

ANNUAL COLLEGE ETHICS SYMPOSIUM

INTRODUCTION TO CASE STUDIES AND STUDENT DISCUSSION

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The case discussion session is the heart of the Ethics Symposium and will be in small groups of seven or eight students. The six hours you spend in your small group will be led by a person who has achieved success as a business or professional person in the world of work. So that you may get the most benefit from your attendance, we offer the following guidelines.

- ◆ Reading each of the 12 cases **before** you arrive at the Symposium is necessary. Besides contributing to the discussion of each case, you most likely will be asked to introduce one or two cases by summarizing the case and noting the ethical issues.
- ◆ The purpose of discussing the cases is to understand the **process** whereby one arrives at an ethically responsible decision. To begin a discussion, it is more important to seek answers to the **right** questions than to search for **right** answers to the **wrong** questions. You will likely find that some cases do not have a simple right-wrong answer but have several options based upon different perspectives and possible outcomes. The goal is to arrive at the most ethically responsible position based upon certain core values and ethical principles.
- ◆ The discussion leaders are facilitators. While they may share a bit of their experience or point of view, the emphasis will be upon student participation with the sharing of different views and the exploration of the ethical issue. They will encourage you to be the “devil’s advocate” so that different sides of the issue will be examined.
- ◆ We encourage students to introduce ethical situations they have faced or are dealing with now to highlight the reality of the case and possibly help others gain insight. The discussion leader will ask you to maintain confidentiality of personal situations that are shared.
- ◆ Three ethical codes are provided for your use. Please refer to them and practice using them in your thinking and discussion. We encourage you to bring a code of ethics related to your major field. The following web site can be used to search for a code related to your professional or business field:

ethics.iit.edu (go to Codes of Ethics Collections)

As further examples, many public and private organizations publish a code of ethics and ask their employees to attest that they will comply with them. The following links are for business codes of ethics for IBM and UPS.

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- ◆ Get to know your discussion leaders. They have a rich and varied background in business, the professions, and organizational leadership. Together they have more than 250 years of experience.
- ◆ So, come prepared for an exciting and challenging discussion of some of the important ethical issues of the day. There will be no tests, grades, or reporting back to the large group. You are the CEO—the *chief ethics officer* of your life.

“Ability may get you to the top, but it takes character to keep you there.”

John Wooden