90th Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology
Denver, Colorado

CASE STUDIES IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ETHICS

for the Twentieth Annual Intercollegiate
Ethics Bowl Competition
April 24, 2025

PREPARED BY

Katherine Chiou, Daniel Perez, and anonymous authors

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, APRIL 24

FIRST ROUND A/B (6:30 AM-8:00 AM)

First Round A
Capitol (Tower Building, Terrace Level)
Binghamton University vs. Georgia Tech

First Round B
Savoy (Tower Building, Majestic Level)
Central Piedmont Community College vs. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

FIRST ROUND C/D (8:00-9:30 AM)

First Round C
Capitol (Tower Building, Terrace Level)
Cal State University, Northridge vs. Eastern New Mexico University

First Round D
Savoy (Tower Building, Majestic Level)
Indiana University of Pennsylvania-University of Oregon vs. Wayne State University

SEMI-FINAL (9:30-11:00 AM)

Semi-Final A
Capitol (Tower Building, Terrace Level)
Winner of First Round A vs. Winner of First Round B

Semi-Final B
Savoy (Tower Building, Majestic Level)
Winner of First Round C vs. Winner of First Round D

FINAL (1:00-3:00 PM)

Governors Square 15 (Plaza Building, Plaza Level)
Winner of Semi-Final A vs. Winner of Semi-Final B

CASE ONE

Felipe Rojas and Lucia Hernández are doctoral students in their fifth year of study at the Universidad Autónoma de Sierra Azul (UASA) in the country of San Pedrana. Both are deeply involved in a collaborative international excavation project co-directed by Dr. Jane Carter, an Assistant Professor of Anthropology from Greenfield University and Dr. Ana Martínez, a renowned senior scholar from UASA. Over the last few years, Felipe and Lucia have served as area chiefs, coordinating excavations, managing logistics, and supervising excavators. Like many large-scale archaeological projects, each excavation season relies heavily on contributions from numerous undergraduate field school students, local laborers, and a whole host of specialists who support day-to-day operations. As area chiefs, Felipe and Lucia regularly author detailed chapters in annual reports containing excavation data that are submitted to the Ministerio de Cultura in compliance with cultural heritage laws. They also conduct extensive documentation and produce original field drawings that illustrate key archaeological findings. All of this original data is available on the project website along with season reports and technical reports stemming from specialist analyses.

Following a highly productive excavation season, Dr. Jane Carter from Greenfield University submits an article for publication in the high-impact journal *Scientific Discoveries*. The article synthesizes significant findings from the project over several field seasons, pulling, in part, from Felipe and Lucia's detailed chapters in several season reports and original field drawings. The published article prominently features these wall mural drawings, which are central to the argument and interpretation presented. However, the published article lists only two authors: Jason and Ana, respectively. Neither Felipe, Lucia, nor any of the other project participants are acknowledged or credited for their contributions or the creation of the illustrations. To make matters worse, Felipe and Lucia see their figures reproduced with minimal additions (consisting of a few arrows and labels) in the publication with the line "Drawing by Jane Carter" in the captions.

After publication, Felipe and Lucia approach Jane about the omission, expressing their surprise and disappointment, particularly highlighting their significant intellectual contributions and the use of their original drawings without credit. Jane responds by email, saying, "Your efforts were certainly valuable, but it's common practice in archaeology to limit authorship on high-impact journal publications to senior scholars who write and finalize the manuscript. I'm sorry if this caused any confusion, but this is very standard." She adds, “Also, I don’t know why you think I copied your figures. I traced those images from photographs.” When they approach Ana in her office at UASA, she tells them to not cause a fuss. "You just have to put in your time while you climb the ladder," she says. "Everybody knows this. Besides, those report chapters aren’t even really published so you can’t claim that they are your intellectual property."

Felipe and Lucia are frustrated and troubled by Jane and Ana's responses. To further complicate matters, Ana is a member of both of their dissertation committees as is Jane as an external member. They wonder if Jane and Ana’s approach to authorship and attributional practices truly represents an accepted norm in archaeology or if it perpetuates systemic inequalities. At what point is one considered an author? To what extent can figures be plagiarized? Feeling uneasy, they consider what their next steps might be—should they keep their head down, raise their concerns publicly, or attempt another course of action?

