

University of Texas at Dallas Consent Information Sheet

Title of Research Project: Ethics in Engineering Senior Design Projects

Investigators:

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Purpose: The purpose of this study is to increase our understanding of ethics in senior design projects.

Description of Project: One of the assignments for PHIL 4310: Science, Technology, & Values is to serve as a member of a model “Ethics Advising Office” to aid Electrical Engineering Senior Design Project students. The SDP teams will be asked to meet twice to discuss ethical issues surrounding their project: at the beginning of the semester, and towards the end of the semester. At the beginning of the semester your team’s discussion will be observed and recorded by a graduate student observer, who will not be involved in any discussions. No one from PHIL 4310 will be present at that meeting. A representative from the class will be present at the teams’ second meeting (30-60 minutes in length) to provide the prompt for, as well as facilitate the discussion. The discussion, and your participation in it, will be observed and recorded by a graduate student observer.

As “ethics experts” you will be also asked to collaborate in staffing the “Ethics Advising Office.” That is, you will be asked to hold “office hours” for engineering students. They may need your consultation between the discussion, in which you took part in, and the end of the semester. Members of PHIL 4310 will additionally take shifts staffing an ethics “help line” email address. You will be required to keep track of when engineering students contact the “help line” or come to office hours. You will be asked to write about your experiences.

Payments to Participate: Participants will not receive any reimbursement for participation in this study.

Voluntary Participation: All participants in our study have the right to agree or refuse to participate in it. Even if you consent to participate, you also have the right to change your mind at any point during the procedure. You may tell the investigator that you no longer wish to participate, and your refusal or withdrawal of participation will not involve any penalty. Alternative activities not directly associated with the research project will be provided for you to fulfill your grade.

Records of Participation in this Research:

Information Stored at the University of Texas at Dallas

All of the information participants provide to investigators as part of this research will be protected and held in confidence within the limits of the law and institutional regulation. The PI and Co-PIs will keep track of senior design project teams’ and lab groups’ names on file. Each group/lab will also have a numerical identifier, to which only the PI and Co-PIs have access. The focus of this study is to observe SDP teams, their dynamics and interactions, and we will not collect either participants’ names or other identifiers, that could be linked to their specific responses and/or behaviors. Each lab will be assigned a numerical identifier. Access to data that might break anonymity—links between the labs’ names and numerical identifiers—will be limited to the PI, Co-PIs, and research assistants engaged in data coding.

The research data will be archived in the digital format by the UT Dallas IT department on the university fileservers, or in fileservers specific to the PIs’ laboratory that operate under the supervision of the UT Dallas IT department. This data storage will be performed in a safe and effective manner, with sufficient provisions for backup and recovery in case of equipment failure.

No personal information will appear in disseminated results or public data. Personal information and links between names and numerical identifiers will be kept on a separate computer, in Dr. Grohman’s office. All computers used in this project will follow UT Dallas encryption policy to protect personal information <http://www.utdallas.edu/infosecurity/EncryptionPolicy.html>

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Information Available to Others:

Members and associated staff of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Texas at Dallas may review the records of your participation in this research. An IRB is a group of people who are responsible for assuring the community that the rights of participants in research are respected. A representative of the UTD IRB may contact you to gather information about your participation in this research. If you wish, you may refuse to answer questions the representative of the IRB may ask.

Publications Associated with this Research: The results of this research may appear in publications but individual participants will not be identified.

Contact People:

Participants who want more information about this research may contact any of the investigators listed at the top of page 1 of this document. Participants who want more information about their rights as a participant or who want to report a research related injury may contact:

Sanaz Okhovat, Senior Director of the Office of Research Integrity
UTD Office of Research

972-883-4579