each group. It is the leader's responsibility to establish a format for the discussions, which involves all the members and ensures attention to critical features of each case. Generally, the format proceeds from identification and analysis of the major problem and issues in each case, to participants' specific plans of action for dealing with those problems and issues. It should not be the goal of the group to secure agreement or consensus on a single plan of action, but to identify the alternatives so that in the general session each member is prepared to:

1. *state the problems at issue in the case;*
2. *present a course of action which he or she would advise in the particular instance, as well as alternatives;*
3. *formulate carefully and logically the reasons for the course of action; and*
4. *defend the analysis and conclusions in open discussion.*

Useful analysis must employ facts of the specific instance described in the case. **Thorough case preparation for group and class discussion is essential.** A study group session will not add value to your seminar experience if it must be used simply to digest the facts of the case.