CASE TWO

Dr. Ivonne Foster is an anthropology professor at Middleton State University and an active member of several avocational archaeology groups on MyFace, including the private group "Northwest Artifact Hunters." She has successfully completed several field seasons working at the Martin House site located on the Hillsdale Farm property, a project that is often considered by professional archaeologists as a model for ethical collaboration with private landowners. She is an advocate for leveraging the interests of avocational archaeologists and private collectors in archaeology to help with efforts to protect cultural heritage in the region. One evening, Ivonne scrolls through her social media feed and comes across a recent post from a member named "JB Martin."

The post reads: "I have 200 acres in Woe's Hollow with a massive overhang shelter on the property. I've found some flint flakes scattered around but haven't done any serious digging yet. I'm thinking of hosting a camping and digging event—three days and two nights. Participants can keep anything they find. Limited to 30-40 people, $200 per person. Maybe discounted for kids. I'm pretty sure the ground inside the shelter has been picked over by locals over the years, but the outside area is untouched. Any thoughts or suggestions? Never organized something like this before." Ivonne, an active member of this MyFace group, sees JB's post and feels immediately incensed. Ivonne knows that sites like this overhang shelter could be incredibly significant, possibly containing undisturbed stratigraphy and important cultural deposits.

Concerned, Ivonne debates responding directly in the comments section but hesitates. She worries about alienating private landowners, who often view archaeologists as intrusive or overly critical. Nevertheless, Ivonne believes strongly in advocating responsible stewardship of archaeological heritage, particularly in cases where few legal protections exist for private property. Ivonne also wonders if approaching JB directly would be effective or if she should publicly raise the issue in her MyFace circles, possibly alienating avocational archaeologists who could be valuable, and potentially necessary, allies. As Ivonne weighs these considerations, the responses to JB's post are disheartening, with most supporting the idea as harmless "fun" and a good side hustle. "Love the idea, JB!" one comment reads. "Why didn't I think of that? Times are tough. Could use the extra cash rn fr fr..." As Ivonne continues scrolling, she sees that one commenter contributed an unpopular opinion that lightly raises some ethical concerns. It has 40 downvotes and counting.

Ivonne has trouble sleeping that night. Unable to get any rest, she jumps out of bed at 2 AM and rushes to her laptop. Feeling extremely motivated, she comments on JB's post and makes an impassioned plea to consider the rapid destruction of archaeological sites in the Middleton Valley, lamenting how agricultural erosion, development, and private collecting continuously threaten valuable cultural resources. She emphasizes how understaffed archaeologists, overwhelmed and underfunded, struggle to keep pace with recording and conserving rapidly disappearing sites; private landowners must be part of the solution, not the problem. "There we go," she says to herself. "I feel much better."

Ivonne is awakened by a call the next morning from her department chair. Apparently, her screenshots of her comment have been widely shared, and complaints are pouring in.

CASE THREE

Kai Souza Oliveira is a first-year international PhD student in anthropology at Southern Pines University, a flagship R1 institution in the state of Belgravia recently impacted by state legislation targeting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Kai chose this program specifically for its commitment to fostering diverse voices and encouraging critical examinations of archaeology's colonial legacy with the goal of working towards just futures. Their intended dissertation aims to apply an intersectional perspective to the history of archaeology, analyzing the discipline's historical composition of practitioners to inform ongoing decolonization efforts—an area about which Kai is deeply passionate due to (1) their own experiences, (2) archaeology's persistent lack of diversity in the makeup of its practitioners, and (3) the continual perpetuation of harms rooted in the past.

Shortly after Kai's arrival, state lawmakers pass legislation targeted at DEI efforts. Specifically, the law prohibits "certain public entities, including state agencies, local boards of education, and public institutions of higher education, from maintaining a diversity, equity, and inclusion office or department or sponsoring any diversity, equity, and inclusion program or program that advocates for a divisive concept." Consequently, university administration swiftly responds by dismantling DEI offices, removing language referencing equity and diversity from university websites, and freezing all funding directed towards research or programming explicitly tied to DEI.

