BELIEF
Building Ethical Leaders Using an Integrated Ethics Framework
annual report
2017-2018
Thank You to Our Corporate Partners
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Students compete in Arizona

Two present case at 2017 Eller Collegiate Ethics Case Competition

By Noah Templin

This year LEAD returned to the University of Arizona and competed in the 15th Annual Eller Collegiate Ethics Case Competition. University of Arizona’s Eller School of Management hosts the competition for 25 of the top private and public business schools in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The purpose of this invitation-only competition is to expose students to a controversial business ethics case in which they can apply the skills they have gained in their life as a professional and a student. The NIU veteran competitor Noah Templin and first-time competitor Robby Bishop were the LEAD members chosen to represent NIU this year.

Noah and Robby had three weeks to research a case and prepare a presentation for a panel of judges, while competing against other teams. The teams were asked to present a proposed course of action against a hacker that stole intellectual knowledge and customer data. Taking on the role of co-chairmen of the Board of Directors of a fictitious life-support system company, Robby and Noah were the deciding vote on whether to act offensively and hack the organization back or play defense by securing the corporation’s network against future hacking incidents. Space Inc., the life-support company, was assisted by a cyber security company named Death Knell Inc. Death Knell was hired before the attack. The objective of the case was to evaluate the financial, legal, and ethical implications of each option (to hack back or not), and decide on which course of action the company should take.

Robby and Noah spent numerous hours researching the financial and legal aspects of the two potential options presented to them, while implementing the BELIEF Decision-Making Model to provide insight to the ethical issues of the case. They presented their case before the BELIEF Corporate Advisory Board members and received valuable feedback to help shape their official presentation. The team also received help from other LEAD members, LEAD alumnus Sam Kunde, Dr. McCoy and other professionals. Unfortunately, the competitors were not able to make it to the final round, but they gained an enormous amount of experience about the process of making an ethical decision, how to research ethical dilemmas, and presenting these dilemmas in a succinct and meaningful way. Robby anticipates returning next year and improving upon the success of the team.

Dr. McCoy reports that he could not have been more proud of the NIU representation this year. In his words, “We haven’t had a team to perform this well since we took second place in 2011.”

Ethical awareness HEATs up campus

Leaders in Ethics and Academic Discipline (LEAD) is a component within the BELIEF Program whose main goal is to improve student ethical awareness. One way LEAD does this is through their Huskie Ethical Awareness Talk (HEAT) sessions. Each HEAT session features a different guest speaker who speaks on ethics and ethical issues he or she has faced throughout his/her career. This semester LEAD was able to host two HEAT sessions.

The first HEAT session was held on Tuesday, Oct.

10 and featured Luis Santos Rivas, the Director of the Latino Resource at NIU. Mr. Rivas spoke on how the cancellation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) affects immigrants and the ethical dilemma that is created. He spoke about ethical dilemmas he faces in his current career, recent current events, and the long term effects of current legislation. LEAD Vice President D’Shawn Louise was the moderator for the event and asked Luis Rivas several questions regarding ethics in his profession and DACA. Some of the questions included: “What’s the most ethically challenging aspect of your work life? How important is ethics in both your work and personal life? How has ethics changed in your profession from when you were in college to now?” Overall, the event went well and the students learned more about Latino Studies at NIU; ultimately helping bridge the College of Business to Ethical awareness HEATs up campus.

See Ethical Awareness on Page 11.
The UMREB experience: competing in the Midwest

By Brittany Vincent

This fall, Dr. McCoy and the members of LEAD decided it would be a wonderful opportunity for LEAD to participate in the Upper Midwest Regional Ethics Bowl (UMREB). The group has not competed in many years because we have hosted or co-hosted at other schools. The 2017 Ethics Bowl was hosted by Oakland University in Auburn Hills, Michigan. Dr. McCoy and the members of LEAD travelled to Oakland University to not only participate in the competition, but to gain experience on how it was organized. LEAD is very excited to announce that it will be hosting UMREB during the 2018-2019 school year!

In the weeks before the competition, the team spent many hours working together, reading and studying each case carefully. Before we knew it, it was time to travel six hours to Auburn Hills in Dr. McCoy's famous van. On Saturday, Nov. 18, the competition was in full swing! The UMREB consisted of 26 total teams from 18 different schools in the Midwest region. In preparation for the competition, each team was given 13 separate cases to review, and the team was expected to debate the ethical topic in question from any case chosen by judges in each round. Jack Hinds, Brittany Vincent, and Matt Luhring were the three participants from LEAD that attended UMREB.

