

St. Petersburg College



PARALEGAL STUDIES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

**Monday, October 21, 2019 - Clearwater Campus
5:30pm-6:45pm**

AGENDA

ROLL CALL: Dr. Christy Powers, Chair

Present: Susan Demers, Deborah Eldridge, Rebecca Frank, Kandice Hyatt, Candi James, Laura Marx, Jason Nicholson, Christy Powers, Andy Sasso, Melissa Solevilla, Ian Banks, Elizabeth Bryson

Excused: Rachel Bennett, Kaila Glaros, Erika Hartman, Darryl Henderson, Anona Johnson, Jason Stearns, Nathan Suedmeyer

Absent: Heather Arbuckle, Irnya Bandaryk, Joseph Benavides, Lisa Brody, Caitlein Jammo, Ellen Poole, Robert Schumaker, Vitalia Shafer

WELCOME: Dean Susan Demers,
College of Policy, Ethics, and Legal Studies

Susan Demers: Started the meeting by sharing that the major emphasis at the college that affects all of the workforce programs is our career and academic communities or pathways. This December, for the first time, our graduations will be tied to our Career and Academic Communities. Our particular commencement is paired with the health community. And it will be the first graduation at 9 AM on Saturday morning.

SD: Expressed that the Career and Academic Communities (CAC) have also completed our semester activities. Both Jason Nicholson and Rebecca Frank serve on our five-person triad. Our CAC week was the week of constitution day along with other relevant legal activities.

Christy Powers: Thanked members who were able to attend. Generally there is a big roll-out for the Fall meeting but now it's switched to Spring. Called for member to introduce themselves. Discussion ensued regarding Dean Demers' induction into the Stetson Hall of Fame.

FOLLOW-UP FROM SPRING MEETING:

CP: New AS Degree and Schedule Changes (launch Fall 2020)

New AS Degree: Call to members to take a look at merging our two elective courses of the 6 tracks available for the AS. Everyone responded in such a wonderful manner with all the changes to be made. The new curriculum documents received feedback and will be launched

Fall 2020. Current advising for the AS reflects that year one would be all of the general education classes, PLA 1003, and some of the starter courses, but then their last year will be those tracks in a Fall and Spring succession. Removing the choice of electives is in line with what a lot of other AS programs around the country are doing. Thanked the members for the feedback.

❖ **Dr. Rachel Bennett-NEW Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Director**

Dr. Bennett isn't here with us today because she is now for the next two years our CETL Director. Although she is on the campus, we don't get the benefit of all her full-time paralegal services. We're really proud of her in that position, it's a college-wide position, and SPC is known nationally for the wonderful things CETL has been doing.

❖ **Essential Functions Checklist Review**

Essential Functions Checklist –final review. Call for more feedback before utilization in classes.

Susan Demers: Reviewed case law that changed over the last eight months. Utilization of “required technical skills” or “essential functions” as a college to let people know what the actual skillset is of people on the job.

The case law now indicates that you cannot create a list like this that looks so much like a barrier that people with those compensable disabilities.

A discussion ensued regarding an example of a person with profound visual impairment who is able to brilliantly work around that.

Jason Nicholson: Inquired as to when the checklist is utilized.

Christy Powers: In PLA 1003 and revisited in the capstone courses.

Jason Nicholson: Are we tracking that every student has signed one?

Christy Powers: We have two PLA 1003s in Fall and Spring and one in the summer.

JN: I just want to be sure we are able to report on it.

Susan Demers: Emphasized the subheadings as the program goals to align with the AAFPE goals, their stated goals of all of these programs. And that marches with the ABA's goals for the program.

COLLEGE-WIDE UPDATES:

Dean Susan Demers

- **Pathways Project**
- **Career and Academic Communities: Public Safety, Legal Studies, & Public Policy**

Susan Demers: Discussed many big shifts at the college. Several of the shifts are related to losing several key deans. There's a search for the new Dean of Business. There is a search for a new Dean of Humanities. There is also a search for the Work Force Dean which is essentially

going to be the outward-facing person to facilitate the business communities' interactions with the college community. And finally the "super dean" – our Vice President of Academic Affairs. In the final stages of the search for that position.