Nationally, the outlook is similarly grim. Anti-DEI efforts are decimating the federal funding landscape. At SPU, the impact is immediate and stark. Kai's advisor and Department Chair, Dr. Shannon Lee, informs Kai that their planned research will no longer be possible under these new restrictions. Department faculty, even tenured professors, begin revising course syllabi, all of which are publicly accessible online, cautiously removing such offending words as barrier, women, and Indigenous. One day, during a department meeting that Kai attends as the grad student rep, the Dean openly remarks that if she were to return to her faculty role, she would be compelled to abandon her long-standing research on environmental justice because it would now be considered politically controversial and un-fundable. "Don't make a stink," she says. "I can assure you that the Board of Trustees identified the Department of Anthropology as one of the potential troublemakers when discussing how to comply with the new law." She looks around whispers, "You didn't hear it from me, but they mentioned getting rid of y'all along with other departments with the words gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality in their names..."

Feeling disheartened, Kai seeks guidance from senior students and trusted faculty. The advice Kai receives ranges from pragmatic—"just avoid using specific terminology in your proposals and publications"—to cautionary—"you should shift your research focus to something aligned with current federal priorities." Kai wonders, "Does no one care about academic freedom and free speech anymore which I've heard about nonstop for the last few years? Have I gone insane?"

Kai faces a difficult decision. Should they maintain the integrity and original intent of the dissertation research, potentially limiting funding opportunities? Or should they pragmatically shift focus and language to align more closely with acceptable parameters, preserving professional opportunities at the expense of personal and ethical ideals? How can anthropology survive in such an environment?

CASE FOUR

Dr. Nina White is an experienced archaeologist employed by Heritage First Consultants, a cultural resource management firm that is often contracted to perform archaeological assessments ahead of major infrastructure projects. Recently, following an executive order declaring a "national energy emergency," federal agencies have expedited approvals for energy infrastructure projects, significantly curtailing the standard consultation processes under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Heritage First is quickly tasked with assessing the cultural and historical impacts of the proposed Copperhead Pipeline, designed to traverse public lands adjacent to the Red Willow Nation reservation. Traditionally, similar projects required months of thorough investigation, extensive consultations with stakeholders, particularly Indigenous groups, and careful deliberations to identify and mitigate potential impacts on culturally sensitive sites. However, due to the emergency declaration, Dr. White is granted only seven days to conduct all necessary stakeholder consultations, field evaluations, and provide final recommendations.

Immediately after learning about the tight timeframe, representatives of the Red Willow Nation voice serious concerns. They alert Dr. White that the proposed pipeline's route likely intersects multiple unrecorded sacred sites and ancestral burial grounds. Tribal elders and cultural experts emphasize the essential need for detailed site surveys and prolonged dialogue, highlighting that rapid assessments will inevitably miss crucial cultural contexts and could result in irreversible damage to sacred areas. Distressed by the inadequate timeline, Dr. White meets privately with her firm's director, Michael Evans. Although Michael expresses sympathy for her concerns, he also reminds her of the firm's financial reliance on maintaining good relationships with agencies, especially in these uncertain times defined by deregulatory actions.. "I feel you, Nina," he says, "but we must tread carefully. If we challenge the timeline or demand extensions, we risk losing future contracts and potentially harming our professional reputation. Legally, they're within their rights to expedite due to this declared emergency."

Throughout the week, Dr. White finds herself increasingly conflicted. She became an archaeologist precisely to protect cultural heritage and to advocate for the rights and voices of marginalized communities. Yet, now she faces intense pressure from multiple directions. Agency officials repeatedly stress the urgency and national security significance of the project, while pipeline developers press Heritage First Consultants to deliver rapid clearance to avoid costly delays. Meanwhile, Tribal representatives continue to plead for more time, underscoring the deep and lasting harm that expedited approval could inflict on their community's heritage and identity.

Privately, some of Dr. White's colleagues confide their similar frustrations but caution her against speaking out publicly. "Just document as much as possible within the constraints and move on," advises one colleague. "If we speak out, we risk being labeled as difficult or uncooperative, and that could damage our careers permanently and maybe even the future of CRM as an industry."

