

Paralegal Studies

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2013 – 5:00pm

Room SS160 – Clearwater Campus

This meeting was called to order a few minutes after 4pm. Dr. Christy Powers requested introduction from all attendees - their names, professions and time serving on the advisory board.

In attendance:

Bob Shumaker, attorney in St. Petersburg, serving approximately 15 years.

Bob Williams, Sr. Vice President with Bay Cities, handling corporate and commercial lending. New to the advisory board.

Rachel Bennett, our newest full time faculty in the program, began in August 2012.

Andy Gaunce, a Tech Data Attorney, serving for 1 year.

Dustin Smith, Outreach Specialist at SPC.

Krista Fusari (replaced Gary Graham), SPC Advisory Committee Coordinator (i.e. events, member lists, etc.)

Nathan Suedmeyer, a Patent Attorney with Larson & Larson, serving for 2 years.

Jane Helms, a Pro Bono Coordinator at Gulf Coast Legal Services, serving for 1 year.

Carol Hague, Principal Administrator at Johnson, Pope, Bokor, Ruppel & Burns, teaching at the college for 30 years, and serving on the committee for some time less.

Andy Sasso, attorney at a private practice in Clearwater, serving for 10+ years.

Rebecca Frank is with Learning Resources at SPC, and a Law Librarian at Stetson on weekends.

Karen McLead, a certified paralegal for Pinch a Penny's Corporate Office in Clearwater, and has served on the committee for 4 years.

Deborah Eldridge, a professor with Legal Studies teaching Business Law Courses.

Christy Powers, Instructor in Charge, Paralegal Studies Program: Thanked everyone for coming to the Spring 2013 meeting and moves on to **old business**.

C. Powers: Rachel Bennett was hired full time for Legal Research and Writing (LR&W) and is handling all Lower and Upper Divisions LR&W classes. Rachel will now update us on how her focus groups turned out and the progress of the program; plan of what is being done with Legal Research and Writing.

R. Bennett: Discussed the anonymous student focus group and determined that we have a few professors that were not quite meeting expectations; in that some adjuncts tend to teach to law students and not to bachelor degree seeking students. We've made some shifts and are currently seeking for qualified candidates who would like to teach. Also discussed with professors and asked, "what can we do to help ensure that when students come out of their lower level course and into an advanced course, that each student will have the same basis to work on?" Another major hurdle is that the student assignment types were inconsistent amongst professors. Suggested creating core assignments for each class in which LR&W is taught.

R. Bennett: Discussed Jowita Wysocka as the premier legal tutor and English tutor in general. Gauging success is going to take a series of semesters. Also, asked for feedback on what LR&W needs are present in the law offices.

C. Powers: Discussed our current programs and that all students must take PLA 1104 and PLA 2114 which addresses LR&W. Tutoring funds came from Library Services. We are workforce degree that warranted overall tutor.

R. Bennett: Discussed eliminated Appellate Briefs in PLA 1104 that was incorporated into any given semester. Streamlining LR&W classes is our goal.

C. Powers: Approved for two new courses: UD Civil Trial Practice and Advanced Computerized Legal Research. Still need to develop the content for the courses. Discussed how these tied into the Viability Reports.

C. Powers: Discussed enrollment decreases college wide but that we are steady with our numbers. Graduates are steady with a rise in Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Students. Transferable skills of CT seekers are applicable in other job

R. Bennett: Asked as to law school applicants and how many we maintain this semester

C. Powers: About 10 applicants. Provided current issues with FLA local schools. Reminded Advisory Board that we perform Pre-Law Advising as a service to our students.

R. Bennett: Announced Chelsea Farley was accepted into University of Florida's College of Law

C. Powers: Passed around Fact Pattern and Assignment Memo for Judgment and Analytical Ability with Grading Rubric. Seeking more closed memorandums for training the PLA 4944 Certificate Capstone students.

C. Powers: State of Paralegal and Non-Paralegal jobs

J. Helms: Discussed legal placement firms.

N. Suedmeyer: Agreed. Utilized legal placement firms as well.

C. Powers: Agreed. Moved into green home at Seminole.

D. Eldridge: Discussed green home and grant for Seminole Campus. Neat opportunity for college wide internships in various areas.

R. Bennett: Discussed project called the Polished Professional Project with Andy Gaunce. Took four students around to different businesses. Went to Tech Data, Clerk of Court; C1 Bank; and City of St. Petersburg.

A. Gaunce: Agreed. It was very neat and wants to do more of this and these types of polishing projects. His participation would like to be along the lines of project based. Supervising capstone projects possibly. Dual Learning experience.

C. Powers: Agreed. Also, discussed C. Hague and how we supplement soft skills in PLA 1763, Law Office Management

C. Powers: Soft skills & Law Office Management teaches proper ethics and day to day skills from interviews to actual employment.

D. Smith: Their office will do practice interviews as well as Rose Mackey. This is a great resource for resumes to job openings.

C. Powers: Agree with the notion that resume building needs more sets of eyes from individuals such as student services. Advisory Board agrees that they would be open to review of reviews

C. Powers: Need based areas Veteran's Administration Law, more Intellectual Property Law Capstone based projects

K. McLead: Wants to assist on the basic writing and review of papers.

R. Bennett: Asked to contact her for review of papers and legal writing assistance.

C. Powers: Asked about areas of concern in the community

N. Suedmeyer: Taking students to see different businesses and firms (all sizes, in-house, state and local, etc). Also, offered information on Stetson's Program for improving writing. Students who excel in LR&W can apply to be Teaching Fellows with rules regarding feedback and suggestions.

R. Bennett: Wants to take the model and see if it might apply to our students.

C. Hague: Your greatest likelihood of employments is class presence: "This is a 16 week interview." She treats the classes as your job.

C. Powers: Agreed. Introduced the list of Essential Functions as it relates to the ADA Accommodations and overall employability. Will send out the three page document for inclusion and exclusion. Look to all the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed currently for paralegals or legal industry professionals in similar roles. Making students aware from the outset.

C. Powers: Retention of adjuncts and forthcoming challenges in hiring LR&W instructors. Six ECH is now the new standard pending any rule or regulation changes.

R. Bennett: Gave essential functions of LR&W instructors

D. Eldridge: Gave essential functions of Business Law instructors

C. Powers: Ended meeting with setting meeting for Fall.

K. Fusari: Asked for Thursday evening September 12, 2013 with meeting before dinner from 4:30-6:00pm. Meeting set from 6-7:00pm.

Meeting Adjourned at 5:00pm.