Hinds expressed what it was like before entering the competition room in round one. “Going into the first round we were pretty nervous, because we were not exactly sure what to expect; but with all our hard work we were confident in our preparation.”

In the first round, the LEAD team performed better than expected as both teams were well versed on the cases that were given by the judges. The first two cases we did not win, but our scores were very close with the other team. During the third round, the LEAD team was successful, and luckily with their favorite case, won the round. In round four, the team was not as successful. We competed against Ripon College who had a very talented team and went on to win the entire UMREB competition for the fourth year in a row. Even though NIU did not end up placing, we were very proud of our team for their hard work and the knowledge they gained from UMREB. It was a fantastic experience seeing how this competition was run and we are looking forward to having the honor of hosting it ourselves here at NIU in 2018!

LEAD Heat Events on Rita Crundwell

By Tera Lima

The two events held by the Leadership in Ethics and Academic Discipline (LEAD) Program during the spring of 2018 semester included HEAT events about the Dixon, Illinois fraud case. Both of the events focused on the embezzlement of an estimated $53.7 million over 22 years by the admitted operator, Rita Crundwell. This embezzlement is believed to be the largest municipal fraud in American history. Crundwell served as the city’s comptroller and treasurer for more than three decades where she was trusted by her coworkers to control bank accounts and own financial processes. Little did they know, Crundwell had been leading a double life of glamour that was funded by her embezzlement scheme. These embezzled funds were used by Rita Crundwell to finance her championship American Quarter Horse breeding operation.

Our first Rita Crundwell HEAT event was showing

Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Nan Qin, professor of finance

By Zachary Kalk

As the year ends, we get a chance to recognize outstanding faculty in our semi-annual Faculty Spotlight for Ethics. We were honored to have the opportunity to sit down with Professor Nan Qin and get to know him a little better. Qin began his education at Xi’an Jiaotong University in China where he earned his undergraduate degree in computer science. Shortly after graduating he made the decision to travel to the United States from China to continue his education. After completing his Master of Science degree in financial engineering, Qin continued to earn his Ph.D. at Virginia Tech.

Once he completed his doctorate, he began his first assistant professorship at Christopher Newport University and has just recently joined Northern Illinois University prior to the 2017 fall semester. Qin teaches courses on risk management and investments.

While talking with Qin, he seemed excited to join the College of Business and so far his experience has been great. He even states “My favorite aspect about NIU is the wonderful faculty” who have welcomed him with open arms. Because Qin is still relatively new to the university, he is eager to participate on the Faculty for Ethics committee and was also honored to be representing the Finance Department. Throughout the discussion, Qin shared how he deals with ethical dilemmas. He said that when he is faced with a decision that lies in the grey area of being unethical or ethical, he considers what the ramifications are of each decision he has to make and how those decisions impact the people he values. He strongly advised that students use this technique when they are faced with their own dilemmas. The technique that he uses closely resembles the one listed as the “Mom Test” listed on the BELIEF Decision Making Guide.

With new faculty like Qin joining the College of Business, we continue to promote ethical decision-making among students and staff at NIU. He is proud to be a part of the College of Business and hopes he can continue to be a resource for students to pursue their desired career.

Qin is prepared to help build upon the BELIEF program’s success within NIU College of Business.

HEAT

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of the documentary titled All the Queen’s Horses. This documentary was directed by Kelly Pope and explains the Dixon fraud case, how one woman could steal so much money without being noticed and the effects of the embezzlement. Kelly Pope also joined us for her documentary debut to talk about the documentary itself, as well as to answer any remaining questions about the fraud case. She then showed a follow-up video of one of Crundwell’s coworkers and member of the city board, who explained how he never noticed Crundwell’s fraud prior to 2012. Pope explained that the question she receives the most after audiences watch her documentary is “how did she get away with it?” To answer this, Pope described in detail the steps that Crundwell had used, the background information on the importance of her position, and most importantly, the amount of trust that Crundwell’s coworkers had placed in her.

