

NEGOTIATION 101 WITH CRYSTAL REEK (JUNIOR COMMITTEE BLOG)

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Negotiation 101 With Crystal Reek (Junior Committee Blog)

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Last Tuesday, the Junior Committee had the chance to learn about negotiation from Crystal Reek, a professor at Columbia Business School.

The choice of topic was quite pertinent as dancers don't tend to negotiate and rarely dare to even discuss pay. Money is taboo in our community so this opportunity was of a heightened importance.

Crystal began her presentation with a role-play exercise for us around a contract negotiation at a consulting firm. Half of our group was to be the employer, and the other half embodied the future employee. Paired with a member in the opposite role, we were to try to negotiate our contracts following a series of parameters that explained our best interests, which were unknown to the person we were negotiating with and vice-versa.

I was paired with Kayley Pruitt and played the employee (while Kayley was my future employer). Though the negotiation started very easily as we both agreed on "work location" things got more complicated when discussing pay or paid-time off. It was interesting for me to realize that everyone's priorities in a negotiation are different and that it is fundamental to prepare for a negotiation and to try to figure out your employer's interests as well your own.

Sometimes they conflict which makes it a difficult negotiation but they are often just different which makes it easier for you to get your interests fulfilled if and only if you are willing to give in to your employer's. I like to think of this as packaging. In the context of my discussion the packaging took place as follows- Kayley would not offer me more than \$90,000 a year (remember this is fictional) and my goal was to get at least \$95,000 a year (still role-play) so I ended up accepting a lower salary in exchange for better health insurance which she agreed to since I gave in to what she wanted just before (so her interest + my interest= package).

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Following our negotiations Crystal had us share our experiences in these roles and ended with some tips for the future. The 5 most common mistakes in a negotiation are:

1. Not negotiating
2. Being adversarial
3. Not preparing
4. Aiming low
5. Insufficient practice

As an inspiration for our future negotiations she shared this final quote, by Mary Parker Follett-

"...If we think that integration is more profitable than conquering or compromising, the first step toward this consummation is to bring the differences into the open. We cannot hope to integrate our differences unless we know what they are..."

Big thanks to Crystal for enlightening us on a practice that we need to survive and to excel in the professional world.

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