

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Individual Problem-Based Project

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

By melding real world scenarios with course content, this instructor engages students in contextualized learning that enables them to apply legal concepts to an individual, problem-based project. Although this project can take many forms, the general idea is to help students apply legal concepts to an individual written project that is framed around a corporate law scenario. In this activity, students work independently to walk through the steps necessary to carry out a corporate legal action. Each semester, the instructor selects one type of project, and each student is required to complete the project independently over the course of three to four weeks. Before starting the project, the instructor provides students with a detailed outline that describes each of the major elements of the project and the expected deliverables. One class meeting is dedicated to discussing the project and three to four hours of subsequent class meetings are allocated to allow students time to work on the project in class.

In the project scenario, students are attorneys at a corporate law firm and are instructed by their supervising attorney (the instructor) to carry out a specific task related to the life-cycle of a corporation. As such, the project begins with an official memorandum from the supervising attorney outlining important details about the task. Depending on the type of activity selected for any given semester,

the memo will prompt students to develop a plan for creating an LLC, carrying out a corporate merger, liquidating a corporation, or completing another related task. Students must carefully review and critically analyze the memo to identify the notable elements of the project such as the entities involved, organizational structures, important actors, financial parameters, and more. Each student must carefully research their project to identify legal considerations, documents needed, filing requirements, regulatory guidelines, agreement parameters, and financial implications.

Students are expected to submit an overall plan that details their analysis and outlines each important element of the task. Along with the written plan, students are also expected to obtain and submit completed copies of any regulatory forms required to accomplish their goal. The second part of the written project is a cover letter addressed to the supervising attorney and any other interested parties. The letter should provide instructions on what forms need to be signed by each person and also should lay out a filing timeline.