

Paralegal Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Lee County Justice Center, Courtroom 3C & Zoom Meeting
May 7, 2020 - 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM

In Attendance: William Shuluk, Library Director, Florida SouthWestern State College (FSW); Mary Conwell, Department Chair of Paralegal Studies, FSW; Matthew Hoffman, Professor of Paralegal Studies and Business, FSW; Jessica Guth, Paralegal, Collier County Sheriff's Office; Richard Worch, Department Chair of Public Safety Programs, FSW; Sabrina Guerin, CP, FRP, Paralegal, Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt; Nickie Stewart, ACP, FRP, Paralegal, Henderson, Franklin, Starnes & Holt; Jennifer Baker, Associate Dean of the School of Business and Technology (SoBT), FSW; Debbie Psihountas, Dean of SoBT, FSW; Keith Grossman, Esq.; and Lee County Judge Andrew Swett, 20th Judicial Circuit Court and FSW Adjunct Faculty.

Judge Swett's Opening Remarks: Judge Swett welcomed all in attendance and started the meeting with self-introductions around.

Approval of November 20, 2019 Minutes: After a review of the previous meeting minutes, there was a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded with no objections. The motion to approve the fall 2019 meeting minutes carried.

Paralegal Studies Real Estate Certificate Update: Dr. Psihountas stated that the Real Estate Paralegal College Credit Certificate (CCC) has been approved to start this fall 2020 semester. The certificate includes the following courses: Introduction to Paralegal Studies, Business Law, Real Estate Law, and Wills, Estates, and Probate Administration. This gives students an opportunity to complete both an associate degree and CCC.

New Paralegal Adjunct Faculty Hires: Dr. Psihountas commented that SoBT has hired several new adjunct faculty members for the Paralegal Studies program to begin teaching in the fall semester.

American Association for Paralegal Education Conference: Professor Conwell commented on attending the AAFPE Conference in Myrtle Beach.

Upcoming ABA Site Visits: Professor Conwell will be on the site teams for two Paralegal Studies program re-approvals this fall 2020 semester.

Major ABA Guideline Change – ABA guidelines are now allowing nine credit hours of legal specialty synchronous courses to be taught via Zoom, Webex, or similar technology as traditional courses. The following courses were previously traditional: Family Law, Legal Research and Writing I, Paralegal Internship, and Paralegal Capstone courses.

Paralegal Job Outlook during the Pandemic: Currently, the job outlook for paralegals in the area appears to be strong. We are receiving job and internship opportunities for FSW Paralegal Studies students and graduates.

Changes Caused by the Pandemic:

- FSW now has five instructional modalities including: traditional, online, live online, blended, and live flex. Traditional is instruction where students and faculty meet on campus in a regularly scheduled classroom. Online is asynchronous instruction via the Canvas learning management system. Live online is a version of an online course where instruction occurs via Zoom in a virtual classroom at a regularly scheduled day and time. Blended is a mix of online and some scheduled Zoom or Campus meetings. In the Live Flex modality, faculty and students meet at regularly scheduled times, but some of the students participate via Zoom and some attend class on campus.
- Stress among students and faculty members is very apparent during this time. Professor Conwell has requested that the Paralegal Studies professors be empathetic and helpful to students during this trying time.
- FSW has canceled the physical 2020 Graduation. The administration will be compiling videos that graduates submit as part of a virtual ceremony on Zoom
- The LEX Honor Society Induction has also been postponed due to Covid 19

FSW Advising Issues: SoBT advisors continue to educate the general AA advisors. This summer semester, the SoBT advisors will be contacting students in the programs and those who have almost completed their programs in an effort to increase enrollment for the fall semester. Caroline Siefert, Advisor for Criminal Justice, Crime Scene Technology, Paralegal Studies, and the Bachelor of Public Safety Administration, will be contacting current and former paralegal students.

Westlaw Alternatives: Since Westlaw is so expensive, we will begin exploring possible alternatives. We would like to continue using Westlaw through the next American Bar Association reapproval deadline, which is July 2021.

AAfPE National Conference: Professor Conwell will be attending the AAfPE National Conference in Seattle, Washington in November 2020.

Judge Swett thanked all for their participation and the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting minutes interpreted and reported by Jill De Valk.