Before I started my spring semester, I saw The Legal Profession listed as one of my courses and I wondered what would be taught, how it would be presented, and what I would learn. Before I started law school, I thought I had a strong grasp on what was “right,” what was “wrong” and how to make decisions in an efficient manner in most situations. Over the past weeks, I have learned that this is not the case. Practical wisdom is so much more than “knowing” for yourself what is right and wrong, it is opening up and learning from others and the situation. Through my working group and our section discussions, I have learned that there is not always a right and wrong answer. There are many different paths to take in every situation, and just because I feel a certain way does not mean it is the right one. There have been many times I have come to our section meeting after I had met with my working group believing what we have decided is the correct answer. After sitting through the discussion, hearing others speak and applying it to the topic, I have learned that practical wisdom is making the best decision for all those involved in the situation (usually the client, the judicial system, society, the profession and yourself) and holding the virtues of the profession in high esteem. Practical wisdom is important to assess the situation, the timing of the situation, and making the best choice in a virtuous manner. Speaking in the working groups has really opened me up to making all considerations, and almost running through scenarios in my head in order to decide what the different outcome will entail. I hope everyone in the section has learned as much as I have; now recognizing that everyone brings different views and experiences from their backgrounds and that we all have important things to offer. We learn from each other and grow, and I believe that is the most important aspect of practical wisdom.

A good starting point to address the concept of practical wisdom is with the Schwartz article which holds that practical wisdom is one of [if not "the"] most important skill you as a law student should master. Practical wisdom provides a holistic approach to problem-solving which helps moderate all of the other considerations (like loyalty, fairness, caution, bravery, perspective et. al) that we consider when we decide how to attack an issue. So essentially, given all the considerations that we make, practical wisdom helps us weigh those considerations in accordance with their relevance to the situation du jour. This article, as well as the materials and activities this semester, has emphasized that practical wisdom can be very difficult in its application. I'm continually amazed at how much I can sometimes disagree with my peers on the issues. I'm equally amazed at how much these scenarios that we tease out in class discussion have broadened my perspective and indeed, strengthen my practical wisdom skills. I came into law school thinking there would always be a "bright-line rule" as it pertains to moral or ethical
dilemmas and that so long as I found myself on the right side of that line, I'd be fine. But, as I've learned, placing too much weight on my own perspective at the expense all the other relevant considerations, could have unforeseen consequences. At the end of the semester, I will be no means an expert on practical wisdom, but I can say that because of this course, I know to step back from situations where I immediately derive a simple conclusion, and think harder about all of the potential implications and considerations.

In exercising practical wisdom in my discussion group, it has been a bit difficult. Its pretty difficult for to put myself in a situation that I have never experienced, primarily because I suspect the true nature would probably be more difficult than imagined. I learned that in assessing a decision to do something or not to do something, I need to spend much more time thinking about the possible benefits and consequences that may follow my decisions. I learned this especially when having to discuss what we would do if an opposing counsel omits an agreed-upon provision. My initial response was to talk to my clients and advice him to my best ability then to do as I am told. Now, I have taken a different position. As a lawyer, I want to guard my reputation and really think long term on how aiding my client to do something detrimental would effect him and me in the long term. I found that I learn best from the section meetings. Its helpful to see other's point of views and to just be aware of how reasonable minds may differ. In the future, I will approach my call of wisdom with precaution and tread lightly. I would definitely spend more time thinking about the benefits and consequences and think about whom my decisions will affect.

I think I learned the most from your discussion on the opposing lawyer omitting something from a contract. In that discussion, I realized that when I had been thinking about the problem privately, I had focused more on what would be the best for me and the opposing counsel in the long run. That is not a bad thing to consider, but in the classroom discussion, I began to think more about the client's perspective and how he would feel if he found out. I am not saying that he ever would find out, or that I am only concerned about getting caught, but instead it was much more a game of "what if he finds out I didn't tell him about the mistake". In the discussion, I began to see more perspectives and more possibilities tat would come from acting one way or another. Seeing all these perspectives and weighing them is practical wisdom. I think it is similar to the story about the wedding guest dress from the reading. If you made a decision to tell your friend that she looked awful, that is potentially fine. But if you didn't consider whether or not she had anything else to wear, then you can end up making her feel terrible and self-conscious all day long. Now that I have had this tiny epiphany I will try to look at more possibilities in each action before making my decision on how to act. Though it may mean I take longer to respond.
then before, I believe my responses will be based on a better understanding of the whole situation.