We have a relatively new vice president who serves as the executive director of the foundation along with serving as the vice president of all of our marketing efforts. Jesse Turtle is a former development officer at Eckerd as well as USF with many community connections. The Foundation board has a brand new project they are rolling out. Our school mascot is the Titan, so this will be the Titan Fund. And the purpose of the Titan Fund is to solicit monies that are not nondiscretionary. (A discussion was held about the purpose of the fund and how the money can be spent to help students in need.) The Titan fund is discretionary funds the foundation board.

Christy Powers: Thank you. Introduced Dr. Eldridge to discuss Community Connections/Internships.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS/ INTERNSHIPS:

Full Time Faculty, Dr. Deborah Eldridge

➤ **New Sites & Ongoing Opportunities**

Deborah Eldridge: Currently looking at different organizations that we're involved with trying to place students for legal studies. Community outreach and connection, everybody within our community –trying to get that word out that we have students that need to be placed and the availability of our students.

A lot of firms need research, and if we have them sign the appropriate documents, nondisclosure, or we could have them work on Saturday, whatever they can do to get them that experience because they can't give up that 40-hour a week job that they are doing because it makes great money. Asked for assistance in locating more people offering those experiences. There is a study abroad internship opportunity where we would actually be sending our students to Portugal for a semester.

Christy Powers: Internship discussion regarding employers providing tuition reimbursement. (Group discussion regarding how much tuition costs, and offering tuition reimbursement for one class at a time to refresh skills, etc.)

Susan Demers: Discussed how a person taking a single class thinks about school differently. It isn't about a degree, it's about maintaining currency, building skills.

PROGRAM UPDATES:

Dr. Christy Powers, Chair

✓ **ABA Substantive Change Request for AS Degree**

Christy Powers: Program updates. Informed members about asking the ABA for permission to make substantive changes to our AS degree. The ABA has allowed us to go in and - we have our re-approval coming up – and they have allowed us into their system to start reporting already so it won't be so burdensome, letting us do it in advance.

DISCUSSION/SUGGESTIONS:**Dr. Christy Powers, Chair**

Christy Powers: Discussion/Suggestions. Discussed recent use of courtroom for local law firm's mock trial with our students.

We have been tasked through the advisory committee staff and President Williams to really start to address need-based areas that the college has right now predominantly with marketing and recruitment. This goes far beyond a brochure.

Call for Members

- **Two New Sub-Committees: Marketing/Recruitment & Student Retention/Success**

Christy Powers: Request made for members during times in between regular meetings to work together on a sub-committee and report to the rest of the group. This will go out to the others as well to see what the interest is in that. One is the marketing and recruitment, what can we do to draw in more of the HS graduates and the paralegals in law firms that don't have formal training.

And on the back end, the second sub-committee would be for student retention and success, The subcommittees we would probably meet two more times in between Fall and Spring. (Discussion about proprietary schools and advertising and contacting potential students for online courses.)

- **Open floor to committee for suggestions**

Christy Powers: I'd like to open up the floor for any suggestions.

Jason Nicholson: Inquired about alternate ways to recruit students.

Susan Demers: Suggested project management.

Christy Powers: Suggested project management, plus three areas in social security disability, Medicaid/Medicare, VA Law, as a three-prong elective online. A 16-week online class.

JN: Inquired as to it being a PLA Certificate.

SD: This would not be an additional paralegal program. This would be an additional certificate offered to our paralegal grads and other professionals.

Candi James: Inquired as to the use of hybrid courses and ABA approval.

CP: Confirmed they are allowed and clarified blended courses, half of it is online, half is face-to-face. Hybrid, we give them the option if they want to report to class. ABA will allow it but we have to report by the quarter hour what we're doing.

Susan Demers: The ABA will not consider a streamed class a face-to-face class.

(Further discussion on hybrid and blended classes.)

(Discussion re: Legal Studies Society)

CLOSING REMARKS:**Dean Susan Demers**

(Discussion re: topics for Law Day)

Susan Demers: Thanked members and provided closing remarks.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.