



Ina B. Durham
Annual High School
Ethics Case Competition
Information Packet
2026

About the Ina B. Durham High School Ethics Case Competition

In 2019, Clemson University's Rutland Institute for Ethics established its annual High School Ethics Case Competition to expose high school students to ethical dilemmas and good decision-making skills.

Named after Ina. B. Durham, the late wife of Rutland Advisory Board Chair Emeritus Harry Durham and mother of former Rutland Advisory Board Chair Kelly Durham, this is one of the Rutland Institute's signature programs which brings together high school and college students as well as University staff, faculty, and community members for a careful examination of ethics in action.

Born in Columbus, GA, Ina was the daughter of the late James Benjamin Brooks and Cleo Turner Brooks. She met her husband Harry of nearly seventy years while a student at Alabama Polytechnic Institute in Auburn. Following graduation and marriage at age 20, Ina taught school at Smith Station as Harry completed his degree. Ina accompanied Harry on his Army assignment to Germany in 1955 where their daughter Kathy was born. Son, Kelly, joined the family in 1958. Ina committed herself to creating a loving home for her family.

Ina was noted for her warm personality, welcoming hospitality, and desire to serve Clemson students. Through Clemson Baptist Church, she and Harry "adopted" Clemson University students and invited them into their home, treating them like family members, and establishing lasting relationships. One of those students was Robert J. Rutland, founder of the Rutland Institute for Ethics, with whom the family remained close over the years.

In 1974, Ina rejoined the work force when she was hired as the first information desk supervisor at Clemson University's Student Union by Butch Trent. Trent, remembering Ina's tenacity, remarked that she was one of the best employees he ever had because of her ability to take initiative and think creatively to empower Clemson students to invest in the Clemson community. Ina's student staff and the union's student board members became extensions of her family, and she invited them to her home for meals and mentored them through their college careers. Her years of service to Clemson students were recognized in 1976 when she was selected by Tiger Brotherhood as Clemson University's Mother of the Year.

This competition seeks to honor Ina's hospitality, love for students, and excellent ethical decision-making. Each year the competition welcomes teams from across the state and the country to address a pressing ethical dilemma presenting a challenge to the world today. Like Ina's work at the University, the competition seeks to equip students with the confidence and tools to make difficult decisions in their personal and professional lives. The competition, hosted by Clemson University's student ethics organization CHANGE (Changing Habits and Norms Guiding Ethical Decisions), is proud to continue this tradition in recognition of the service and generosity of Ina B. Durham and the Durham Family.



Ina B. Durham

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About the Rutland Institute of Ethics

The importance of ethics education at Clemson University and its tie to the Clemson University mission statement:

With dwindling resources on virtually all university campuses in an age of fiscal justification, it is refreshing to see an institution of higher education committed to ethical leadership and ethical decision-making. Clemson University has clearly dedicated itself to producing graduates of the highest caliber: academically, professionally, and ethically. Embedded in its mission statement, the verbiage is reflective of such a commitment:

The University is committed to the personal growth of the individual and promotes an environment of good decision-making, healthy and ethical lifestyles, and tolerance and respect for others.

To this end, it is the goal of the Rutland Institute for Ethics to be utilized as a conduit for fulfilling the portion of the university mission statement that concerns ethics. More specifically, to promote good decision-making and ethical lifestyles, the Rutland Institute for Ethics is engaged in the following activities:

Co-Curricular Activities

- Engagement with the College of Business Ethics Curriculum Initiative
- Classroom and community presentations (locally, regionally, and nationally) on discipline-specific ethical topics
- Distinguished Ethics Scholars Program



About the Rutland Institute of Ethics

Programmatic Activities

- Annual Ethics Day (Fall semester)
- Ina B. Durham Annual High School Ethics Case Competition (Spring semester)
- Award Opportunities (Demonstrating ethical leadership)
 - J.T. Barton, Jr. Memorial Ethics Award
 - Cherry Braswell Rutland Memorial Ethics Award
- Clemson TIDE (Tigers for Integrity, Discourse, and Ethics) Conference (Spring semester)

Governing Boards and Committees

- Rutland Institute for Ethics Advisory Board
- FACE (Faculty Advocating for the Commitment to Ethics) Committee
- CHANGE (Creating Habits and Norms Guiding Ethical Decisions) Student Committee

Publications

- Semiannual Ethics Editorial (developed by CHANGE students)
- Rutland Institute for Ethics Annual Report

It is the intent of the Institute to inform every Clemson student about good decision-making and how to address ethical dilemmas across the disciplines. We continue to expand upon collaborative opportunities throughout the “communiversity” setting.

“The purpose of the Institute for Ethics is to encourage discussion on campus, in businesses, and in the community about how ethical decision-making can be the basis of both personal and professional success.”