It appears to me that the only way to truly be able to approach these situations that call for this practical wisdom is to recognize all possible decisions, and then proceed to determining what the consequences would mean for all the parties involved as a result of those decisions. This decision process also demands consideration of some of the strengths as discussed by Peterson and Seligman (i.e. honesty, duty, diligence, integrity, etc.) As we learned from our first reading in this course, there are times when decisions will be made in the interest of one virtue that will, consequently, be at the sacrifice of another interest. From these section meetings and working groups, I believe we, the class as a whole, are beginning to hone in on this master virtue of practical wisdom.

I am no longer surprised this late in the semester that I leave our discussion meeting with a completely different conclusion than I had when the meeting began. This has led me to believe that one can never completely master practical wisdom; we only become better each time. I have learned so far that discussing a problem with someone else, particularly with someone that disagrees with me, is the best way to understand both my decision and the opposite view. I now know that I will never have all the answers to a problem, and often there is no one right answer. However, I do know now that the best way to come up with the best answer to any moral issue is through discussion, personal contemplation, and a study of the consequences after the decision is made.

In the abstract, “practical wisdom” was a concept that I had little interest in attempting to understand. After seeing the concept in action and observing how others work through problems differently than me, I am now intrigued by alternative viewpoints and subconsciously consider them while formulating my own opinions. Like many of my fellow classmates, I was amazed to learn that others did not share my views on a problem that I knew to be difficult. I now approach these issues and consider how others may present valid concerns that cause me to change my proposed solutions. The section meetings taught me the most about the vast differences in what people consider to be the right thing to do in a difficult situation. Many times in our section meetings I begin to question my opinion and am often persuaded that another course of action may be better. Unfortunately, in the real world I won’t have the luxury of considering such alternate discussion. I now realize serious impact an ethical decision can have, my opinion is not always the best, and the need to handle such problems delicately.
I have learned that wisdom cannot be taught, in the sense that you can read book or attend a lecture. From my working group and small group is where I have gleaned the most “wisdom”. Many of the situations that we were dropped into were no win situations. Even though there was no way to come out of the situation with everyone happy, I thought I clearly knew what was the best route to minimize the damage and safeguard my own beliefs and values. Then, as I would talk to my classmates about my thoughts, I would hear them passionately argue against me. That is when I realized that they too thought that they had clearly found the best answer. Neither one of us was wrong, but we both felt our answer was correct despite being on totally opposite ends of the spectrum. What this has shown me is that when faced with these tough situations; I have to attempt to look at all of my options, from as neutral a perspective as possible, before making a decision. This is not something I could have learned in a book or a lecture. It was only after being in the tough situation and viewing the controversy first hand that I could fully have realized and understood this, albeit a simulated situation.

We all bring our own experiences with us to our small group meetings and section meetings. Our pasts have shaped who we are and shaped our practical wisdom—virtues, strengths and weaknesses, because we each have a different experience, a different perspective. But as much as my past has shaped my practical wisdom, my current experiences and discussions with small group continue to shape it. I have found that being open to other perspectives and views on life is the best way to grow as a person which changes your wisdom and maybe your strengths and weaknesses too. This whole course is an exercise in practical wisdom. At least for me it is, and I've been able to do that from my own consideration of the problems, form my working group, and from the section meetings. I'll approach situations that call for wisdom differently in the future by keeping in mind that I should look at the problem from multiple angles before I make up my mind for sure. And also keep in mind that it's okay to change your mind or to be persuaded by someone else.

Before we had our working groups and section meetings, I believed that I knew a lot about understanding different ideologies and exercising wisdom. However after these meetings, I have learned that practical wisdom isn't about having one good virtue. We all have different viewpoints on how to respond to the situations that confront us. Having practical wisdom is understanding that there are multiple ways to solving a problem and looking at all of them to develop a good course of action. In this class, we have been taught how to balance, to look at our strengths and virtues as integrated. This lesson has been invaluable to help me understand more about myself and others. It has also taught me to be more open to new values because it is a constant evolution and there is rarely, if ever, one perfect answer.
A sentence from Schwartz and Sharpe's article stuck with me: "For in addition to skill...practical wisdom requires will. To be wise, it is not enough to know the right thing to do. You have to want to do it." This conflict surfaced quite a bit in my working group discussions. Often, it is easy to answer "what should you do," but difficult to predict what you would do. Practical wisdom means knowing which virtue to deploy from one's arsenal of virtues in a given situation, recognizing that courage in one situation may just be foolhardiness in the next. This course has forced me to look within myself and decide what I would do in the posed situations. It hasn't been as easy as I thought it would be. The working group discussions have contributed to my self-awareness in a profound way.

