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SU debate team honored after scoring error

By **Conor Harrison**

The Daily Times

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Consilium Virtusque. Reason with honor.

That was the motto of the Schreiner University Business Ethics Team when it headed to Fort Worth last month to compete in the annual Ethics Match presented by the Texas Independent College Foundation.

A scoring error prevented the team from competing in the finals but led to a personal apology and special award presentation.

Schreiner professor Charles Torti lead the group of five women who gave up their lunch hours for nine weeks to prepare and debate business ethics questions.

Kristi Click, Nichole Mariakis, Kelli Kunz, Samantha Jones and Kathy Calhoun comprised the team that went to Fort Worth to defend the title, won by Schreiner last year, against more than 20 challenging teams.

"We gather in the spring, but the real work begins in the fall," Torti said. "These girls give up their lunch hours to review ethical dilemmas and core values."

The competition consists of one full day of intense questioning by a panel of three judges and a moderator.

Teams are judged on ethical problem solving and how well they answer questions such as: Who are the stakeholders in the ethical dilemma? What are the legal and moral dilemmas? Who is harmed by the decision? What are the total ramifications of the decision?

"We practiced on the entire five-hour drive to Fort Worth," Jones said.

"We really focused during our lunch hours and got good feedback from our professors," Click said.

The 20 teams are broken into two groups: East and West divisions.

Then, two teams from the same division meet in a room where a question is given to both teams. After two minutes to confer, the first team gets to respond to the ethical problem, and the second team gets to react to the response by team one.

A total of 36 points was awarded per round, with the highest team cumulative scores for each division meeting in the finals at the end of the day.

After a tough day of competition, Schreiner was

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disappointed to find out they had come in second place in their division and would not make it to the finals to defend their title.

But, there had been a scoring error in Schreiner's first round scores and, unbeknownst to the team members, Dr. Marcia Hawkins, president of the Texas Independent College Foundation, decided to make it up to the team.

At the team dinner at Torti's home, Hawkins flew in from Ft. Worth and presented the team with their rightful first place division trophy and check for \$750.

"Dr. Hawkins personally flew down to present the trophy," Torti said. "They resolved it and I really am proud of the way the team handled it. They really took the high road. There was no whining about not coming in first, they were just happy to participate. That is very admirable."

Torti has been leading the team for five years and considers it, along with teaching a "second career for me."

"I try to make it fun and enjoyable," Torti said. "We go to Fort Worth and stay at the Worthington Hotel in downtown. We make a weekend out of it."

When looking for good team members, Torti has a recruiting plan he follows.

"I don't teach ethics — I recruit ethics," he said. "Many of the core values were developed by their parents. The real key for this team was they enjoyed being a team."

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