

IPRO Team Ethics Assignment

In-Class Ethics Bowl

Description of Exercise

Kelly Laas, Librarian of the Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions, will work with an IPRO group to run an in-class version of the Ethics Bowl, a competition that has been held as part of the IPRO Program in past semesters.

In the Ethics Bowl, a moderator poses questions to teams of three to five students. Questions relate to cases that concern ethical problems on wide ranging topics, such as the classroom (cheating or plagiarism), professional ethics (engineering, law, medicine), or social and political ethics (free speech, gun control, etc.). Special effort will be made to find cases that pose ethical issues relevant directly to an IPRO team's project.

The IPRO team will divide into two competing teams. The teams will receive a set of two or more ethics cases in advance of the competition, which they will need to study in detail and discuss as a group in advance of the ethics bowl. The purpose of the discussion will be to identify the main ethical issues in the cases and work out the position of the team on the issues in preparation for an in-class ethics bowl match with the other team.

During the in-class ethics bowl, which is usually held during an IPRO class period, a panel of judges from CSEP and/or IPRO faculty will pose questions related to the cases and evaluate the answers of each team. Each team will answer one question about one of the cases in an ethics bowl round. The structure for the round is as follows:

1. The team going first, (team one) will have the question read to them and have two minutes to confer.
2. Team one will then have 5 minutes to present their answer.
3. Team two will have one minute to confer, and 4 minutes to respond to team one's initial answer to the question.
4. Team one will then have one minute to confer and 4 minutes to respond to team two's commentary.
5. The discussion will conclude with a 10-15 minute period where the judges will have a chance to ask questions about the case and team one's response. These questions will usually be aimed at getting team one to expand or clarify their analysis of the case.

After the first round is complete, the teams switch, with team two answering a new question about a new case study, and team one providing commentary.

The above procedures of an ethics bowl match are designed to mirror the best approaches to discussion of a complex, difficult to resolve, and highly viewpoint dependent ethical issue – careful analysis of each others' arguments and back-and-forth discussion help clarify the main ethical issues in a case.

The judges will then evaluate the teams' responses according to the following criteria:

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?

(For additional background on the Ethics Bowl see: <http://www.indiana.edu/~appe/ethicsbowl.html> or <http://ethics.iit.edu/index1.php/Programs/Ethics%20Bowl/IPRO%20Ethics%20Bowl>.)

Student Competency Level

Beginning – Good for helping students develop moral awareness, imagination, and understanding

Time Commitment

- 1 Hour doing research on the cases and developing case briefs that outline main points to cover in the initial presentation.
- 1 Hour discussing the case as an ethics bowl team; can either be done in or out of class.
- 45 Minutes to 1 Hour for in-class ethics bowl.
- 1 Hour outside of class writing final summary on case, highlighting the key points discussed.

Tasks Involved

1. Faculty advisor /student representatives work with Kelly Laas in developing the format for in-class ethics bowl, selecting cases to use, and inviting guest judges if desired.
2. Divide IPRO team into two teams; both teams perform case research, write up briefs, and have group discussions about the cases.
3. Hold an in-class ethics bowl
4. Final case write-up, both as a team (and individual reflections if required by the faculty advisor.)

Required Deliverables

The teams will write a team position paper that summarizes how they answered the question posed to them (during their turn as team one during the ethics bowl), highlighting the main ethical issues that loomed large, how they came to an agreement on their approach to the case, and a summary of key arguments that supported their solution to the question posed during the ethics bowl competition. This deliverable should be uploaded to iGroups by the deadline set each semester by the IPRO Program.

If the IPRO faculty advisor requires team members to also submit individual reflection papers, each student on the team will also write a one-page reflection paper, discussing how they prepared individually for the ethics bowl, what they learned from being a part of the discussions about the cases, how their own opinion either matched or differed from that of their team as a whole, and any ways in which they would want to improve either their own preparation and participation in the competition, or how the competition/cases themselves could be improved.