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University of South Florida St. Petersburg, Office of University Advancement.

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Fourteen undergraduate students will participate in the Southeastern Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl (EB) at the University of Central Florida in Orlando on Saturday, Oct. 29. The event, which is hosted by the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, provides students with an opportunity to research, argue, and defend their assessments pertaining to some of the complex issues in modern society. Topics range from business and health to interpersonal relationships and politics.

"The students enjoy the Ethics Bowl experience because it gives them a chance to use critical thinking skills in real-world situations," said Leila Davis, adjunct faculty at the USFSP Bishop Center for Ethical Leadership who teaches the Practical Ethics/Ethics Bowl course and serves as the team’s coach. Davis has vast experience in debate, having served as a St. Petersburg High School teacher and coach of the school’s ethics bowl team. Her team won the Regional Ethics Bowl for high school students eight years ago, and won the national bowl in 2013.

Davis had recently retired from St. Petersburg High School when she received a call last year about teaching the Ethics Bowl course at USFSP with Dr. Stephen Bitch, an adjunct and founding director of the Bishop Center.

"It is exciting to be a part of the process because the students are learning transferrable skills," Davis said. "They’re able to present an argument and a case about something they believe in."

USFSP became part of the Southeast Regional Ethics Bowl in 2004 and was led by Dr. Deni Elliott. Eleanor Poynter Chair in Media Ethics & Press Policy and chair of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies. Originally consisting of journalism students, she led the team until the 2011-12 academic year when she stepped down to go on sabbatical. The team lay dormant for a few years until Elliott asked the Bishop Center to take it over in 2015.

"It is better for the Ethics Bowl team to be part of the Bishop Center because that opens it up to the whole student body," said Elliott.

"The ethics bowl embodies the ideal university experience—rigorous academic preparation with a real-world test," said David O’Neill, staff assistant in the Bishop Center. "We’re proud of the students’ dedication and know the skills they’re acquiring will transfer into other aspects of their lives."

Since 2015, the Ethics Bowl team has grown from three to a record 14 students. Three of the students returned from last year to participate in this year’s event. One of the returning students is Marcus Rubenstein, 19, a Biology sophomore from Jacksonville. Rubenstein said he was motivated to participate again due to his competitive nature.

"We, as a first-time team, didn’t do as well as I would have liked," he said about last year’s IEE performance. "However, I also realized that we were very inexperienced in comparison to many of the other teams."

Another student, Jonathan Perez, 21, is dedicating his time to participate on the team even though he is not registered for the class.

"I think the ethics bowl helps you understand the underlying issues, and makes you learn to apply those critical thinking skills," said Perez, an Accounting senior in the Kate Tiedemann College of Business.

The team is scheduled to compete with teams from other colleges and universities. Each round will consist of two teams facing off with five-student panels to discuss two cases. Team members can be rotated off and replaced with others between rounds.

"This is very competitive, and we are confident that the team will compete well," said Dr. Bill Heller, dean of the College of Education and director of the Bishop Center.

"The beauty of this effort is that it includes these hard-working USFSP students from programs across the campus."
Largest USFSP Team to Compete in Regional Ethics Bowl

Fourteen undergraduate students will participate in the Southeastern Regional Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl (IEB) at the University of Central Florida in Orlando on Saturday, Oct. 29. The event, which is hosted by the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics, provides students with an opportunity to research, argue, and defend their assessments pertaining to some of the complex issues in modern society. Topics range from business and health to interpersonal relationships and politics.

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