Throughout this course I have been provided with many opportunities to learn new insights from my peers. The working groups and section meetings have been very beneficial to me. This course presents us with challenges we may have never contemplated we would encounter when we enter the real world as lawyers. Bringing my own perspective and life experiences to first the working group and presenting my ideas and listening to others ideas of the problems was a great opportunity to allow myself to think about problems from different perspectives and to learn from others with different experiences. The section meetings further provided me the opportunity to consider different perspectives that I may not have ever thought about. Every section meeting I walk away with a more broad understanding of the problem and the possible solutions and it gives real world insight into resolving problems with others that have different insights and perspectives. I've learned that it is always necessary to listen to your peers and try and understand where they are coming from rather than having a closed mindset as to what I think is right. In the future, I will approach situations that require wisdom from all angles and try and think of all possible scenarios and outcomes. I may even consult someone else, if the circumstance permits, to see what their take is on the presented problem so I am able to gain further insight before I make my decision.

Before reading the article on practical wisdom, I had never really stopped to think about how I made my decisions or took any time to delve deeper into my thought process. I was asked a question and I tried to answer it the best way I knew how. Growing up going to religious schools I was always taught to make the moral choice, not necessarily make the choice that makes you happy, but make the choice that is the moral and just choice in the end. I guess the biggest thing that the practical wisdom article and our group meetings have taught me is that you cannot make a decision based solely off of one consideration or using one virtue. You actually have to think decisions through and not go with your gut or go with the answer that has been programmed into your head. You have to sit down and weigh the options, think of all the possible outcomes and
then try to balance out the virtues needed to make the decision in order to make the choice that you believe to be the best choice. I have learned from my own considerations that I tend to make decisions quickly; I make my mind up about our class problems within minutes of reading the prompt. I did not previously stop and think about all of the considerations I needed to be putting into that decision making process, I just made the quick and easy decision and stuck with it. Having our small discussion groups and our section meetings have allowed me to get other opinions on the matter, other choices; the discussions have allowed me a chance to look into another's mind and see what virtues and choices they make while considering the answer to tough questions. Hearing my classmates's answers have allowed me to see past the one-sided decisions I have made and have allowed me to realize that I really need to be more thorough and in depth when I answer tough questions inside and outside of class. It says in the practical wisdom article that to have practical wisdom is to know what to aim for; someone who has practical wisdom not only knows what the right thing to do is, but wants to do the right thing as well. Knowing what the right thing to do is not an easy task but I understand what the authors of the article meant when they said that all of our virtues need to work together for us to achieve and employ practical wisdom. In the future I will approach situations that call for wisdom differently. I will take the time to sit and think about what the right thing truly is. I will not let one virtue over-power the others in my decision making process. I will get the advice and opinions of others should I get stuck in the decision process but most of all I will strive to make the right choice and to do the right thing. It may sound very cliche but in the end I would like to be able to look at myself in the mirror everyday, I feel like acting with practical wisdom will allow me to achieve that.

I believe that the Schwartz and Sharpe article, our group discussions, working group meetings, and interviews all show the importance of balance in our personal and professional lives. Having been in the "real world" for a few years before coming back to school, I have had first hand chances to succeed and fail at exercising practical wisdom. Our class exercises have helped to reinforce much of what I have learned, sometimes the hard way: It is necessary to gather as much information from as many sources as possible before making decisions or moving forward to meet your goals, all while maintaining a vigilance regarding your ethical or moral duties. We all approach problems from different perspectives. It is important to listen to and seek out these perspectives that we may not consider or share. In my working group, Justin, Lizzie and I agreed often. However, it was much more instructive and interesting when we disagreed with each other. It was also fun when we attempted to come up with solutions that met our respective concerns and were led to an answer that none of us had considered. The same can be said from our class discussions. Having these disagreements or seeking out different views help to get us all in the habit of recognizing whether we may be doing something that could be considered to be inconsistent with our duties. I think they also help us to engage in the balancing act that can sometimes be necessary if you want to chart a wise course of action.
The working group discussions have really introduced situations that were never apparent to me before the class. I believe introducing the situations on a level like this is, where we can talk about them and raise hypothetical "what ifs", is what is most beneficial to me. Also, I have really enjoyed hearing my classmates prospectives. I often am surprised to find myself very one sided on an issue before a meeting, and then after hearing the prospectives of the other students, I am completely swayed on the issue. This often happens because many of my classmates had working experience prior to school, and are able to apply this experience to the problems. In addition, the section meetings seem to be more effective when these participants' experience produce different views on a particular subject.