CASE FIVE

Dr. Sammy Khan, a respected early career archaeologist with expertise in Elmyran landscape archaeology, recently received an intriguing invitation to collaborate with HorizonTech, a pioneering artificial intelligence company by serving on its advisory board. HorizonTech's latest creation, "PastSight," utilizes AI and satellite imagery analysis to predict the locations of previously unknown archaeological sites. Enthusiastic about emerging technologies and their applications in archaeology, Sammy eagerly attends a public demonstration.

During the livestreamed presentation, PastSight impressively pinpoints multiple promising areas with sites, a sample of which were groundtruthed during a pilot phase. An impressive 95% were confirmed to be archaeological sites by experts. As excitement fills the room, HorizonTech's lead developer, Jake Donovan, proudly exclaims, "With PastSight, we can streamline archaeological discovery, making archaeology more efficient, cheaper, quicker, and precise than ever!" Sammy, however, quickly grows uneasy when she realizes that HorizonTech will not disclose their algorithms, training data, or methodologies. When she presses for details after the event, Jake politely but firmly replies, "Our model's inner workings are proprietary intellectual property. But rest assured, the results speak for themselves."

Her concern deepens when she recognizes that several of the identified locations in the slide deck are on lands belonging to the Indigenous Jera people. In fact, she was able to discern that some of the images shown were culturally sensitive and protected landscapes. Upon her questioning, Jake admits that no consultations had occurred with these communities (or any, really) prior to the demonstration. "We aim to initiate dialogues eventually," Jake clarifies, sensing Sammy's discomfort. "But currently, our goal is simply demonstrating the tech's potential."

The ramifications of this become clearer in subsequent weeks. Indigenous representatives from around the region reach out to Dr. Khan, deeply distressed by news circulating about PastSight and her role with the company. "We had no idea this technology even existed," one Tribal leader said. "These areas are sacred to us, and now locations of potential sites are publicly known without our consent. We've already had issues with trespassers and looters. Now, we fear things will worsen dramatically." Sammy sympathizes with their concerns, knowing too well how site coordinates can be sensitive information. Disclosure could result in invasion of privacy, damage to property, or impede the traditional uses of the area.

With an international archaeology conference looming, HorizonTech invites Dr. Khan to be the public face of PastSight, sponsoring her keynote address and offering substantial funding for her future research projects in return. With funding becoming increasingly difficult to secure, this could mean she'd spend less time worrying about applying for grants. Struggling with the prospect of tying her reputation to the company, she confides in her close colleague, Dr. Miguel Romero. "I feel trapped, Miguel. Endorsing PastSight could transform my research and career—but at what cost?" she asked. Miguel nods gravely. "And if you don't endorse it, Sammy? What then? HorizonTech could still move forward without you, but at least you'd have your integrity intact.." As the conference approaches and Sammy prepares her address, she can't help but feel like she might be selling out.

CASE SIX

The midday sun scorches the barren desert sands outside Camp Laguna, a renowned archaeological field school run by Dune University deep in the rugged terrain of the Larapaca Desert. Each summer, students from around the world pay $8,000 to learn excavation techniques, archaeological survey methods, and field research skills under esteemed faculty supervision. Among this year's participants is Mia Kim, a junior undergraduate who has dreamt of becoming an archaeologist since childhood.

On a particularly sweltering morning, the faculty supervisor, Dr. Randall Foster, assigns a small survey group to James Bennett, a confident and charismatic PhD candidate acting as a teaching assistant for the season. James has a reputation among the Dune Anthropology faculty as a rising star, admired for his bold personality and willingness to tackle challenges head-on. Dr. Foster gives him the responsibility of leading twenty students—including Mia—on a day-long pedestrian survey into a less-explored area of the desert.

The survey starts well enough, with James enthusiastically leading the group into the landscape, confidently pointing out geological features and sharing anecdotes from his prior field experiences. Yet, as hours pass, James begins to visibly struggle with his handheld GPS. His pace slows, and he frequently doubles back, mumbling assurances as the students exchange anxious glances. Water supplies dwindle under the oppressive heat, and by early evening, the reality is undeniable—they are lost.

