



ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE
PARALEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

April 14, 2016, Clearwater Campus, Clearwater, Florida
5:30-7:00pm

MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Susan Demers, Christy Powers, Deborah Eldridge, Rachel Bennett, Ian Banks, Karen McLead, Ellen Poole, Rebecca Frank, Anona Johnson on behalf of Nathan Suedmeyer, and new member: Heather Arbuckle (student graduating next month with BAS in PLA) with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. in Room SS 160 on the Clearwater Campus.

Following roll call and introductions, Dean Demers began the discussion with recent awards and recognitions in the Department. Dr. Powers is in her 10th year at SPC; Dr. Bennett has the largest club on the Clearwater Campus with the Legal Studies Society; and Dr. Eldridge has been charged with restructuring BUL 2241 Business Law I on behalf of the entire college.

Dr. Eldridge spoke about the online revitalization. She created courses to promote consistency in the BUL (Business Law) courses. Online engagement is the most recent task. The Committee was shown a sample of Week 6, BUL 3564 Legal Aspects of Managing Technology. They were able to see the major learning outcomes and the WebEx Meetings that are used in the virtual world to communicate effectively. The Committee was thrilled to see that a balance was achieved with a standard course offered college-wide and the high level of online engagement.

Additionally, projects were profiled from BUL 3564 to examine organization structural change; soft skills in communication and online presence; and live streaming and the recording of the material.

Dr. Powers asked the Committee if they felt that WebEx was useful and are there other tools and resources. Then she 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.

A. Johnson said they utilize Skype and K. McLead said they will create virtual space for communication where necessary with clients.

Dr. Powers spoke about the new requirement in PLA 4941 Paralegal Studies Capstone where the students are required to present their project to the class by using video technology and document retrieval tools.

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H. Arbuckle said it was a useful component to the exercise as many can be resistant to technology. She found it useful and a nice learning experience.

R. Frank then asked about technology and e-filing.

K. McLead asked why practitioners are finding this difficult to complete and intimidating.

Dr. Bennett stated that in working with the Clerk's Office, there is not mock account we can create, but the Clerk's Office has created a lot of e-filing tutorials from training with the State filings. All Federal filings are done through the PACER system.

Dr. Powers then asked how the Committee felt about e-discovery and where they would see it in the curriculum.

A. Johnson said it is useful to learn conversion of documents and what the court expects while protecting your client's information. E-discovery would not be useful as a separate class but it should be imbedded throughout relevant classes.

Dr. Bennett and Dr. Banks then reviewed the current status of the PLA 1104 Legal Research and Writing and PLA 2203 Civil Litigation classes as needing an overhaul to assure that information was current.

Dr. Bennett mentioned that the technology knowledge is going to be increased in the AS program as well as providing technology assignments to adjunct instructors.

Dr. Powers introduced the ongoing topic of Enrollment, Graduation, and Success Rates. Over 40 students will be graduating in May 2016.

Current Registration for Summer 2016 reviewed. Course management Details showing current course enrollment; unduplicated headcount (2011-2015); and success and percent full rates were examined from Summer 2015. (See attached Statistics Handout) All statistics were pulled from Business Intelligence software retained by SPC.

Dr. Powers passed around the Statistics Handout for each member to examine. We are currently for summer 76% full at the lower division and 98% full at the upper division. This includes all BUL classes as well.

Dr. Powers then opened the floor to comments regarding Post Degree Certificate v. Post-Baccalaureate Degree Certificate. Each member of the Committee was very vocal on three themes: it would overwhelm the field with too many qualified applicants (which is an issue already); preserve the quality and integrity of the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate and students; and this was not the best way to increase enrollment.

Dr. Powers then opened the floor to comments regarding St. Pete Gibbs Campus Offerings as a down/south county option OR having all class offerings at the Clearwater Campus.

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K. McLead stated that we would end up losing a lot of students if we moved everything to Clearwater.

E. Poole and R. Frank also felt that HEC was not the best option for a south county campus over lack of resources.

Dr. Powers then introduced the Essential Functions List. Call to the Committee to change section I, Computer Proficiency.

The Committee assisted with rewording and restructuring the computer competencies necessary to work through the program and hold a career in the legal field. (Essential Functions Checklist as amended 4/14/16).

Dr. Christy Powers adjourned the meeting with a reminder of the Fall 2016 meeting. The meeting ended at 6:58pm.