



Supporting Diversity and Inclusiveness in the National High School Ethics Bowl: Grant Report for the American Philosophical Association, 9/20/2018

We are extremely grateful for the support of the APA in making the NHSEB as welcoming, accessible, diverse, and inclusive as possible. Our final budget for the use of this grant followed our application exactly: \$4,400 contributed to supporting financial aid for teams in need to travel to participate in the 2018 National Bowl at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and \$5,600 supported new and low resource Regional Bowls so that they could focus on outreach efforts in their communities.

1) Nationals 2018: Financial Aid for Team Travel

The NHSEB is committed to helping teams come to UNC at Chapel Hill to take part in the annual National Bowl by reimbursing teams for part of their travel and accommodation costs. The Nationals happen every spring and bring 24 teams to UNC-Chapel Hill's campus. Each year, the total financial aid needs expressed by schools who have qualified to attend the NHSEB National Bowl go well above what we can offer – however, we make sure that no one is prevented from participating due to financial need. This year, the APA grant portion (\$4,400) made up about a fifth of the financial aid we were able to provide to traveling teams. Each year, the total financial aid we give out depends on our fundraising that year as well as the overall pool of applicants to our financial aid program, so the APA's support was instrumental in supporting this essential aspect of our program.

Schools that received financial aid this past year came from rural and urban areas in CT, NY, VA, MO, FL, CA, and beyond. They are diverse geographically, in their need for financial assistance, and in their team composition. One public high school came to Nationals after their first time participating in (and winning) their Regional in rural Texas. Another team had several ESL students and one undocumented student. Many of these schools are Title I schools.

Evaluation:

That we were able to make sure, through financial aid, that all teams qualifying for the Nationals in 2018 were able to attend means that this portion of our proposal was a great success. Additionally, we know that the National program is meaningful, transformative, and fun from the survey data that we collect every year. A small sampling of the results is below:

Responses from coaches at Nationals 2018:

- 100% strongly agreed or agreed that their "students' critical thinking skills have improved as a result of their participation in the NHSEB."
- 94% strongly agreed or agreed that they "more likely to sponsor or teach a class in philosophy or ethics, or to use philosophy or ethics materials in [their] classes."



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Parr Center for Ethics



And here are some observations from coaches about the event:

“What I most like about the Bowl is watching students of different backgrounds engage in ethical issues. It is civic engagement. We need more intercultural exchanges like this one. Thanks again for making this event as life changing as it is for students.” – Coach, 2018 NHSEB Nationals Survey

The NHSEB “provides a fun and challenging environment to develop critical thinking and analytical skills, as well as becoming an effective communicator. As I have stated to each team that I have put together (7 total), this has to be fun - it is a lot of work, but throughout the process, it has to be fun . . . [NHSEB] has never failed to be just that! It provides a "grounding" experience for high achieving students who could benefit from some humility, and fosters strong and lasting relationships.” – Coach, 2018 NHSEB Nationals Survey

“Regarding the National event - my students . . . have stated to me each personally that it has been the hallmark of their academic lives. It was more than just fun and exciting . . . but a life changing experience in regard to the whole experience and the confidence that they now have moving forward in life.” – Coach, 2018 NHSEB Nationals Survey

Responses from students at Nationals 2018:

- 100% strongly agreed or agreed that their “critical thinking skills have improved as a result of their participation in the NHSEB.”
- 82.7% strongly agreed or agreed that they were “now more interested in philosophy and/or ethics” due to their participation in the NHSEB.
- 89.6% strongly agreed or agreed that the “National High School Ethics Bowl is unlike any other academic or extracurricular experience I've had in high school.”

And here are some observations from students about the event:

National High School Ethics Bowl “is an experience unlike any other. It is both the most fun I’ve ever had while also stretching my critical thinking skills and forcing me to engage in civil discourse in a whole new way. The cases are interesting and multi-faceted, the students are thoughtful and intelligent, and the directors and volunteers are extremely hardworking and kind. I am beyond grateful for this experience and the skills and friendships I’ve developed because of it.” – Student, 2018 NHSEB Nationals Survey

The NHSEB is unique “because of the way that students are able to think critically about not only their own perceived solutions, but also the solutions of the opposing team. This allows for substantial insight at the competitions, as there is always something new to learn just by listening to the different stances and approaches” of others. – Student, 2018 NHSEB Nationals Survey





2) *Micro-Grants for Regional Organizers:*

We offered 7 grants of \$800 to those NHSEB Regional Bowls just getting started, and to those struggling to find the capacity to reach out to schools in need in their area. These micro-grants were framed as a way to help support these regional organizers in their own work to reach out to and foster the participation of underserved schools in their region. Because the APA grant arrived just before most 2018 Regionals took place, the funds were used by regional organizers beginning last winter in order to support their efforts in connecting with underserved schools in their area for the upcoming 2019 regional bowl season. As a result, regional organizers have been making connections with schools new to the NHSEB with enough time to help them prepare so that they feel comfortable and excited, rather than intimidated, by their joining a regional NHSEB chapter.

