2020
NATIONAL SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS
MILTON F. LUNCH ETHICS CONTEST

KEY ETHICAL ISSUE FACT SITUATIONS

Ethical Issue #1: Artificial Intelligence – The NSPE Code of Ethics states that the services provided by engineers require honesty, impartiality, fairness, and equity, and must be dedicated to the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. In addition, engineers must perform under a standard of professional behavior that requires adherence to the highest principles of ethical conduct. The emergence of artificial intelligence will have an enormous impact on society, including on such issues as employment, inequality, human behavior, and security. How will artificial intelligence influence the work performed by professional engineers in the years ahead? What are some of the engineering ethical issues that will emerge as professional engineers begin to design facilities, systems, structures, and products using artificial intelligence?

Ethical Issue #2: Diversity and Inclusion – The NSPE Code of Ethics states that engineers shall treat all persons with dignity, respect, fairness, and without discrimination. How can and should professional engineers incorporate diversity and inclusion into the practice of professional engineering? What are some of the challenges and opportunities in creating a diverse and inclusive engineering culture? How can professional engineers foster diverse thought and an inclusive work environment that enables all professional engineers to excel?

Ethical Issue #3: Climate Change – The NSPE Code of Ethics states that engineers are encouraged to adhere to the principles of sustainable development in order to protect the environment for future generations. Sustainable development is defined in the NSPE Code of Ethics as the challenge of meeting human needs for natural resources, industrial products, energy, food, transportation, shelter, and effective waste management while conserving and protecting environmental quality and the natural resource base essential for future development. Currently, the issues of climate change and global warming are receiving heightened attention. How should professional engineers work to balance these competing considerations consistent with the NSPE Code of Ethics?

Ethical Issue #4 (Open-Ended): The Future of Professional Engineering – What is the most daunting ethical challenge currently facing the engineering profession? Are you optimistic or pessimistic that the engineering profession is up to the challenge? What steps will be necessary for the engineering profession and broader society to effectively address this issue in the decades ahead?