Tension mounts with the fading daylight. Students, dehydrated and increasingly fearful, repeatedly ask James if he can contact base camp or determine their precise location. He reassures them sharply, insisting that getting a bit lost is just part of "real fieldwork," dismissing their concerns with bravado. As darkness falls, their anxiety intensifies. Mia, exhausted and dizzy, stumbles on uneven ground, spraining her ankle severely. It's not until nearly midnight—over seventeen hours after departure—that the bedraggled, distressed group finally returns to camp. Students were in tears; some visibly shaking from exhaustion and dehydration. Mia is carried in by two friends, her swollen ankle throbbing.

The following morning, Mia and several classmates confront Dr. Foster about the traumatic experience. Rather than concern or apology, his response consists of lighthearted laughter. "Looks like you've all finally earned your stripes," he jokes, brushing aside their distress. "Every archaeologist has a story about getting lost. Consider yourselves initiated." Feeling disoriented and humiliated, Mia struggles internally. Later that day, classmates privately approach her. "Maybe it's best to let it go," suggests one friend gently. "Everyone here says that's just how archaeology is—tough, adventurous, unpredictable. Complaining will just hurt your career."

Mia, however, is troubled by the incident and by the casual disregard for basic safety protocols. Dr. Foster didn't even report them missing when they failed to return for dinner. She thought of future students who would inevitably pass through Camp Laguna, potentially facing similar risks. She agonizes over whether to stay silent—protecting her reputation and opportunities—or to file a formal complaint, risking alienation and possible backlash from faculty and peers.

CASE SEVEN

When Dr. Hiroshi Tanaka became president of the Ebetsu Archaeological Scholars Association (EASA) two months ago, a professional organization dedicated to the study and preservation of cultural heritage across Ebetsu, he envisioned the creation of a more supportive and inclusive environment for professional archaeologists. Established in the early 20th century, EASA is a small but prestigious organization largely driven by volunteer efforts, occasional contracted administrative assistance, and modest membership fees.

Early in Hiroshi's term, the international archaeological community is grappling with increasing revelations about sexual harassment and assault in the field of archaeology. Courageous survivors, predominantly junior researchers and students, are sharing disturbing accounts of misconduct, calling for a serious reckoning within the discipline. To support these emerging conversations, Hiroto and the EASA board issue a carefully worded public statement affirming their solidarity with survivors of harassment and their commitment to fostering safe workplace environments and ethical cultures.

Initially, the response is overwhelmingly positive, especially from junior scholars who thank Hiroto personally for finally addressing issues that are long neglected in Ebetsuan archaeology. However, within days of releasing EASA's statement, Hiroto receives an alarming letter from Dr. Samuel Reed, a prominent senior archaeologist and longtime member of EASA, who has been filing multiple defamation lawsuits against colleagues and institutions that spoke out against him or rescinded his membership due to documented Title IX violations.

The letter accuses EASA's leadership of implicitly defaming Dr. Reed by releasing the statement at a time when he was heavily featured in the news—even though he was not explicitly named. Dr. Reed has recently gained notoriety for his litigious behavior and thinly veiled threats sent to alleged victims. Alarmed by the letter, the EASA board is forced to retain legal counsel, quickly depleting their limited financial reserves. Internally, EASA's volunteer leadership debates intensely. Despite Dr. Reed's weak legal argument, some urge Hiroto to withdraw or soften the statement, emphasizing the existential threat the lawsuit poses to their small underresourced organization. Others insist that they have an ethical responsibility to stand firm, warning that backing down would undermine the organization's credibility and embolden further threats against speech and accountability.

In a private conversation, a respected senior board member cautions Hiroto: "We're risking the survival of EASA if we don't compromise here. We've never faced a threat like this in the history of EASA." On the other hand, younger members privately express deep frustration, fearing the chilling effect of caving to intimidation. "If we back down now," one graduate student confides to Hiroto, "it sends a signal that power and intimidation can silence us whenever we speak up." Plus, people are tired of organizations that don't stand by their principles.

Hiroto sits at his desk late one night, the letter from Dr. Reed still open before him. The path forward feels uncertain, but Hiroto knows the decision he makes will resonate far beyond the immediate crisis.