Our second HEAT event focusing on Rita Crundwell was with Paula Meyer. After Crundwell was arrested in 2012, Paula Meyer, an NIU alumna, took over her position. Paula Meyer graduated from NIU with a Master’s of Accounting Science in 1987. LEAD invited Meyer to speak in front of an audience of students about the embezzlement and some of the challenges she had faced after taking on the position. She described to the audience that she has further helped the city establish a new financial system as well as an accounting software, and has created new policies that follow specific IRS guidelines. When asked about the ethical challenges she was faced with after becoming the finance director for Dixon, she explained that the hardest part was facing people and their resistance to change. Many of the individuals in the city of Dixon trusted Meyer, however many were hesitant to change the way they work, even if it meant a future scam would be prevented. After helping Dixon recover from the large embezzlement and debt crisis, Meyer will be resigning from her financial director position with the city of Dixon and will be assuming the Lee County treasurer elected position.
The Alumni Experience

Betsy Lima

By Tera Lima

Betsy Lima started at Northern Illinois University in 2010, where she chose to major in Accountancy. She chose accounting because of her passion and experience with numbers. Prior to NIU, Betsy gained accounting experience working as an accounting clerk at W.R. Meadows and as a senior accounting clerk at First Card Bank, now a part of Chase Bank. She was involved with student organizations while she attended NIU and continues to stay in contact as an NIU alumni today. Betsy worked with Student Accountancy Society for one semester, assisted with the CPA prep course, and served as the secretary of LEAD while she was a student. This was a lot considering she was also a stay-at-home mom for her three children at the time. One of the many things LEAD accomplished while she was in the program was running the first year of the NIU Ethics Case Competition. At its founding, the case competition hosted by LEAD was only for NIU students, but has since expanded to area high school students. The case competition was quite successful and set a new standard for LEAD.

After studying accountancy at NIU, Betsy graduated in 2012 and started her career as an auditor for McGladrey, now known as RSM. She kept this job for about a year and then moved on to audit in a smaller firm for a couple years. At McGladrey, Betsy assisted with audits of manufacturers, construction companies, government, and healthcare clients. She gained experience auditing and reviewing cash, investments, accounts payable, and accounts receivable (just to name a few). While she really enjoyed working for McGladrey, she left to work at another CPA firm called Borhart Spellmeyer & Company so she could be closer to home.

While auditing, Betsy’s job entailed making sure generally accepted accounting principles were being followed and reported properly. This caused her to be faced with many ethical dilemmas throughout her auditing career. Her first experience of fraud was when a bookkeeper told her about a couple of suspicious transactions. Betsy described it as a very stressful experience because it was difficult knowing that if she

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Liz Klawans

By Robby Bishop

Liz Klawans started her first year at Northern Illinois University in August 2010 as an Accountancy major. She finished her Bachelor of Science in May 2014 and followed with a Master of Accounting Science a year later. As an Accountancy major, Klawans was a very busy and active student, preparing herself for the real-world and a career in accounting. She got involved with LEAD during her junior year and was very important in organizing the Ethics Case Competition and the numerous BELIEF Week events. The Ethics Case Competition and BELIEF Week are signature events, and LEAD takes pride in how they are run. She was also heavily involved with Delta Sigma Pi and Student Accountancy Society. She worked in the College of Business undergraduate advising office. Throughout graduate school, she worked as a graduate assistant.

Klawans interned at Miller Cooper, a CPA firm headquartered in Deerfield, Illinois her senior year. She started her career at Miller Cooper after graduation. She is now a senior at the firm. This involves leading different client engagements and supervising staff members. Miller

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Adam Cox of Northwestern Mutual

Adam Cox’s then girlfriend Shawna said, “If you want to be with me the rest of your life, you better go to the career fair and figure out what you want to do…” Twelve years later, he’s with the exact firm he interviewed with on that fateful day in March of 2005. He is now Managing Director at Northwestern Mutual-Elgin, leading an office with 10 full time financial advisors (two NIU alumni) and six to 10 college financial representatives (currently two NIU Students). Adam represents his company as a corporate partner for the last five years on the NIU College of Business’ BELIEF Board.

Adam Cox graduated from Bishop McNamara High School in Kankakee, IL, then proceeded to attend Parkland Community College in Champaign for two years. He was recruited to play basketball and earned an associate’s degree in marketing. After two years at Parkland, he attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, graduating in 2005 with a degree in speech communications.

Being attracted to the opportunity Northwestern Mutual provided, one of having the opportunity to have an impact as well as the lifestyle it offered, Adam said the recruiter made him feel like he was the only person in the room. He knew right then and there that was what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. He started at Northwestern Mutual as a Financial Representative, but soon got the added responsibility of being the College Unit Director. This entailed overseeing the internship program along with his normal duties as a Financial Representative. Being able to interact with college kids was a way to get to know them. Adam was not that far removed so he was able to easily relate to them and enjoyed watching a 20-year-old student grow and evolve within the internship program.

