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## Student Perspectives: Putting Theory Into Action

Below we feature Edward Saint Vil (JD '21) describing how negotiation theories were put into practice on the Negotiation Competition team.

Interview of Edward Saint-Vil (JD '21) by Shaun Sun (JD '22)

*Q: What were some of the most important skills you gained through participation in and preparation for the competitions?*

A: Some of the skills I'll highlight are communication skills. Active listening skills: learning how to listen to your counterparty and parse out what their interests are. Learning how to categorize those interests and list them out in terms of importance. Teamwork: working aside another negotiator and figuring out how to communicate with each other even in the midst of a negotiation. Strategy: learning when is the best time to call a caucus, when to put forth an offer. And of course, in terms of preparation, learning how to analyze a set of facts and figure out what's most important to your client.

Also, staying calm under pressure, staying collegial, learning to negotiate based on the merits rather than on emotion. I'm very grateful to the center, grateful to the course offerings at Northwestern Law - the skills I learned, I think are really gonna help when I'm at a law firm.

*Q: Are there any key pieces of advice that you think would be helpful for future negotiations students to hear?*

A: I'd say prepare, prepare, prepare. Take it seriously but have fun. The more time you put on the front end, use a structured approach. My competition partner Ramia Mitchell (JD '21) and I, the second year, we started using a very systematic and structured approach for our negotiation and it really helped immensely. We had an outline where we inserted the interests; we inserted key facts; we inserted what our first offer, second offer, third offer would be; we had our opening statements planned out; we had our Pre-Negotiation Analysis outlined.

We also kind of memorized things because there was one judge who didn't like how it looked when we kept looking down. Even in person, I remember judges were impressed when students didn't have to look at their notes when they were doing their pre and post negotiation analysis. I would definitely say that preparation is key and preparation will definitely add to your confidence. It's gonna be like a reflex when the opposing party brings up a certain issue.

And also, pressing things that are important to Northwestern - if you can avoid starting off on the wrong foot, if you can seize the momentum by setting the agenda early, managing the negotiation, putting out the first offer, calling the caucus, summarizing things at the end - those are concrete and structural things that would be very advantageous to any negotiator, especially in the competition setting because it's scored by points.



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