



at the Forefront

A new approach to ethics education revolutionizes the industry

DEIDRE ALVES, M.ED.

Improving the quality of people's lives through infrastructure development is IRWA's purpose. Not merely words—it is action, heart and dedication from countless individuals committed to excellence in this dynamic field. IRWA is proud to lead the world in thoughtful and ethical standards of practice around this vital industry that brings electricity, transportation, water, energy and countless essential services to people everyday. And as a beacon of light and leadership, IRWA is proud to be at the helm with our new classroom Ethics course.

Working in tandem with IRWA's International Ethics Committee led by Colleen Brown, I am honored and humbled by the team's dedication and the extraordinary work that has been done to bring this course forward.

Ethics is arguably the most essential subject among the many courses that IRWA offers. It is the foundation that anchors our curriculum. And it is not only required for recertification every five years, it is also mandatory for all IRWA Credentialing programs. However, ethics is more than just a requirement. It is a responsibility and diligence that promotes excellence and sets us apart as an honorable profession—a profession that treats people fairly and with care.

Because our certified members must retake the course every five years, we were challenged to create a dynamic

learning experience that would be customizable and relevant for the long haul, and not a mere regurgitation of the same information every time it is taken. The team and I worked tirelessly to develop a course that would ask students to think deeply and critically about the concept of ethics—to develop an active awareness of ethics in their daily lives and to consistently make it an active practice and veritable presence in their work. The next charge was to include the Standards of Practice for the Infrastructure Professional, IRWA's Code of Ethics, Rules of Professional Conduct and the Ethical Violation Complaint Procedure—all in a way that was innovative and highly engaging.

Threaded throughout the course is the IRWA CLIMB Certified Instructor Method that enables dense content to leap off the page and holds the learner accountable through highly engaging and memorable learning experiences that check for understanding and ensure high long-term retention. And it is fun! Yes, ethics really can be FUN! This course addresses the serious compliance components required of our profession in a way that positively changes people's lives and how they think and do their jobs. Impactful and engaging, students will feel inspired to activate ethics awareness in their lives—and at an ethical standard never before imagined.

The new course is IRWA C101, "Elevating Your Ethical Awareness," and it is being piloted in the Spring to an

audience of select IRWA leadership. The 8-hour course will offer 8 credit units, and once it is officially released to all Chapters, it will become the required IRWA Ethics Course. At that time, it will replace both IRWA C103: Ethics and the Right of Way Profession and C104: Standards of Practice for the Right of Way Professional.

IRWA is proud to be the leader in ethics education for infrastructure professionals worldwide. It is a calling that is taken very seriously. I wish to thank the team for being fearless with me as we embarked on some exceptionally beneficial risks with this course. As we continue to focus on improving the quality of people's lives through infrastructure development, IRWA is indeed living up to its profound purpose. ✪



Deidre Alves is IRWA's Vice President of Professional Development.