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Policy and Ethics Partners' First-Year Experience Culminates with East Coast Trip

March 29, 2019

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — A trip to Baltimore and Washington, D.C. was the culmination of the new Policy and Ethics Partners [First-Year Experience](#) (FYE).

The group consisted of first-year Policy and Ethics Partners scholars led by Assistant Professor of Philosophy Andrew Engen, also accompanied by Associate Professor of Philosophy and co-coach of the [Ethics Bowl team](#), Emily Kelahan '05.

The group traveled to Baltimore for the 2019 conference of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics where students attended sessions focused on topics tailored to their interests. The conference featured nationally renowned researchers who are working on ethical issues in areas such as public administration, law, the environment, business, engineering, computer science, scientific research, healthcare, and higher education.

The conference took place in Baltimore's Inner Harbor neighborhood, which students were able to explore between sessions. Following the conference, students were served dinner and discussed what they learned from the day's events.

"Among the sessions that generated great dinner conversation were those on human embryo research, autonomous vehicles and confederate monuments," Engen said.

On Sunday, the group traveled to Washington, D.C. They visited a number of sites and museums, including the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, the World War II Memorial, the Vietnam War Memorial, the Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Natural History Museum, the National Mall, and the National Air and Space Museum.

This trip was the unique culmination of the Policy and Ethics Partners First-Year Experience, a competitive scholarly program "designed for incoming students who are passionate about moral and political issues and like to entertain the best arguments on both sides of policy debates," Engen explained.

"I was impressed by how students were able to draw connections between presentations at the conference and what they were learning in their other courses at IWU," said Engen. "Over the course of the year, the Partners have bonded over their shared interest in public policy. Those bonds were solidified through this travel experience."

The First-Year Experience built upon a fall Gateway component that included lively discussions and visits from professionals in the field of policy making and ethics. In the spring, the group met weekly to discuss "contemporary issues in ethics and policy, such as the debate over whether a wall should be built at the southern border of the United States and the college admissions scandal," said Engen.

This trip was also made unique by the fact that some of the students were competing in the [Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl National Competition](#) which is held in conjunction with the conference. All of the Policy and Ethics Partners observed a round of the competition.



Policy and Ethics Partners stand outside the Washington Monument.