In our discussion groups I learned that my way of thinking, which I do often consider the right way, isn't the only way. There were some situations where I did not see how people could think differently but they did. I know that in all situations, everyone will not have the same opinions but there were some instances that I just found baffling that someone could think another way. This probably comes from my just complete stubbornness to think I'm always right I am sure. Learning this and seeing these different perspectives has allowed me to see so many other sides of stories that I would not even think of because to me it would be a closed case no discussion, this is how I think and there is nothing else (which I do realize is not a good characteristic to have at all). I think through these discussions I gained much more practical wisdom in that now I know when there are tough issues that you have to make decisions about sometimes you need to get outside perspectives because everyone has different life experiences and backgrounds that causes them to see things that you just may not. Also through the discussions we've had, we have had to learn to think through things a lot more thoroughly and develop our arguments much more in depth, which is one of the most important parts of what we will do. Listening to others perspectives helps in this area as well because you can see the counter arguments someone will have to be able to go ahead and develop against it. I definitely think my practical wisdom as grown tremendously throughout our course, and I now know that for the future it is very important to bounce ideas off of someone else to make sure there isn't something you are missing because maybe your past experiences have left you kind of blinded by certain things.

As stated in our reading of the article "Practical Wisdom: Aristotle Meets Positive Psychology," the neo-Aristotelian view is that virtues and strengths are integrated, there should be a balance among them, and practical wisdom is essential to achieving that balance. I think this idea speaks to the core of what we've been learning in class through our group and class discussion of the hypothetical problems and the in class interviews with the professionals of our field. There needs to be a balance of all the interests and factors that goes into making any decisions. In class, we're
asked as to how we would act in different scenarios if we were to put ourselves in that position. These problems have provided us with the practice and learning experience of how to balance all the different interests and factors in making our decision. But I think we forget that it's easier for us to balance all these interests and factors at the moment than it will be if we're truly face with the dilemma in the future because we're only pretending right now. Realizing this will help me to not take for grant that I know how to balance because of this class and not assume that my first reaction is the proper decision, but that I should always take a step back and re-evaluate the situation.

As lawyers, we are asked to "do what is right" on a daily basis, whether for our client, profession, etc. Practical wisdom gives us the knowledge to know what is right. I think this class has been an eye-opening experience into how different each person's perception of "what is right" can be. I have never been one to expect everyone to agree with me, because I know I can be a little idealistic sometimes. I have, however, been amazed at some of the vast differences of opinion in such a small group of people in the Wednesday meetings. It's a good precursor before going out into the much larger community of the legal field, because now I expect that almost everyone has a different, sometimes opposing, view of what to do in a different situation. Meeting in my small group has been interesting. We've had our small disagreements on who to represent or other issues, but we've maintained civility in our discussions. This class, mainly the large meeting, shows us how important civility and listening to opposing point of views is. I have gotten better about not immediately taking an offensive position whenever someone's views differ from mine (like on whether to represent an unpopular client like Sandusky). I believe this is also an important facet of practical wisdom and is something I will definitely take away from this class. In the future, I will be more equipped, and open, to understand the reasoning behind someone's point of view. I will be more understanding of that point of view and less likely to take offense when someone disagrees. In my opinion, a large part of practical wisdom is not only knowing what the right thing to do is and how to do it but making sure you can communicate and understand when someone has a different idea what the right thing to do is. We need to be able to communicate openly and civilly in our line of work, and I believe this class is a great way to practice that.

