



ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE
PARALEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

September 14, 2016, Clearwater Campus, Clearwater, Florida
4:30-5:30pm

MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Christy Powers, Deborah Eldridge, Rachel Bennett, Ian Banks, Karen McLead, Nathan Suedmeyer, Jenica Ibarra, Mark Mazurak, Ellen Poole, and Dean Susan Demers.

ABSENT: Irina Bandaryk, Anona Johnson, Carol Hague, Andy Sasso, Lia Shafer, and Brittanie Strickland.

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 p.m. in Room SS 160 on the Clearwater Campus.

Following roll call and introductions, Christy Powers announced her new role as Academic Chair of the PLA Programs.

Dr. Powers gave brief description of Friday's Workforce Connections event where different students and panelists from the college community will be discussing their experiences.

Ms. Poole said she would be attending that event and was interested in connecting with CCIT/Engineering and the Fire Science Departments. Also stated that Charlie Rodgers finished his internship for Piper Fire and would be happy to re-open the pool for consideration of more students.

Dr. Eldridge stated in her capacity as Paralegal Studies Internship Coordinator/Instructor, she would be thrilled to re-post the position. Additionally, she provided information on her award for Online Innovations Monday Morning Breakfast Bytes-5 minute vignettes. Overall, the Bytes consist of front-loading important weekly information including but not limited to review of directions and assignments.

Ms. McLead asked if this was a simultaneous discussion. Dr. Eldridge stated it is a recording, but live stream questioning is available within MyCourses.

Dr. Eldridge reiterated she does live WebEx meetings to utilize guest speakers and such. Mr. Suedmeyer presented within her various courses. Students can login but for those who cannot, they are recorded videos. Student success has been impacted by these meetings and recordings.

Dr. Powers introduced the concept of having low or no-cost open source materials v. print textbooks from publishers.

Ms. Poole stated that not all are savvy electronically. There was something to be said for having a textbook that was comprehensive. Discussion with the group ensued regarding how we all learn from e-text to paper text.

Ms. Ibarra stated that larger universities utilize open access to create repositories and E-books. Some schools such as USF, also partner ProCopy to assist with text affordability.

Mr. Suedmeyer weighed in with stating that open source creations would be a lot of work for the professor to compile. Students find a way to obtain a textbook even though there is a cost. Other options to utilize technology.

Ms. McLead stated you must balance reducing quantity of material and cost v. providing materials necessary for the law or legal course.

Ms. Ibarra said she would look into what SPC maintains and explore some options for areas such as Business Law and other legal resources to supplement.

Dr. Powers introduced the ongoing topic of Enrollment, Graduation, and Success Rates. The Fall 2016 statistics were reviewed. Course management Details showed current course enrollment at 101% for the UD and 86% for the LD.

Dr. Powers discussed new Accessibility Resources department which replaces Disability Resources. Referred to new paragraphs in our syllabus which reference as such.

Additionally, new Immigration Law professor Ahmad was hired. And all PLA 1003 Intro classes are full and over capacity. In-class outreach is being performed to assure the Academic Pathways are employed.

Dr. Bennett provided updated information on the switch from HEC to Gibbs Classes and that classes are going well. Additionally provided updates on the new curriculum PLA 1104 Legal Research & Writing and PLA 2203 Civil Litigation I.

Overall it was decided to alternate the writing courses to make the materials more digestible. PLA 1104 is very limited in writing so they can now focus on finding materials first.

Ms. McLead states writing can be intimidating. Research was lacking and needed improvement.

Dr. Bennett also provided a status update on PLA 2203 Civil Litigation I which she co-taught this summer with former student, paralegal, and lawyer, Ray Carr. Together, they reviewed the course to re-hash content and utilize more skills.

Mr. Suedmeyer stated that civil procedure and civil litigation are very different to learn as is Pre-trial practice. What are the differences?

Dr. Bennett noted the differences and challenges of 25 students. There is a lot of time spent grading a complaint. A lot of time spent teaching answers, discovery, etc. Substantive assignments suggestions?

Dr. Powers then opened the floor to comments regarding PLA 2203.

Mr. Suedmeyer-Federal Pre-Trial practice difficult but very beneficial. Suggested putting students on teams of 2/2 to exchange pleadings and responses.

Ms. McLead and Ms. Poole both felt it very important but break down the process even more. And then add on the court system. How do you get there? That is the student's main question between a rule and a pleading.

Mr. Suedmeyer reiterated teaching style and that each person is responsible for something, so they feel as if they were engaged by becoming an expert on a particular concept in class. This could, in turn, reduce workload and get same or better outcome with student success.

Dr. Bennett transitioned into explaining how the LSS has partnered with St. Pete Bar Foundation for Oktoberfest for Community Law Program. Sponsor table but networking open for students/participants. Additionally, the Clearwater Bar Association will be staffing their law day on this campus Oct 15th. There are also additional opportunities to partner south county for the LawFest Midtown. Judges Pierce and Andrews generally seek out our students to assist that day as well.

Dr. Bennett brought up the LSS Tallahassee Trip Proposal. Since only a small number of students are funded to attend the invite provided by Justice Quince to attend live oral arguments, the LSS will have an essay contest to select the participants. She asked the Committee if they would be willing to be the deciding Judges for the applications/requests.

Dr. Bennett introduced the new Clearwater Library partnership and construction that is now occurring on campus. Brought up the topic of Westlaw access in the public library. One computer and anyone can utilize it? Two or three passwords on specific computers?

Ms. McLead and Ms. Poole stated they never/rarely use Westlaw in their specific area. It is very much a "use it or lose it" skill. In house corps jobs really won't use it. Not realistic. Out of 100 paralegals, maybe 5% or less on a regular basis trained by Westlaw.

Mr. Suedmeyer found it highly useful because he is in IP and that field promotes it. WestlawNext was a business model that costs him \$400-500 monthly. Practitioner specific.

Dr. Powers asked Committee on thoughts concerning balance between the College being overall down 3% and our programs are steady and rising in full classes. Committee suggested that we keep promoting offerings that lead to employability. If we are over 100% full, there are still room for additional sections in need based areas.

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Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

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Dr. Christy Powers thanked the Committee for their time and adjourned the meeting with a reminder of the Fall 2016 meeting. The meeting ended at 5:28pm. Legal Studies Society meeting started promptly at 5:30pm.