

## ***Preparing for Ethics Bowl Competition***

### *Brainstorming a Case*

- What are the most important facts in the case? Explain.
- What are the most unusual facts or aspects of the case? Explain.
- What are the major ethical issues and the central ethical question raised by this case? Explain.
- What aspects of the case require more research? Explain.

### *Well-trained teams*

- research the case
- respond to the prompt
- carefully consider and appropriately use the facts of the case
- apply ethical perspectives as part of their analysis of the case
- organize and effectively support their argument
- ask good questions (that show that they have listened to and considered the key points of the other team's position)
- exhibit good team work
- demonstrate good communications skills (appropriate for a "layperson" audience)
- effectively employ persuasive/rhetorical skills

### *Good questions*

- are concise
- restate or clearly represent the other team's position
- demonstrate good listening and good note taking skills
- identify and explore the ethical theories/perspectives that support the other teams' position (to include both effective and possible problems concerning the identification and application of the theories/perspectives)
- offer a better rationale or justification
- focus on whether or not there is a valid connection between the position and the justificatory framework
- point out that the other team has missed or failed to clearly identify key ethical issues

### *Good responses to questions*

- respond to the question (as it was actually presented)
- add to the overall argument (rather than simply repeating points from earlier in the match)

### *Remember*

Make eye contact with the judges, develop a logical structure for the argument, use clarifying examples, and remember principles of rhetoric (*logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*).

## NCICU Ethics Bowl Judging Procedures

### Reasonable Disagreement

The ethical case studies are designed to address controversial issues about which intelligent, thoughtful people can reasonably disagree. The scores of the teams, therefore, should be based on the quality of their arguments, not on whether or not they adopted one position rather than another. The team that makes the strongest argument should win the most points. Moral decisions are made case by case based on applying critical thought to difficult situations. Judges should not let whether or not they agree with the team's conclusion influence their assessment.

### Research

Successful presentations should include a clear and detailed understanding of the facts given in the case. Since cases often involve details that are not general knowledge, research will often be necessary. Students should be prepared to identify sources of facts gained through independent research. While research is helpful, even necessary as a learning tool, judges should focus predominantly on the quality of arguments presented.

### Presentation Skills

The focus of the Ethics Bowl is on the quality of the arguments made by student teams in support of their position on an ethical issue revealed by a specific case. Good arguments will show understanding of and insight into the ethical issue; provide solid support of the team's position with relevant facts, statistics, and examples; and will be clear and persuasive. **In 2015, judges also will be asked to rate the presentation skills of the teams** — e.g., eye contact, effective voice inflection and clarity in speaking, and the use of language that is appropriate for a general audience — qualities that help make the content of the argument effective and persuasive.

### Moral Theory

Judges should be looking for good arguments that employ clear ethical principles. This does not require that teams put those arguments explicitly within some formal ethical theory. What really matters is that they grasp important ethical principle(s), and are able to clearly articulate and defend them well against critique. For example, if a team has a good argument about fairness they should be rewarded for this, whether they drape it in theory or just leave it in plain English. The above should not be interpreted to mean that teams should be discouraged from using ethical theory. Rather, if they do they should clearly explain the theory(ies) and not merely drop names (a really good argument based on such theories is possible).

### Scoring Procedures

Judges are asked to score each team individually throughout the duration of the match instead of as a group at the end of the match. Judges are asked to use the Scoring Sheet for Judges for their individual awarding of scores. Each judge must vote for Team 1 or Team 2 as the more outstanding team based on the overall quality of their presentations and answers to judges' questions. Judges individually will assign a "W" in the space provided on the scoring sheet defining their choice for the winner of the round. Judges will score teams between 0-10 for each scoring category following the suggested guidelines on the Scoring Sheet for Judges. Each team can earn up to 90 points from each judge during one round.