Founder Bob Rutland

Case Competition Objective



Teams of two high school students create a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation outlining a solution to a provided ethical dilemma using the **Clemson University STAR Model** to tend to the ethical, societal, and financial implications of the possible outcomes.



Case Competition Rules

Team Structure

- A. Teams must consist of two student members.
- B. A maximum of two teams (four students) can compete from each high school.
- C. Students teams can consist of students from two different high schools.

Registration

- A. Only the completed registration form will be accepted as the means of registration. The registration form can be completed by visiting clemsont.edu/ethics/programs/highschoolcasecompetition
- B. The registration cost for participants is \$35 per student competitor (\$70 per team). Payments must be made using the link at the top of the registration form by the registration date. Chaperones and advisors do not pay a registration fee.

Preparing for Competition Day

- A. The ethical dilemma for the competition will be released via email on the Friday two weeks prior to the date of the competition. Advisors are responsible for ensuring that each team receives the case.
- B. The final PowerPoint presentation must be submitted to ethics@clemsont.edu by the Wednesday the week of the competition by 11:59 pm. After submission, no alterations can be made to the presentation.

Competition Day

- A. The dress code is business professional (i.e., suit and tie or as close as possible).
- B. All teams must check in on competition day between 8:00 am – 8:30 am.
- C. Competitors may not be in the presentation rooms during first round presentations of other teams.



Case Competition Rules Continued

Presentations

- A. All participants must adhere to the Clemson University Academic Integrity Statement, which can be viewed by visiting clemson.edu/academics/integrity/
- B. Outside sources (including, but not limited to, professors and business professionals) may be consulted when developing solutions.
- C. Citing all referenced material and external sources is required; all sources must be given due credit.

First Round Presentations

- A. Presentations are not to exceed 10 minutes.
- B. While presenting, teams will be given five-, two-, and one-minute notices of their remaining time by a room attendant with cue cards.
- C. Judges will ask follow-up questions for five minutes.
- D. No handouts or visual aids are allowed beyond the required PowerPoint presentation.
- E. Note cards are allowed, but discouraged.

Final Round Presentations

- A. Teams advancing past the first round will have five minutes to summarize their solution to the panel of final round judges.
- B. Following each team's presentation, the judges will ask a single, identical question to each of the finalist teams.
- C. Teams will have two minutes to privately discuss the question and form a response.
- D. Each team will be given one minute to present their answer to the final question.





Case Competition Rules, Continued

Judging

Judges will include business professionals, Clemson alumni, faculty, and community leaders. To ensure objective evaluations, a rubric will be supplied to all judges.

The judges will utilize the following criteria in evaluating teams throughout the competition:

- Creativity
- Practicality
- Stakeholder Evaluation
- Financial Analysis
- Ethical Implications
- Use of the STAR Model
- Organization
- PowerPoint Design
- Verbal Delivery
- Responses to Questions
- Impromptu Speaking



Awards

All participants will receive a certificate of merit for competing, as recognition for their hard work. Each student from the first, second, and third place teams will receive \$200, \$125, and \$50 respectively.



Competition Dates and Deadlines

Saturday, January 31st, 2026

The competition registration form must be submitted by 11:59 pm. The form can be found by visiting clemson.edu/ethics/programs/highschoolcasecompetition/

Saturday, February 14th, 2026

The Rutland Institute for Ethics will host an online workshop for registered student teams to discuss the competition format, the Clemson University STAR Model for making ethical decisions, and offer presentation tips. This workshop is optional, and participation will not be a metric for scoring in the competition.

Friday, February 20th, 2026

The competition case is released via email to registered teams. It is each advisor's responsibility to ensure that each team receives the case. The students can begin preparation for the competition!

Wednesday, March 4th, 2026

Submission of the final PowerPoint file must be emailed to ethics@clemson.edu by 11:59 pm. After submission, no alterations to the PowerPoint presentation are permitted.

Friday, March 6th, 2026

Case Competition Day!





Case Competition Day-Of Schedule

- 8:00–8:30 Team Check-in and Breakfast
- 8:30–9:00 Judges' Orientation and Admissions Speaker
- 9:00–11:00 First-Round Presentations
- 11:00–12:00 Lunch
- 12:00–12:30 Keynote Speaker
- 12:30 Finalists Announced
- 1:00–1:30 Final Round Presentations
- 2:00 Winners Announced



Clemson University STAR Decision-Making Model

When confronted with an ethical dilemma, use the STAR Decision-Making Model:

S = Stop

Take the time to recognize the ethical problem and all of the issues surrounding and contributing to the problem. Identify the stakeholders (those affected by the problem) and the impact the issue is having. Develop at least three potential solutions to the problem.