Even with advising and running the internship program, Adam wanted to do more. He moved into the role of Recruiting Field Director. There, Adam was in charge of recruiting and developing new representatives that joined the business. He enjoyed this role because of the opportunity to impact exponentially by teaching others what was taught to him by his mentors, Wendy and Jim. Adam then became Managing Director, much like being recruiting field director, but running the office in Elgin. “Having an impact and legacy can be stressful and challenging, but in life, we are forced to grow, and there gets to a point we aren’t forced to grow and it’s all about choice. I saw my Dad and how hard he worked in corporate America, and I saw what it took for him to be a part of things, like my games, and he did a phenomenal job, but I also saw how hard that was. My wife and I believe in living a life by design, not a life by default in being the maker of our own destiny and making our own calendar.” With the ability to create his own calendar, Adam is able to take his daughters to breakfast every Wednesday, sharing lessons like, “We become what we think about.”

Adam was first exposed to ethics as a kid. He learned that “trust is like a bank account; it takes a long time to build it up and one stupid mistake to lose it all.” These thoughts governed his behavior and was great exposure to ethics. This prepared him for the day-to-day ethical issues he would face in his career. “We are dealing with people’s livelihood’s, life goals and aspirations. People rely on us to provide sound solutions and advice. Unfortunately, there are still advisors out there who don’t act in a client’s best interest and we know the Bernie Madoffs of the world exist out there.” Not only does Adam need to act ethically, but in his field, his clients need to be ethical as well. For example: if a client is a smoker, they may be able to get a lower premium on life insurance if they don’t smoke, but need to make the ethical decision to be truthful. “I don’t envy younger millennials; a lot of companies are setting them up to fail in my opinion. It’s one thing to have a fun environment that fosters growth, but we must remember they are impressionable and are setting forth habits in life that will dictate their future. It’s our job as leaders to put people in a position to be successful, and as we tell our daughters, they need to be the best version of themselves.”

Adam has been involved in the BELIEF Program since Northwestern Mutual-Elgin has been in existence. Northwestern Mutual corporate headquarters was involved with a similar program at a school in Arizona, and when they found out about BELIEF, Adam says, “It was a no brainer.” The woman who originally recruited him thought that he should be the one to get involved, and Adam was excited to have an impact on the community and recruit potential advisors, as well as being in line with the desire to impact and grow the firm with the right people.

Adam is still a part of the group because of the people. He has surrounded himself with individuals he respects who keep him engaged and part of the college. He gets a lot out of it. “I love being in the room with brilliant individuals who are seasoned at life and have life experiences. A smart person learns from their own mistakes, a
In this edition of the BELIEF Briefings, we are given the chance to meet with Charles Petersen of the Operation Management and Information Systems Department to learn a little bit more about his story.

Dr. Petersen began his undergraduate studies at Iowa State University where he earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Engineering. Shortly after graduating, he pursued a Master of Business Administration Degree at the John M. Olin School of Business at Washington University. With completion of his MBA, he continued his education to earn his Ph.D. at Indiana University. After receiving his Doctorate Degree, Petersen began teaching at Northern Illinois University’s College of Business and has been with the university for 23 years. Petersen has risen to be named a Dean’s Distinguished Professor of Operations Management and Information Systems. He currently teaches Supply Chain Systems (OMIS 478) to undergraduate students and Operations Analysis (OMIS 627) to graduate level students.

While meeting with Petersen, he talked very highly of the BELIEF Program. In addition, he is well versed in both the BELIEF Decision-Making framework and the Ethics Handbook. During the interview, when asked how he would deal with an ethical dilemma, he responded with by using the Decision-Making framework. He said that he has been faced with many different ethical dilemmas and he always falls back on the card to help him make the right decision. One of Petersen’s professional goals is for his students to succeed and he believes that if his students are faced with an ethical dilemma, the Decision-Making Card framework is the best tool to help them through any situation out. Although he suggests using the card, he strongly recommends students follow the course rules outlined in the syllabus to help avoid being caught in an academic ethical dilemma.

According to Petersen, his experience with NIU and its programs has been a positive one, and the BELIEF Program is privileged to have him. He believes that the BELIEF Program is an integral part of the College of Business, and that it will continue to be a driving force for advocating ethics among students and the future business men and women they will become.
Everyone associated with the BELIEF program is grateful for its funding sources which allow BELIEF to continue its important work. During the 2017/18 year BELIEF took NIU students to compete in the Eller Ethics Case Competition at the University of Arizona as well as the Upper Midwest Ethics Bowl Regional (UMREB) competition in Michigan. BELIEF also hosted a high school ethics case competition and planned and managed BELIEF Week activities. Funding of these activities, as well as the Director’s salary, was critical to making BELIEF a vibrant and broad program that touched all students at the College of Business.

