

Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee Meeting
Thomas Edison Campus – J 117/118
Tuesday, March 14, 2017

In Attendance: Dr. McCormick, Matt Hoffman, Bill Shuluk, Lisa Fowler, Kelsey McHugh, Nickie Stewart, Mary Conwell, Dr. Johns Meyer, Guest Kathleen Hirbour, Guest Susan Demers, and Jill De Valk.

American Bar Association Re-Approval Site Visit: Guests Kathleen Hirbour and Susan Demers are evaluating the Paralegal Studies Program for ABA Reapproval.

Paralegal Studies vs. Legal Studies: Changing the program name to Legal Studies is a current trend and something to think about.

American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE) Conferences: Professor Conwell participated in the AAfPE Conference in San Antonio, Texas in fall of 2016. She will be attending the regional conference in New Orleans, Louisiana in April. She will be co-presenting the topic of legal research with a law librarian in fall 2017 at the national conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Gulf Coast Paralegal Association Workshops & Mentoring: The GCPA has been a true friend of the paralegal studies program. The GCPA recently hosted a resume workshop on February 18, 2017 at the Fort Myers campus. Professor Conwell commented that the dynamic presentation was one of the best that she had seen. The GCPA also pairs paralegal students with a working paralegal for job shadowing or internship purposes. The program encourages student memberships and the GCPA allows students to attend meetings on campus every other month.

LEX Honor Society – Covering Induction Costs: We are preparing for the third induction ceremony for paralegal students joining the LEX Honor Society. The cost is \$30 per student and several eligible students could not afford the induction fee. The program is looking for ideas on how to fund the cost of the induction fees such as foundation scholarship or donations from law firms, etc.

State Frameworks Update: Last fall, Dr. Meyer and Professor Conwell were on the committee to update the Florida State Frameworks for the Paralegal Studies Program. If approved, the program credits may be updated to 68 total credits instead of the 64 credits currently in place.

Internships: The internship course is turning into a job for many of the paralegal students.

Business Law – No text, open source, redesign: Professor Hoffman will be redesigning the Business Law course by eliminating the textbook and incorporating open sources in place of the textbook. This is part of the challenge that the School of Business and Technology has placed on each program to eliminate the textbook from at least one course in an effort to help students and textbook affordability.

Videos promoting FSW Paralegal Studies Program: In order to generate more interest in the program, Professor Conwell believes that perhaps we could create Youtube videos for the website as discussed at a recent conference.

Emerging LLLT Profession in Western United States: The state of Utah is the newest state allowing Limited License Legal Technicians. Paralegals experienced in Family Law complete training and are licensed to dispense advice to people about divorce, child custody and other family law issues. Will LLLT make it to Florida?

ABA Site Team: Guests today include Kathy Hirbour from North Shore Community College in Massachusetts and Susan Demers from Saint Petersburg College in Florida.

Feedback: The hands on nature of paralegal studies is different than what is taught in law school. The advisory committee can assist the program with examples of practical assignments.

The Reapproval process after the site visit:

The site team completes their report and sends to Professor Conwell for accuracy. The Paralegal Advisory Standing Committee of the ABA House of Delegates will decide in their April or August meeting for reapproval or not. Approval is extended until the meeting.

A discussion ensued regarding the value that advisory committees bring. Committee members bring the perspective of what law firms are looking for in a paralegal. Their feedback helps decide what the focus should be because of change in the practicing world.

It was also mentioned that the GCPA has special rate for students to join. In a recent visit to one of Professor Conwell's classes, 6 students became members. The organization is an excellent resource for networking and obtaining a job. The GCPA has a meeting every other month at the FSW Fort Myers Campus.

Hot topic – What legal course should be offered?

Immigration law

Trends such as cybersecurity, data security, how law firms are encrypting data to protect

Other ideas that the advisory committee could assist the program with:
Having mock interviews or workshops on e-filing and e-recording.

Professor Conwell thanked all for participating and the meeting was adjourned.