

University at Buffalo Law School
Interviewing, Counseling and Negotiating
Professor Kim Diana Connolly
ICN PROFESSIONAL SKILLS LEARNING CONTRACT,* Summer 2011

1. Parties.

The parties to this contract are:

- Student: _____
- Professor Kim Diana Connolly

Hereinafter the above-listed parties may be referred to as the "Learning Team."

2. Duration.

This contract shall be in effect during the Summer 2011 semester.

4. Course Requirements and Agreements.

The requirements associated with the Interviewing, Counseling, and Negotiating (ICN) course (as set forth in the syllabus, on the course website and discussed in class) shall be met by the student to the best of her or his ability. The information and support necessary to help the Student achieve the course requirements, course goals and the individual goals set forth by the Student in this learning contract will be provided by the Professor to the best of her ability. This contract adds to (but does not supercede) the general agreement to provide guidance and complete assignments that is traditional in a law school course. It allows the Learning Team to work together on making progress toward a few professional goals that the Student wants to achieve in the context of the ICN course.

4. Learning Goals.

A. Professor's Goals for the Course

ICN is designed to make concrete and useful some of the learning students bring to the classroom, and to provide the opportunity for learning new skills and paradigms about law and lawyering in context. Specifically, the Professor's goals for the course include the student experiencing and exploring the following (in no particular order):

- A. learning to assume responsibility for work with clients
- B. improving problem-solving abilities
- C. improving collaboration abilities
- D. learning from reflection
- E. understanding the relationship between theory and practice
- F. exploring professional value choices
- G. exploring and developing a personal understanding of professional responsibility
- H. skills development

* This learning contract framework is adapted from one used by the Center for Applied Legal Studies at Georgetown University Law Center, as well as variations on that model used by the Interdisciplinary Environmental Law Clinic at Washington University College of Law, and the Case Western Reserve Law School Family Law Clinic Educational, Professional, and Personal Goals Statement.

- I. enhancing creativity
- J. learning to exercise authority and responsibility
- K. making use of existing knowledge
- L. learning to meet deadlines
- M. learning how to learn

B. Student Skills Goals

From an alphabetical list of certain lawyering skills, Student Attorney shall select two or three skills on which they wish to put special emphasis on working toward proficiency during this course:

1. Selected Skills Goals

[Please delete the ones you are not selecting for this course]

Class presentations
Interviewing
Fact investigation
Counseling
Negotiation
Professional responsibility
Reflective practice
Writing
Other (please specify):

2. Anticipated Methods of Exploring and Reflecting on your progress toward increasing your proficiency in the listed skills

[Please add]

C. Student Professional and Personal Goals

In addition to skills training, this ICN section is designed to help students achieve more general professional and personal goals as well. Every effort will be made to provide autonomy and responsibility for learning. Therefore, development of measurable goals is one way to assist Students in making the most of this opportunity. Listed in Appendix 1 (in no particular order) are possible personal and professional goals that may help Students further in thinking about their own goals in the context of this semester, to be explored through this course. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but is offered as something to consult before preparing this part of the contract. Feel free to identify goals not on the attached list.

Please list two or three personal and professional goals you want to pursue this semester, identify what obstacles might prevent you from achieving these goals, and outline a plan for reaching the stated goals. Your outline should include ideas for overcoming perceived obstacles and taking advantage of existing skills and experiences.

Section I – Goals (see Appendix 1)

- 1.
- 2.
- [3.]

Section II – Obstacles

[Add]

Section III – Implementation Plan

[Add]

5. Evaluation and Assessment

The Professor shall provide reasonable input as requested by the student during progress toward these goals. The Professor and the student shall meet in class weekly or as scheduled, and shall have personal meetings and other communications to discuss this learning contract and performance on class assignments. Additional individual feedback shall be provided via email. Meetings with teams of students may also take place in which these goals are discussed. The student will reflect in writing on progress toward these goals in the middle of the semester. At the close of the semester, the student and the Professor will evaluate the success of working toward proficiency with respect to these goals in this contract individually, and consult about the results (in person and/or electronically).

6. Intent of Contract¹

The intent of this contract is to enhance the learning experience during the Interviewing, Counseling and Negotiating Course, and to not provide a burden to either party. Compliance shall be interpreted holistically and liberally. No more than five percent of the grade will come from the process of working to fulfill this learning contract.

6. Amendment

This contract can be amended by mutual agreement.

Signed by:

Student

Printed Last Name

Date

Professor Kim Diana Connolly

Date

¹ By definition, law school courses involve an unwritten contract, which of course is also in effect as part of this agreement: If the student produces such work as the professor specifies, to a standard which the professor will determine, the professor will provide a grade to the student. The student indicates acceptance of this "contract" by enrolling in the course and producing the work.

Appendix 1

This appendix contains a list of possible personal and professional goals. Students should use this list in completing Section 4 (Learning Goals), Part C (Student Professional and Personal Goals) of the Learning Contract. This list is not inclusive - feel free to identify goals not on this list in completing that portion of the contract.

- learn to develop productive work relationships
- improve ability to collaborate with colleagues and others
- learn to accept constructive criticism
- learn to give constructive criticism
- improve time management skills
- learn to make decisions more deliberately by broadening the range of options considered and rationally and selecting among them
- learn to make decisions more consciously
- learn ways to make work experience enjoyable and personally fulfilling
- learn to deal with anger constructively
- become more sensitive to ethical issues
- learn to compete more effectively
- learn to cooperate more effectively
- improve ability to work with people of differing age, sex, race, sexual preference, economic status, etc.
- become more assertive
- become less assertive
- learn leadership skills
- learn to work more effectively as a member of a group
- increase confidence in professional abilities
- learn to shoulder responsibility well
- learn how to approach work in a more creative way
- become more aware of, and responsive to, non-verbal communication
- become more introspective
- become less introspective
- become better able to evaluate the risks inherent in particular courses of action, and increase ability to accept risks
- learn how to make better use of resources
- learn to develop resources