The success of the BELIEF Program primarily lies in two places: the support of the College of Business and the commitment of our corporate partners.

**College of Business**

The college has provided programmatic support from the inception of the program. Through the vision of dedicated faculty members with a penchant for ethics, and the financial commitment of the college secured by former Dean Schoenbachler, BELIEF has been able to thrive and flourish as a leading ethics education model for NIU and other institutions of higher education around the country and the world. Recognizing the importance of ethics education, the college continues to support the BELIEF Program with a portion of its operating funds. The ultimate financial goal for BELIEF is to stand independently on firm fiscal grounds with outside funding that will provide program existence into perpetuity.

**Corporate Partners**

Without a doubt, the BELIEF Program would not be as successful as it is without the commitment of time, talent, and treasure from its corporate partners. Although the landscape of those partners has changed from time to time over the years, all partners have one unique thing in common: a strong desire to make a difference in the ethical decision-making of college students. Each corporate partner has committed to $7,500 per year to provide most of the budget needed to operate the program. In turn, the program has done its best to demonstrate the return on investment through our alumni, events, and educational metrics that are unique to the College of Business.

**Our Future**

As the BELIEF Program examines ways to become even more financially independent, we are looking at different financial models to guide our future. We are encouraged by the number of individual donors who are impressed enough with our program to give of their personal resources, and we welcome even more of those individuals to contact us for more information. Together, we can and will continue to make a lasting impact on our community and in our world one ethical decision at a time.
The people of BELIEF
Ethical Awareness

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other parts of campus.

LEAD’s second HEAT session was held on Tuesday, Nov. 28 with Board of Trustee members Dennis L. Barsema (Board Vice Chair) and John R. Butler (Board Secretary) to discuss ethics and ethical dilemmas they’ve faced throughout their career. The event was set up in panel format where students were free to ask questions. Both Barsema and Butler started off by discussing their education and how their view of ethics changed throughout their career. Another great question was “How did Barsema and Butler get on the Board of Trustees?” Barsema said that his name was brought up during one of the board meetings and a few months later he received a phone call asking if he was interested in the possibility of being a trustee. At first Barsema was not interested because he knew that he would not be able to continue teaching. Yet, after consulting with friends and family members he decided to accept the invitation.

Lima

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told the partner about the transactions, somebody could lose his or her job. Possessing information like this puts a lot of pressure on auditors to make decisions that carry a lot of impact on the livelihood of another. Of course, the most ethical decision would be to tell the partner, which she did, but it’s still a difficult decision to make. Betsy describes ethics by saying “It’s not always black and white; we all have values and as long as we stick to those values instead of letting our choices be influenced by greed, selfishness, and emotion, we will usually make the right choices.”

After spending three years auditing, Betsy joined a private company. Currently, she works for Sasser Family Holdings, Inc., a leasing company, as a senior accountant. She enjoys her job because she loves working with numbers and likes the variety of work she gets to do every day. Betsy recently balanced new financial reporting and budgeting software so it could be used by the firm’s business units. Sasser Family Holdings is a fourth generation privately held transportation asset leasing services and management company. Her job includes many ad hoc projects related to each of the six business units or subsidiaries. The six subsidiary business units and investments include Chicago Freight Car Leasing Co., Union Leasing Inc., CF Rail Services LLC, CF Asia Pacific Group PTY Ltd, NxGen Rail Services, Express, and Xcēd Aviation Services.

Klawans

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Cooper only works with privately held companies and serves as their best ally in this ever changing business world. The firm has been enjoying tremendous organic growth of 15-20 percent the past two years, while the average has been between 2-3 percent in the industry. Miller Cooper employees work in a fast-paced environment with all different types of clients. This allows employees to be well-rounded business professionals, with very little specialization. Miller Cooper has been a wonderful place for Klawans to work, filled with plentiful opportunities to advance in her career while using many skills she learned at NIU and from LEAD.

NIU helped develop Klawans into a not only functional, but a flourishing business professional. “NIU gave me a good understanding of what the professional world would look like prior to having entered the workforce.” She believes that she has had good opportunity to grow at Miller based on the skills she learned during her time with LEAD as she said, “LEAD provided me with a solid foundation of technical and soft skills that have proved to be beneficial in handling everyday situations at work.” Liz Klawans is looking forward to furthering her career at Miller Cooper and continues to apply BELIEF and her experiences with LEAD to her job each and every second while in a never ending quest to learn.