CASE EIGHT

Paul O'Connor, having recently earned his doctorate in anthropology, struggles to secure stable academic employment. Despite a strong record of prestigious grants and publications, his job applications yield only adjunct and visiting professor opportunities. After multiple rejections, Paul comes across a tenure-track position announcement that aligns perfectly with his research interests. He submits his application, though he tries not to get his hopes up.

To his surprise, Paul advances to the longlist and then the shortlist—one of only three finalists for the highly competitive tenure-track position in archaeology at Westmore University. Ecstatic, he throws himself into preparation, refining his job talk and anticipating potential interview questions from faculty and students.

When Paul arrives for his campus visit, he finds the faculty and students welcoming and supportive. His job talk is a resounding success, praised for its cutting-edge contributions to archaeology. Following the talk, he joins graduate students for a scheduled lunch, where he engages in lively discussion, answering questions from potential future students. After lunch, with extra time before his meeting with the Dean, Paul decides to explore the anthropology department on his own. As he wanders the halls, he overhears a conversation from a partially closed office door. Inside, the department chair is speaking with Professor Henry Owens, a faculty member Paul had met earlier in the day. Paul quickly realizes he is the last of the three candidates to complete a campus visit. Then, he hears something that makes him stop in his tracks.

"Look, we know he's an impressive candidate, but you already told me that my daughter would be a shoo-in for this position," Owens says, his voice low but insistent. "Yes, yes, I understand," the department chair responds. "These processes can just be mere formalities. We need the appearance of an open search. Don't worry."

Paul feels his stomach drop. Had he just overheard a pre-arranged hire? The implication is clear—the position may have already been promised to Owens' daughter, making Paul's candidacy nothing more than a meaningless formality. Shaken, Paul tries to rationalize what he heard. Maybe he misunderstood the context. Maybe faculty casually speculate about hiring outcomes all the time. Maybe the decision isn't already made.

He pushes aside his unease, completes the rest of his campus visit, and returns home hopeful.
Weeks later, Paul receives news that he did not get the position. Shortly after, he learns that Owens' daughter has been selected. Paul feels a rising sense of unease—this hiring decision aligns too perfectly with what he overheard. If the outcome was predetermined, was his candidacy ever evaluated fairly? Did he even have a real ?

Now, Paul struggles with what to do. Raising concerns might jeopardize his career in an already brutally competitive job market. Universities rarely revisit hiring decisions, and he has no definitive proof of wrongdoing—just an overheard conversation. Yet, if he stays silent, he risks allowing an unethical hiring process to persist, reinforcing the reality that academic networks can prioritize personal connections over merit.

CASE NINE

At Eastwood Regional University, a midsized public institution known for its strong liberal arts tradition, a looming budget crisis is driving difficult decisions across the campus. Enrollment at Eastwood has declined steadily since 2021, dropping by nearly 20% as the impact of the national "enrollment cliff" arrives earlier than expected. Administrators face increased pressure from students, families, and the Board of Trustees to realign academic offerings toward majors perceived as more directly connected to career outcomes.

To address these challenges, Eastwood's leadership hires a consulting firm, CoreMetrics, to conduct an "academic-portfolio review" designed to assess program viability based largely on financial performance, student enrollment data, and projected workforce demand. The administration emphasizes the severity of the university's $22 million budget deficit, attributed to enrollment declines, rising inflation, and increased operational costs.

Weeks later, CoreMetrics presents its initial findings, ranking academic programs using metrics that favor market-driven degrees. Immediately, several programs find themselves identified as underperforming: anthropology, philosophy, physics, art history, economics, theater and dance, women's and gender studies, and physics. Anxiety and panic quickly spreads across campus, prompting faculty and student protests.

