



ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE
PARALEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

September 24, 2015, Seminole Campus, Seminole, Florida
4:30-6:00pm

MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Susan Demers, Christy Powers, Deborah Eldridge, Rachel Bennett, Ian Banks, Karen McLead, Ellen Poole, Rebecca Frank, Robert Schumaker, Jane Helms, Anona Johnson on behalf of Nathan Suedmeyer, and Iryna Bandaryk.

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m. in Room UP233 on the Seminole Campus.

Following roll call and introductions, Dr. Powers began the discussion with introducing an adjunct profile video on the SPC Home Page featuring Myriam Irizarry, former Chief Deputy of the Clerk of Court for Pinellas County who was recently appointed as a member of the 6th Circuit Judiciary as a County Court Judge. The 3 minute video clip profiled our program in relation to "Careers in the Clerk's Office."

D. Eldridge spoke about the Quality Matters (QM) training and online revitalization that is currently in a 4 year cycle at SPC. QM courses are created with the promotion of consistency in the BUL (Business Law) courses. We are starting off revitalizing BUL 2241, Business Law I. The Committee was shown a sample of Week 6, Introduction to Contracts. They were able to see the major learning outcomes, the modules for each chapter outline, and the learning objectives. The Committee was thrilled to see that a balance was achieved with a standard course offered college-wide and academic freedom.

Additionally, the QM Rubric for course content required the ADA Compliance for all types of disabilities.

R. Frank was wondering about the Cengage usage with the courses.

D. Eldridge reiterated that we utilize the BUL classes and books for many disciplines. We use Cengage for the break in pricing as the books are getting more expensive each year and not all content is necessary.

Dr. Powers spoke about current Initiatives and Projects. We held a Program Wide Meeting in September 2015 in 2 live meetings and 1 online meeting. The students were able to complete their My Learning Plan in addition to being assigned an advisor within the PLA Department. Students are now able to anticipate their course load each semester and project an anticipated graduation date.

Dr. Bennett and Dr. Banks then reviewed the current status of the Legal Research and Writing classes and tutoring. The Committee members were pleased to find that we have a small set of excellent and qualified instructors in those classes.

Dr. Bennett mentioned the new hire Olivia Weisman who has excelled in many writing areas including tutoring. This has helped in the assistance of developing new assignments and drafting of practical materials.

Dr. Bennett also mentioned the recent successes of the Legal Studies Society and the free legal clinics being held for SPC students. There is also a trip to Tallahassee being planned for the students.

Dr. Powers introduced the ongoing topic of Job and Internship Placement.

I. Bandaryk with Citibank announced that there are a few positions that would require paralegal skills. We told her that we would send over resumes for review and possible interviews.

K. McLead with Pinch-a-Penny announced that she hired one of our recent graduates, E. Madden, and that is going wonderfully.

E. Poole mentioned that as General Counsel for Piper Fire (and a former paralegal), they have a current student interning, C. Rodgers.

Current Registration for Fall 2015 reviewed. Course management Details showing course enrollment and identifying information related to campus/time/day, etc. Dr. Powers passed around the CMDs for each member to examine. We are 87% full at the lower division and 96% full at the upper division.

Dr. Powers then opened the floor to comments about how to adjust and prepare our students for all the changes in technology in the law offices and corporations.

With classes PLA 1730 Computerized Legal Research and PLA 3734 Computers and the Law Office, we opened the floor for comments and suggestions about ways to improve those classes.

I. Bandaryk suggested surveying each law office to gauge what programs they are using.

K. McLead offered the suggestions of assignments which a student would be able to create detailed databases in excel; Prezi presentations; cloud-based programs and sending students on research missions for software. Investigation is necessary into what is affordable and that room for negotiation is open with each vendor in most circumstances.

Dean Demers reiterated the importance of also being able to utilize pivot tables in excel and being resourceful in developing access to current programs.

A. Johnson mentioned that the Federal Courts are currently only taking pleadings and documents in WordPerfect which not all students nor lawyers are proficient in.

J. Helms mentioned that the Clearwater Bar Association and the Florida Bar are seeking to phase out WordPerfect.

B. Schumaker stated that interviewing honesty is crucial in gauging what students are proficient in when dealing with technology challenges.

Dean Demers stated that the Florida Bar is also focusing to include CLEs in technology as all 67 clerks in the State of Florida are requiring e-file. Students need to be able to strip metadata and find a way to make documents searchable within each Clerk's system. Also, in the first year of e-filing that 80% of the documents were not in compliance and the pdfs filed the storage capacity within the first 3 months.

I. Bandaryk introduced the topic of redlining documents to preserve integrity and honesty when commercial documents change hands so many times.

R. Schumaker suggested that any transactional classes should include a Best Practices Management manual to follow for the support staff.

Dean Demers agreed and mentioned that she recently visited a small school for an ABA site visit in South Carolina vs. SPC with an unduplicated headcount of 1500 in the paralegal programs.

Dr. Powers stated that we continue our partnership with Stetson College of Law as a recruiting tool for all students.

Dean Demers closed out the meeting by introducing the VARK tool to acquaint students with how they learn.

E. Poole remembers being in Dean Demers classes 10 years ago and the benefits of understanding how she, as a student, learned at the time. It molded the type of lawyer she is today.

Dean Demers and Dr. Christy Powers adjourned the meeting with a reminder of the Spring 2016 meeting. The meeting ended at 5:58pm.

**Dinner followed the meeting from 6:00-7:30pm.