The most valuable experience that I have gained from working group and discussion group meetings has been the opportunity to hear my peers articulate their understanding of a particular issue and how they would handle a similar situation if involved. While I have not agreed with others on every issue that we have surveyed, my understanding and position have been altered to some degree by every discussion. My own analysis of these issues has been tempered by the life and work experiences that I have accumulated over the last 37 years. I have found many of my
career experiences relating to interaction with others particularly relevant to the scenarios we have encountered. Regardless of how much experience I have accumulated, points are always raised in our discussions that I have not considered. This exposure to new ideas and information has undoubtedly increased the neural base from which I will bring my own practical wisdom to bare on future problems. Schwartz and Sharpe hypothesize in their article that practical wisdom cannot be instilled in an individual. It must be cultivated by experiences that allow an individual to apply their judgment to a situation, observe the outcomes, and receive feedback. Discussing the various situations that we have encountered this semester has allowed each of us to do this in a controlled and safe environment. Through the discussion we are exposed to ideas that are different than our own and we are forced to consider ideas and consequences that may have never crossed our minds. I remember when I was promoted to the position of department director in my prior job. I had no supervisory experience and very limited conflict resolution experience. I suddenly found myself in charge of over 50 employees, a huge operating budget, and conflict resolution for the parents of more than 1300 children. That first year was extremely stressful, as I learned how to balance all of those things. Looking back now, I believe that much of that stress was coming from the development of practical wisdom that was taking place within me. I was applying my own judgment to real situations that seemed more gray than black and white. Sometimes that judgment proved to be wrong and the wisdom was accumulated with great pain. In class, we are able to experience these types of situations in a way that is not quite as painful if we make a bad choice. The cumulative effect is that we have some background to draw from when we encounter similar situations in the future. I fully recognize that the environment we analyze these situations in (and the situations themselves) is artificial. Decisions are not this easy or clean in real life; however, an informed decision is always better than an uninformed one. In the future, each of these sessions will allow me to pick up where the group left off when I encounter these or similar situations again. When I make that decision in real life, I can do so after bringing to bare the viewpoints and analysis that I have accumulated during the group work sessions. Each of those sessions has laid the groundwork for a deeper practical wisdom that I believe will make me a more thorough (and ultimately better) decision-maker in the future.

I came to law school believing that there is a right answer to every question. When I said this in my intro-week class, Prof. Titshaw suggested that I might want to change that view when it comes to the law. After dealing with the issues in this class, I realize that I failed to convey to him what I meant. I believe that, in a Platonic idealist sense, that there is a "perfect" way to do things and in that sense, every question has a right answer. I do not believe that man, no matter how long he thinks, can always come up with the perfect answer on his own. By working through the problems we have faced in our discussion groups and in rereading the article after those experiences, I feel that what I was trying to express to Prof. Titshaw on that first day was that through the cultivation of one's practical wisdom, one can get closer and closer to the "perfect", to the right answer, the right solution, even if one can never actually attain it. I have

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come to this conclusion based on the discussions with the working groups and my own considerations. The solutions offered by other students, particularly in the section meetings, often differ from my own, but they are no less worthy of consideration even if based on completely different rationals. In my own reflection, I feel that each problem is strengthening my ability to weigh various factors, establish goals for the outcome, and come to some solution, understanding that true adjudication means some things must be sacrificed to make other things work better. Is it "the" right answer? Probably not, but with each exercise of practical wisdom, I believe one gets closer to being able to solve those problems in "the" right way. In essence, I have learned more about my own thought process by working through these problems and the discussion groups. Because of this, I will approach opportunities for the use of practical wisdom with a truer understanding of my own worldview, and better understand what it is I am actually attempting to do.

Steve Jobs once made an interesting illustration. Jobs said that when he was a child, his father had a machine used to polish rocks. He would place ordinary rocks that he found in the yard into the bin on this machine and it would rotate similar to how the mixer on a concrete truck rotates. This caused the ordinary rocks inside the bin to collide with one another over and over again, slowly eroding the hard edges. At the end of several hours of colliding, these ordinary yard rocks had transformed into perfectly smooth and polished rocks. I think this illustrates the way that my ideas have been transformed in this class, especially through the section meetings. Every person in the class brings a unique perspective and by making our idea’s “collide” it creates a more polished view of the issues that we are discussing. In the larger picture, I believe that this is how practical wisdom is created. By taking an idea into a situation and then having the hard edges of that idea eroded through experience and feedback. In this class, we have had the opportunity to do this in a safe environment. In the real world, I think we will need to be much more nimble in the way that we handle everyday situations.