T = Test

For each potential solution, use at least three of the following tests. For maximum effectiveness, it is best to use all of the tests.

- **Harm Test:** Does this option do less harm than the alternatives?
- **Legality Test:** Is this option legal?
- **Precedent Test:** Does this option set a precedent, which, while the outcome in this fact pattern may not be problematic, would create a dramatically different outcome in another fact pattern?
- **Respect Test:** What would someone you respect or hold in high regard say if they learned of this option?
- **Golden Rule Test:** Would I still think the choice of this option good if I were one of those adversely affected by it? How would I want to be treated?
- **Peer or Colleague Test:** What do my peers or colleagues say when I describe my problem and suggest this option as my solution?

A = Act

Using these tests as a lens to gain insight into your dilemma, make a decision and act upon that decision.

R = Reflect

Now that you've made a decision, take responsibility and own the decision. Pause to reconcile the solution with anticipated outcomes and reflect on what you've learned from the process. If necessary, adapt and modify your decision to secure the most positive results possible.





Judging Criteria

Competitors are to be scored in three areas: **Content**, **Presentation**, and **Q & A**. Within each of these sections, sub-criteria are included as indicated below. For each criterion, teams are graded on a 1 to 5 scale by the judges. In the first round, competitors are seeded into competition rooms with a panel of judges. The team with the top overall score from each competition room will move on to the final round, where their summarized presentation will be graded by a new, larger panel of judges.

Content

When examining a presentation's content, four main sections should be present, with **Creativity** and **Practicality** evaluated for the content holistically:

- **Stakeholder Evaluation**
- **Financial Impact**
- **Ethical & Societal Implications**
- **Use of the STAR Model**

Each team should make their best effort to show what factors they took into account in each area, as well as display their familiarity and confidence with the material. Judges should take into account the time constraint the competitors are working under when evaluating each area. Student use of the STAR Model is required in presentations, and constitutes a significant portion of the rubric.

When formulating a solution, competitors should strive for both a creative and practical answer. These elements are often in conflict. Generally, the more creative a solution is, the more impractical it is to implement. A good solution does not necessarily have to be high in both elements, but a great solution must be.



Judging Criteria, Continued

Presentation

The presentation itself is judged on three criteria: **Organization**, **Presentation Design**, and **Verbal Delivery**. Organization pertains to how the presentation was pieced together—did it flow logically, was there an introduction and conclusion, etc. The Presentation Design score is based on how well the slides are used to enhance the presentation. Professionalism, visual appeal, and legibility all are factors. The third section is the verbal delivery of the presentation. Speaking performance defines this category, including use of filler words, pacing, volume, and evidence of rehearsal. Dependence on notecards would detract here, while speaking clearly and with minimal errors would be rewarded.

Question & Answer (Q & A)

The Q & A period is the third area in which competitors will be evaluated. Judges will have five minutes to ask questions after the competitors finish their first-round presentations. Competitors will be scored on the **Strength of Responses** and their **Impromptu Speaking**. Answers will be judged on how relevant they are to the judge's question, as well as their quality. A quality answer will clarify the competitors' presentation, is well thought-out, and addresses the root of the judge's point. The other criterion, Impromptu Speaking, is based on the competitors' ability to communicate clearly while thinking on their feet. Competitors should share time answering questions; one competitor should not answer all the questions. Additionally, Q & A is a time where competitors should show their depth of understanding of the case. Confident (though not necessarily correct) responses will result in high Impromptu Speaking scores; confused, rambling, "fluff" answers will result in low Impromptu Speaking scores.



Judging Rubric

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Content					
Creativity	Unoriginal ideas and presentation; content shows no attempt at original thought whatsoever	Far from groundbreaking, but content shows some evidence of unique thought that comes through in the presentation	Clear proof of original ideas and presentation; neither extraordinary nor lacking in creativity	Ideas and/or presentation exceed expectations for uniqueness; content is memorable	Extra effort is evident that this presentation went the extra mile to find novel solutions, approaches, and analyses
Practicality	Presenters gave no consideration at all to whether their solutions were usable or reasonable	Presenters gave some consideration to practicality, but proceeded to recommend a solution that likely would not work as intended	Presenters addressed practicality and feasibility of their solutions and presented one that would likely work as described to resolve the dilemma	Presenters addressed practicality and convinced the audience that their solutions are feasible; no doubt of their efficacy	Presenters thoroughly analyzed feasibility of the solutions and convinced the audience that their solution is the best one available
Stakeholder Evaluation	Stakeholders were not identified	Stakeholders were identified, but were not further elaborated upon nor referred to again	Stakeholders were identified and referred to throughout the presentation in some capacity	Stakeholders were identified, their roles in the dilemma analyzed, and they were referred to throughout the presentation	Stakeholders are a central theme of the presentation and their roles are clear; stakeholders are referenced throughout the presentation and are considered when choosing the best solution
Financial Impact	No financial implications noted at all	Financial impact is mentioned, but no analysis	Financial implications or impact are analyzed	Financial impact is thoughtfully analyzed and reasonable deductions are made	Thorough financial analysis and impacts are presented that have a clear effect on solution

