

Sweet Briar College Students to Compete in Statewide VFIC Applied Ethics Bowl on AI Ethics

Sweet Briar College students to compete in VFIC's Ethics Bowl, tackling complex AI ethics issues alongside Virginia's top independent colleges.

AMHERST, VA, UNITED STATES, February 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Three Sweet Briar College students are set to showcase their critical thinking and debate skills at the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges' (VFIC) 25th Annual Applied Ethics Bowl, presented by TowneBank. The competition, which brings together some of the brightest students from Virginia's top independent colleges, will be held on Friday, Feb. 7, 2025, at the University of Richmond.



Benedict Hall is a prominent academic and artistic space on the Sweet Briar College campus, named in honor of Mary K. Benedict, the institution's first president.

Tackling the Ethical Dilemmas of Artificial Intelligence

This year's Ethics Bowl theme, "Ethics and Artificial Intelligence," could not be more relevant as AI rapidly transforms industries, education, and everyday life. Sweet Briar's team—Nadia Abrego '26, Gail Faulkner '25, and Nathalie Schelin '27—will engage in thought-provoking deliberations, presenting well-researched arguments on complex case studies under the guidance of faculty coordinator Dr. Nathaniel Smith, assistant professor of economics.

The competition will challenge students to examine AI's implications, including privacy concerns, biases in machine learning, ethical decision-making in automation, and AI's role in shaping society. Sweet Briar's team will compete against top collegiate teams from Virginia's prestigious independent colleges, defending their positions before a panel of judges.

A Prestigious Platform for Future Leaders

One of the most distinctive aspects of the VFIC Ethics Bowl is its real-world engagement with

industry professionals. Experts from business, cybersecurity, education, engineering, law, and finance will listen to team presentations and offer insights, providing students with invaluable exposure to ethical decision-making in various sectors.

The Ethics Bowl provides students valuable opportunities to develop analytical and communication skills while engaging with pressing moral issues. Sweet Briar's team has dedicated significant effort to researching and crafting compelling arguments, ensuring they are well-prepared to contribute insightful perspectives to this important discussion.

Expanding the Reach: Economics at Sweet Briar College

Participation in the Ethics Bowl is a natural extension of [Sweet Briar College's economics program](#), emphasizing analytical thinking, ethical decision-making, and real-world applications. The program, housed within the Department of Business and Economics, provides students with a comprehensive understanding of economic theory and policy, equipping them with the skills to evaluate and address pressing societal issues—such as the ethical implications of artificial intelligence.

Under the guidance of Dr. Nathaniel Smith, students engage in a rigorous, discussion-based curriculum that fosters intellectual curiosity, problem-solving, and leadership. The program integrates experiential learning opportunities, including research projects, internships, and case competitions, allowing students to apply economic models to real-world scenarios.

By participating in events like the [VFIC Applied Ethics Bowl](#), Sweet Briar students gain valuable experience in articulating complex ideas, defending ethical positions, and engaging with industry professionals. This reinforces the College's commitment to preparing students for success in business, policy, and law. With a strong foundation in quantitative reasoning and ethical analysis, Sweet Briar's economics graduates are well-equipped to tackle global challenges and lead in diverse fields.

"The Ethics Bowl is a powerful example of how Sweet Briar prepares students for leadership beyond the classroom," said Dr. Christopher Smith, Vice President of Enrollment Management at



Dr. Nathaniel Webb Smith, Assistant Professor of Economics, Sweet Briar College

Sweet Briar College. "Through experiences like this, our students sharpen their ability to think critically, communicate persuasively, and engage in meaningful discourse—skills essential for success in today's evolving professional landscape. Our economics program, in particular, equips students with the analytical tools and ethical foundation needed to navigate complex global challenges with confidence and integrity."

Event Schedule & Public Attendance

The competition will kick off with an opening session at 10:30 a.m. in the Ukrop Auditorium at the University of Richmond. The first round of debates begins at 11 a.m., with subsequent rounds scheduled for 2 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. The event will culminate with a reception at 5 p.m. and the championship round at 6 p.m. in the Jepson Alumni Center's Robins Pavilion.

The public is invited to attend and watch the rounds free of charge. The winning team will be announced at 6:30 p.m. Sweet Briar College takes pride in its tradition of cultivating articulate, ethical leaders, and this competition is an exciting platform for students to refine their ability to navigate complex moral questions. For more details on Sweet Briar's economics program, visit <https://www.sbc.edu/academics/economics/> or contact Sweet Briar College Admissions at 434-381-6142.

For more information about the VFIC Applied Ethics Bowl, visit VFIC Ethics Bowl

<https://www.vfic.org/ethicsbowl>

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