FSW PARALEGAL STUDIES BREAKOUT MEETING FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2025 2-3 PM VIA ZOOM

In Attendance: Department Chair Mary Conwell, Professor Matt Hoffman, Professor Sandi Towers, Professor Ed Estes

The following topics were discussed at the February 2025 Paralegal Studies breakout meeting:

1. General education competences were discussed. Professor Matt Hoffman said that the general education competencies were wrong and the meaning of assessment unclear. He pointed out that general education competencies have nothing to do with course learning outcomes. Professor Sandi Towers asked where and why this disconnect. Professor Hoffman stated that there should be three competencies: creative thinking, critical thinking, and research. The Legal Research & Writing 1 paper measures program and course learning outcomes. The rubric is not widely known. Dr. Towers said that professors had to be creative matching assignments with course learning outcomes and general education outcomes. Professor Hoffman lamented that everything FSW professors have been doing with assessment for the past ten years is wrong and has nothing to do with Quality Matters. Professor Hoffman discussed taking eight assignments and determining if each assignment meets the creative outcome.
2. Textbook selection. It was agreed that input from paralegal studies faculty will be provided and utilized in selecting paralegal studies textbooks.
3. Class modalities. Faculty input will be sought for appropriate class modalities. Professor Towers recommended the following courses for synchronous Zoom modality: Business Law; Constitutional Law; Family Law; and Legal Research & Writing II. Professor Ed Estes enjoys classroom interaction with students. In his opinion, asynchronous online creeps towards correspondence courses. Professor Estes commented that a problem with synchronous Zoom is black screens. His former school would not require students to show themselves on the Zoom screen. Professor Estes adds extra assignments and has Canvas drop a student’s two lowest grades. Everyone discussed students who do not show up in person or on Zoom.
4. Paralegal internships. Professors Towers and Hoffman do not want the paralegal internships given to FSW’s Career Center because things may change in a year or so. At Professor Estes’ former college, there was no paralegal internship because the schedule of working students did not fit with a paralegal internship. Professor Hoffman pointed out that the majority of FSW paralegal studies students do not live in Lee County. He emphasized the need for having everything being remote. He wants a flex classroom and to give students options. Professor Hoffman mentioned that college administrators are told by Tallahassee what to do or funding will be pulled.
5. Course approval. Everyone agreed that it takes a long time for courses to be approved by e-learning.

The meeting was adjourned.