

NEW Opportunity: Engineering Ethics Slam

by Angelina Oberdan

On April 10th at 6:30 pm in the Self Auditorium of the Strom Thurmond Institute, technical writing students held an Engineering Ethics Slam. The first of its kind, this event was a pilot to learn from and it is hoped that sharing information on the experience will help establish a campus series of ethics slams focused on varied student populations.

Inspired by Ann Arbor's "Big Questions Ethics Slam," the Rutland Institute for Ethics partnered with the Pearce Center for Professional Communication's Client Based Program to create a similar series at Clemson. This first ethics slam was organized by Angelina Oberdan's technical writing students. It was based on their research and proposed plan for the event. Not only were they responsible for self-managing and executing a professional event, they are required to soon provide analysis and instructions so that other student groups can hold similar slams in future semesters.

The Engineering Ethics Slam is was debate-style event wherein teams of students were tasked with ethical dilemmas and their responses were judged by professors (an industry professional was a last minute cancellation). The dilemmas engaged the teams of students, as well as their supportive audience, in real world scenarios as they were assessed on how they critically examined the situation and arrived at a decision as to how to act ethically.

This event was a great "pilot" that presented opportunities for students, professors, and community professionals (although not as many attended as hoped – allowing the students to realize the difficulty of getting an after work hours commitment for the event).

- Students who participated in the event had the chance to win prizes and as well show off their awareness of ethics and decision-making abilities before their peers and audience. Student attendants showed their support for ethics, learned from the discussed dilemmas, and networked with the audience.
- Three professors from different disciplines participated as judges and some just came out to observe and support an ethics related event at Clemson. Some also helped support the event by encouraging their students to attend.
- In an after program debriefing in class, it was brainstormed that perhaps for the next Ethics Slam, the students or organization ask the Michelin Career Center to collaborate as they are the experts at getting professionals on campus. This event can be a great opportunity to see Clemson's best in a way that challenges the students and couldn't be observed in a traditional career fair or interview.

In you're interested in planning a future ethics slam or would like further details, please contact Angelina Oberdan at angelio@clemson.edu.