The 7 NHSEB regionals that received these micro-grants were:

Chicago High School Ethics Bowl at the Illinois Institute of Technology
Colorado High School Ethics Bowl at the University of Colorado-Boulder
Connecticut High School Ethics Bowl at the University of Connecticut
Maryland High School Ethics Bowl at the University of Baltimore
New England High School Ethics Bowl at Tufts University
North Florida High School Ethics Bowl at the University of North Florida
Ohio High School Ethics Bowl at the University of Findlay

More information about these Regional Bowls can be found here: <http://nhseb.unc.edu/regionals/>

Evaluation:

In order to evaluate the micro-grants, I surveyed the regional organizers to find out how their micro-grants would be used and what successes or challenges they encountered. A selection of answers (edited for brevity and to avoid repetition) is below.

How do these micro-grants help you as a regional organizer in reaching out to new and underserved high schools? What efforts will or have the funds been used to support?

- Offering a coaching workshop for high school teachers
- Supporting travel costs for experienced Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl team members and/or philosophy graduate students to visit and talk about the NHSEB and/or coach local high school teams
- Covering the costs of a practice invitational or scrimmage – giving new teams a chance to get a sense of how everything works and to get constructive feedback from experienced judges, coaches, and fellow teams well before the Regional Bowl
- Offsetting the costs of printing informational material to recruit and to help orient and prepare new schools
- Covering costs for the participation of high schools in need at upcoming Regional Bowls, including making transportation available to these schools



COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Parr Center for Ethics



- Hosting an orientation workshop for new coaches – the event will be an opportunity for the coaches to network as well as to receive coaching advice from Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl coaches and students. We will share coaching and recruiting strategies, answer questions, and plan further helpful events (since this is a new regional every coach is a new coach, so the event will be of significant benefit to everyone)

All of these uses fit perfectly with the feedback we have gathered in our annual surveys of coaches and regional organizers. Regional organizers often point to teachers' already huge workloads as an understandable obstacle to their participation, especially when paired with financial need in the school or student body. And when asked what would improve their experience, coaches often mention that they would love coaching help, pedagogical resources to help guide their students, and more opportunities for their students to engage with the NHSEB material with fellow participants:

“The most difficult challenge is finding coaches who are willing to put in additional time and energy to their already busy schedules to coach a team.” – NHSEB Regional Organizer, 2018

“Past efforts to reach out to local public schools were not successful. We found that public school teachers already feel overwhelmed by their workload and [are] reluctant to take on a new responsibility.” – NHSEB Regional Organizer, 2018

“I think that holding some sort of scrimmage round or providing resources for schools to host their own scrimmages would be beneficial for practicing. My students love discussing the cases and constructing their arguments, but they are intimidated and don't have a great deal of practice presenting their ideas” – Coach, 2017-2018 NHSEB Regional Survey

“I think it would be transformative for my students to get professional feedback from someone who is a veteran judge or coach. I am an English teacher with an extremely limited background in Philosophy. I did my best, but I would love it if there was some kind of boot camp” to help us prepare. – Coach, 2017-2018 NHSEB Regional Survey

These APA-funded outreach projects are taking place or happening soon, and we will continue to follow up on their success. There is still much work to be done to ensure that the NHSEB feels welcoming, inclusive, and possible for underserved schools, and this is a wonderful beginning and an important way to collect data for future fundraising in order to further support regional outreach.

3) General Program Evaluation:

We have collected socioeconomic data about participating high schools (and not the specific student team members) from the 2016-2017 NHSEB season¹ and we will continue to do so in the fall of every following season:

¹ School data can be found here: <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools>; original source of raw data is here: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/index.asp> and comes from the 2015-2016 academic year.



Of 245 participating schools for which we could get data, 76 schools (31%) have student bodies in which 50% or more of the student body qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Of 245 participating schools for which we could get data, 93 schools (38%) have student bodies in which 50% or more are minority students.

We are just beginning to try to gather systematic data about overall NHSEB participation and its impact from participating teachers and students themselves. Our biggest hurdle is garnering much more survey participation from students and coaches across the U.S. in order to make sure our data is accurate and useful. In February 2018, we sent out surveys to all registered coaches in order to try to reach them and their students. We received 53 coach responses and 106 student responses back from across the U.S., which is a very small fraction of the approximately 300 teachers and 4,000+ students who participate formally and informally. The following data comes from that survey:

Of 106 students participating in a variety of Regional Bowls in 2017-2018:

- 69.8% described themselves as white, while others chose from a range of possibilities or created their own
- 20.8% identified as of Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin
- 56.6% described themselves as female
- 99.1% strongly agreed or agreed that the NHSEB encourages their critical thinking
- 83% strongly agreed or agreed that because of their participation in the NHSEB they were now more interested in philosophy and/or ethics

4) Conclusion:

In general, our data shows that the NHSEB has a transformative and positive effect on its participants in the areas of critical thinking, collaboration, thoughtfulness, civic awareness and engagement, and more. Tackling barriers of financial need and low resources in high schools in order to make the NHSEB as diverse and open as possible is our utmost priority, and the APA's support for our projects in "Supporting Diversity and Inclusiveness in the National High School Ethics Bowl" has been instrumental in having a real effect on participating schools and has also furnished us with important information about obstacles and potential solutions for us moving forward. We are so grateful for this support.