Judging Rubric

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical & Societal Implications	Broader ethical or societal implications are not considered at all	Broader ethical or societal implications are mentioned, but no analysis	Broader ethical or societal implications are analyzed adequately	Broader ethical or societal implications are thoughtfully analyzed, and reasonable deductions are made	Thorough analysis of broader ethical or societal implications are presented that have a clear effect on solution
Use of the STAR Model					
<u>Stop:</u> Proposed Solutions	Did not propose more than one solution or solutions were completely unreasonable	May have proposed two or three solutions, but one or more are largely unreasonable	Proposed at least three solutions, all within the realm of possibility	Proposed at least three solutions that are clearly feasible	Proposed three or more solutions that are all reasonable and explicitly denoted as such
<u>Test:</u> Ethical Tests	Used fewer than three tests, results of tests are unfounded, and no implications of test results considered	Used two or three tests, but may have unclear results or comparisons	Selected at least three tests and came to reasonable conclusions for each, with some consideration given to comparing tests among proposed solutions	Selected at least four tests with reasonable results, and provided some comparison among test results and solutions	Selected five or more ethical tests, came to thoughtful conclusions for each, and effectively compared the results of each test across solutions
<u>Act:</u> Choice of Solution	Chosen solution is not based on the STAR Model and would not be the best option of the proposed solutions	Chosen solution is decided from some aspects of the STAR Model, but it is unclear whether this would be the best solution	Chosen solution is based on the STAR Model, with some reasoning given to support this selection	Chosen solution is based heavily on the STAR Model, with some support from ethical tests suggesting that this would be the most effective solution	Chosen solution is based heavily and explicitly on the use of the STAR Model, with support from all aspects of the model, suggesting that it would be the most effective of all proposed solutions

Judging Rubric

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Reflect: Summary	No summary is given	Summary is given, but is largely unhelpful or ineffective	An adequate summary is given, with some emphasis on the value of the chosen solution	A clear summary is given, with emphasis on the value and implications of the chosen solution	A cogent defense and clear summary of the chosen solution were provided, clearly emphasizing the value of the solution
Presentation					
Organization	The presentation is a mess; difficult for the judge to follow or understand ideas presented	The judge is able to follow the presentation, but it is far from flowing smoothly	Presentation and ideas are understandable; a flow to the organization of ideas exists and some thought to organization was given	Flow of ideas is smooth and easy to follow; order of content and slides is strategically arranged to communicate ideas clearly	Presentation is entirely professional, smooth, and genuinely impresses judge with how the presentation and order of ideas relate to each other
Presentation Design	PowerPoint nearly unintelligible; unable to read or understand what is projected; abundant spelling or grammatical errors	PowerPoint is poorly designed; slides sometimes hinder understanding of presentation; frequent spelling or grammatical errors	PowerPoint is adequately designed; neither hinders nor enhances the presentation; few spelling or grammatical errors	PowerPoint enhances the presentation and communication as a whole; minimal spelling or grammatical errors	PowerPoint is professional, aesthetically pleasing, and genuinely impresses judge with how it benefits communication; no spelling or grammatical errors
Verbal Delivery	Poor delivery with abundance of speaking errors, countless filler words, and verbal pacing/volume issues; no evidence of rehearsal	Many speaking errors, filler words, and/or poor verbal pacing and volume; unclear whether rehearsed	Adequate delivery with some speaking errors and filler words, but appropriate verbal pacing and volume; some evidence of rehearsal	Few speaking errors, occasional filler words, and appropriate verbal pacing and volume; evidence of repeated rehearsal	Nearly flawless speaking, minimal filler words, and excellent verbal pacing and volume; clear evidence of thorough rehearsal

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5
Q & A					
Strength of Responses	Literally unable to answer most questions	Answered all questions, though answers are nearly all inadequate	Adequately answered the surface-level of most questions	Answers directly address the question and hint at deeper implications	Intelligently and thoughtfully handle questions, addressing the root of the issue posed by judges
Impromptu Speaking	Presenters are clearly panicked or completely unclear in verbal delivery	One or both presenters are delivering answers that are often hard to follow or off-topic	One or both presenters adequately deliver answers, but are frequently hard to follow or off-topic	Somewhat smooth answers from both presenters that address questions, but may be occasionally rambling or off-topic	Answers are balanced between presenters, delivered professionally, and clearly structured to address questions posed



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