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IU Ethics Bowl Team Makes Third Consecutive Appearance at National Championship

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The Indiana University Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl team will compete for the third consecutive year in the national championship tournament on February 26, 2017, in Dallas, Texas. IU qualified for the national championship by placing fourth out of twenty-one schools at the Central States Regional Ethics Bowl held at Marian University in Indianapolis on Saturday, November 12. In the last two years, IU has advanced to the semifinals and quarterfinals of the national championship tournament.

Two teams from IU competed at the regional competition, and each team went undefeated in a series of three matches against other universities. The top five universities in the regional competition, based on cumulative points from all three matches, advanced to the national championship. Team members for IU’s first team are Alex Johnson (captain), Reyan Coskun, Ali Henke, Lauren Meadows and Nikhil Nandu; the roster for the second team comprises Kendra Obermaier (captain), Ryan Cortopassi, Daniel Hao, Naomi Farahan, Elaina Roach and Tom Sweeney. The teams are coached by PhD candidates Joe Bartzel and Sarah Adams.

Bartzel emphasized the hard work that IU’s team members put into preparation for the competition: “I ask a lot of my team members, and they’re an incredibly bright and motivated group of students who rose to every challenge that I set for them leading up to this competition.” Adams agreed that the team’s extensive preparation paid off at the competition, saying, “I’m really proud to see both our teams go undefeated and improve from round to round.”

Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl is an academic competition in which students work in teams to develop positions on a variety of complex ethical scenarios. This year’s regional competition included cases on political correctness in standup comedy, religious exemptions for military personnel, and mandatory recycling programs. When asked about the benefits of participating in Ethics Bowl, team member Reyan Coskun emphasized the professional skills that she sees as a boost to her future career as a researcher: “Overall, Ethics Bowl has helped me become a better speaker. Public speaking is an underrated skill that is so essential in communicating your ideas to scientists and the general public.” Teammate Tom Sweeney, who was competing at his first Ethics Bowl competition, added, “The biggest surprise is how much fun it is!”

Indiana University Ethics Bowl is housed in the Political and Civic Engagement program, with additional sponsorships from the Office of the Provost, the Hutton Honors College, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Religious Studies, the Department of Philosophy, and the Department of Business Law and Ethics in the Kelley School of Business.