Dr. Landon Morgan, chair of Eastwood's Department of Anthropology, argues passionately at faculty meetings that CoreMetrics' analysis is flawed, neglecting the intangible yet essential value of critical thinking, cultural understanding, ethical reasoning and other "soft skills." However, administrators, including Provost Evelyn Foster, highlight financial imperatives that cannot be ignored. In a private meeting, Provost Foster confides, "Landon, the Board sees these program cuts as unavoidable. I believe in what anthropology brings, but the reality is stark. Parents and students increasingly demand direct job pathways, state funding is shrinking, and our enrollment shows no signs of rebounding. Take Anthropology, for example. Your number of majors has fallen below 30. The core classes you teach are under-enrolled. That's simply unsustainable, especially considering your faculty are not bringing in big grants." She adds, "Also, Anthro has an image problem. It's a regular on the lists of worst majors in terms of job prospects and starting salaries."

As Eastwood publicly announces plans to eliminate multiple undergraduate and graduate programs and consolidate others—including merging anthropology into a broader social sciences department—students and faculty mobilize. Students express panic about finishing degrees, faculty members worry about layoffs, and the wider community voices concerns about losing critical programs that foster civic engagement and cultural literacy. Complicating matters further, Eastwood announces plans to eliminate its Division II NCAA athletics programs, adding to the emotional climate on campus. The move underscores the depth of the financial distress.

Caught in the crossfire of financial necessity, administrative mandates, passionate student activism, and a commitment to their disciplines, faculty members like Dr. Morgan must now navigate complex ethical decisions about advocacy, collegial solidarity, and institutional sustainability. It's a matter of survival.

CASE TEN

Andrew Schultz is a prominent professor at Shiz University in Erewhon, widely recognized as the leading expert on Velkari culture—a coastal fishing culture from Erewhon known for its intricate archaeological sites. His stellar reputation attracts numerous graduate students eager to study under his guidance. Alongside Dr. Schultz's groundbreaking research, students are drawn by Shiz University's prestigious Velkari archaeological collection, the largest and most comprehensive assemblage of Velkari artifacts globally.

Hayleigh Richards, deeply passionate about Velkari archaeology, applies specifically to Shiz U to work under Dr. Schultz. Thrilled by her acceptance into the doctoral program in anthropology, Hayleigh is delighted when Dr. Schultz agrees to chair her dissertation committee. Having unrestricted access to Schultz's mentorship and the extraordinary Velkari artifact collection makes her academic journey feel almost perfect.

Three intense years into her doctoral research, Hayleigh spends countless hours meticulously documenting, analyzing, and cataloging artifacts, becoming intimately familiar with the collection and its accession records. She knows precisely that Shiz University's Kraken Museum officially owns the artifacts, with strict guidelines governing their storage, use, and transport.

One quiet Saturday afternoon, Hayleigh unexpectedly enters the anthropology lab to complete urgent data collection for an upcoming conference presentation. To her shock, she finds Dr. Schultz hurriedly packing several boxes of Velkari artifacts into crates. His movements appear unusually frantic. Startled and uneasy, she cautiously offers, "Dr. Schultz, let me help you with those." Dr. Schultz sharply shakes his head, visibly agitated. "No, Hayleigh, stay out of it. I'm just securing these artifacts temporarily." His tone is uncharacteristically curt, and he avoids eye contact. The tension in the room leaves Hayleigh deeply unsettled, though she hesitates to push further, fearing to strain their academic relationship.

Within days, unsettling rumors circulate among graduate students and faculty that Dr. Schultz is secretly negotiating a high-profile appointment at Pennbrook University in the neighboring country of Genovia which intends to launch its own Velkari research center. Weeks later, the university formally announces Dr. Schultz's sudden departure. Hayleigh and her colleagues feel blindsided; their advisor never hinted at leaving, jeopardizing their academic stability and research plans.

In the chaotic aftermath, Hayleigh visits the artifact lab, discovering that numerous essential Velkari artifacts she analyzed extensively are now missing. Panic sets in. She frantically contacts Dr. Schultz via calls and emails but receives no response. The university administration seems unaware of the missing artifacts, and Hayleigh faces mounting pressure to finalize her dissertation data.

Driven by anxiety, Hayleigh revisits the artifact accession records and finds no documentation authorizing the removal or transfer of the missing items. A horrifying realization dawns on her: Dr. Schultz, her trusted advisor and mentor, might have illicitly removed culturally significant artifacts, potentially to enhance his position at the new institution.