



The Department of Philosophy at Simon Fraser University is proud to have organized the **first British Columbia Regional Ethics Bowl**. Five high school teams competed to demonstrate their ability to critically engage with each other about current ethical issues—social, political, economic, scientific, cultural, and beyond.

An Ethics Bowl is both a collaborative and competitive team event, in which grade 9-12 students study, imagine, criticize, and compare bold strategies. They may even amend their original positions when faced with convincing arguments. Students have opportunities to pose and respond to probing questions, resulting in a deepening awareness of the stakes and principles that animate the discussion. For this event, teams participated in a round-robin style tournament, following by semi-finals and finals; the tournament was held at SFU Burnaby campus on April 13, 2019.



Lunch with the participants!

We would like to thank the five participating schools and congratulate them for such an impressive intellectual display:

- Ideal Mini School, Vancouver
- Prince of Wales Secondary, Vancouver
- Princess Margaret Secondary, Surrey
- Sands Secondary, Delta
- Vancouver Technical Secondary, Vancouver

Each team was led by wonderful teachers who organized the teams, helped them to prepare, and accompanied them to the event. We would like to warmly thank the following people for their wonderful efforts: Michael Bodnar from Ideal Mini, Tony Lee and Shauna Underwood from Prince of



Round 1 match: Sands vs Princess Margaret

Wales, Michael Hughes from Princess Margaret, Grant Jamieson from Sands, and Dale Martelli and Liam Patterson-Gram from Van Tech.

We would also like to thank our team of volunteers who helped organize, moderate, and judge the event: Sylvia Berryman (Prof., UBC), Cody Britson (MA, SFU), Ian Brooks (Lecturer, FIC), Tim Christie (Lecturer, FIC), Lyle Crawford (Lecturer, SFU and FIC), Frank Cunningham (Prof. Emeritus, Toronto), Tom Donaldson (Prof., UBC), Nicolas Fillion (Prof., SFU), Michael Picard (Prof., Douglas), Elliot Rossiter (Prof., Douglas), Sarah Hogarth Rossiter (Lecturer, Douglas and Alexander), Somayeh Tohidi (MA, SFU), Jennifer Wang (Prof., SFU), Shimin Zhao (MA, SFU). Their generous involvement made this a distinguished event, exemplifying the personal and intellectual virtues that student participants will develop!



Prince of Wales preparing their strategy



Van Tech preparing for round 3

The first three matches of the day were quite inspired! As a result the winner of almost every match was decided by a split decision, where two judges favoured one team and one judge the other. Since an odd number of teams participated, one team sat out each of the first three rounds, earning a point by default. The

teams used the opportunity to observe the performance of teams from other schools, and further prepare their arguments for upcoming rounds.

After the first three rounds, two teams emerged as leaders (Van Tech and Prince of Wales), with a perfect 3 points. Following them were three teams in a dead heat, each with one point. Following a tie-break that eliminated Princess Margaret, despite a very solid performance. The two semi-finals saw Sands Secondary face Van Tech, and Prince of Wales face Ideal Mini School.

After commanding performances from all teams, judges compiled scores and reached their decision: the finalists, Sands Secondary and Ideal Mini School, entered their fifth hour of debate with focus, determination, and energy. The two performances were so close that one judge assessed the match as a tie! However, when all was counted, the **winner of the first BC Regional Ethics Bowl was Sands Secondary**. Congratulations to Sands for earning the title, and to Ideal Mini School for being runner up!



Final Round: Sands Secondary vs Ideal Mini School

The two finalist teams then moved on to the **National final**, held in Winnipeg on April 24-25, 2019. Their trip was generously supported by the Canadian High School Ethics Bowl organization and by the BC Social Studies Teachers Association, with our thanks for their generosity. The event, preceded by the Ethical Games for the Mind, was graciously hosted by the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, under the masterful direction of Estelle Lamoureux.



For this first edition of the National, eight teams qualified for the competition, six from Manitoba, and two from British Columbia. The teams from Manitoba benefited from having participated in Ethics Bowls for the past five years, and so our teams unfortunately did not manage to advance to the semi-finals. Their excellent performance, however, is encouraging: watch out Manitoba, we are coming for the title next year!



The BC teams gathering at a café in Winnipeg on the eve of the National Final.

The ethical cases discussed by the teams for both the Regional and the Final of the 2019 Ethics Bowl were the following (the question are those we used for the Regional at SFU):

1. Post human ethics: Should performance-enhancing implantable devices be banned, partly or fully, in the same way that performance-enhancing drugs are banned from athletic competition?
2. Victim impact statements: To what extent should our legal system seek to incorporate victim impact statements into sentencing for criminal offences?
3. Robot labour: Will robot labour increase or decrease human welfare over the next decades and, if possible, what policies should be put in place to ensure that the social benefits of robot labour outweigh the disadvantages?
4. Superheroes: Does the superhero culture enable or undermine the development of a well-calibrated moral compass?
5. Fake news: Can fake news be regulated without unduly restraining freedom of the press? And if so, how should it be regulated?
6. Carbon culture: Should the big lifestyle changes required to tackle climate change be primarily grassroots, individuals or communities volunteering to make different choices about how to live, or should it be mandated by government policies?
7. Nuclear weapons ban: Should the international community adopt a complete ban on nuclear weapons, including disarming those that already exist? If so, how can such a ban be enforced?
8. Refugee crisis: Do wealthier, more stable nations have a duty to take in as many refugees as they can? If so, how can we determine how many we "can" take in?
9. Child welfare crisis: Is the best approach to improving child welfare in Indigenous communities to (1) provide support to specific communities (and if so, who should do it, and how), or (2) to focus on alleviating poverty more generally?
10. Gun ban: In Canada, is the balance of the risks and benefits associated with the possession of firearms warranting a federal gun ban and, if so, what kind of ban?



Opening ceremony of the National Finals of the Ethics Bowl at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg