



ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE
PARALEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, September 13, 2018, SS 160, Mock Courtroom, Clearwater Campus, Clearwater, Florida
5:30pm-6:45pm

MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Dean Susan Demers, Christy Powers, Rachel Bennett, Joseph Benavides, Deborah Eldridge, Joseph Boyd, Bob Shumaker, Darryl Henderson, Anona Johnson, Kandice Hyatt, Ian Banks, Ellen Poole, Kaila Glaros, Melissa Solevilla, Candi James, Laura Marx, Caitlein Jammo, Andrew Sasso, Jason Stearns, and Erica Hartman.

NOT PRESENT: Joseph Nicholson, Rebecca Frank, Audwin Scott, Nate Suedmeyer, Lisa Brody, Heather Arbuckle, Vitalia Shafer, and Iryna Bandaryk.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in Room SS 160, on the Clearwater Campus.

Following roll call and introductions,

Dean Demers opened with a request to send a copy of the most recent Comprehensive Academic Program Review (CAPR) to the ADVC.

Dean Demers mentioned the books and barrister bookshelves donated by former Board of Trustees Attorney Joe Lang. Attorney Lang passed away in April of 2018.

Dean Demers stated that we have a new joint use library with Clearwater with its own law library on campus. She encouraged the Committee to take a tour and see the extensive collection and new resources.

Dean Demers discussed the ongoing initiatives at SPC via the Pathways project which is state mandated. It is a concept implemented to employ meta-majors. We have settled on 10 Career and Academic Communities (CAC) in which we guide students into 4 year degree. We are part of the Public Policy, Legal Studies, and Public Safety CAC. Distributed brochures for the Committee to preview. It is a new way to look at 2 year program to then transition into a 4 year program. Since it takes 9-10 semesters for our AS Degree, it may take longer than a typical 2 year degree.

There are 28 community colleges in the state of Florida. The legislature seeks first time in college students that are attending full time, and they track them for performance funding for each college. The Pathways project figures out how to take in transfer credits and then put them into a finished degree. Dean Demers also requested that our 2 Pathways are distributed to the Committee.

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Dean Demers mentioned that the ABA Site Team will arrive Tuesday evening. The ADVC Meeting is Noon on Wednesday, September 19 at Carrabba's.

Deborah Eldridge talked about community connections and ask for ideas on how to contribute to it for internships. She like to encourage students to do internship and talked about the new law about the usage of interns. She asked the board members about partnership ideas and talked about project management courses. She asked if there are particular projects going to trial, please let us know and we can pair up a qualified student.

Laura Marx asked about the length of the projects. Dr. Eldridge said temporary positions are great and students will acclimate to the project.

Dr. Eldridge mentioned the study abroad in Portugal in PLA 4830 Comparative Legal Systems which is happening this summer 2019. First class for Paralegal Studies that is travelling abroad. But it is also an inter-disciplinary study abroad course/program. It is a ten day course in Portugal.

Dr. Rachel Bennett mentioned the creation of videos about the expectations of internships on the student end. A creation of an FAQ video to encourage more internships.

Dr. Eldridge mentioned also that resumes and their content. Please let us know what you prefer to see listed on a resume during the application process.

Darryl asked if we do internships that partner with Public Policy opportunities.

Dr. Powers mentioned the potential creation of a Law and Policy Academy at Seminole High School.

Joe Benavides discussed strategies to get into high schools to let them know about our programs. Also looking at at-risk students as well. Really focusing on the AS Degree route. He is actively engaged in holding on campus tours.

Dr. Powers introduced the Essential Functions Checklist for paralegals as offered up by AAfPE.

Laura said when on the job, the attorney will expect at least a 20 item from the list. Basic writing skills are assessed during interviews at her firm with an on site test.

Dr. Bennett said there are many initiatives going on to close the gap in technology skills.

Dean Demers stated that the Essential Functions Checklist is a way for the students to understand the expectations and how they should be completing them by the end of the program.

Jason Stearns asked if we have an e-discovery course. Taught at Stetson and was successful with the curriculum. Willing to provide us with the content and syllabus. He feels that SPC would benefit teaching that on the paralegal side as to the technologic terms and programs.

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Dean Demers that some students have learning disabilities and physical challenges. We are seeking ways to assist in transition these students into the workplace. What equipment should be made available to particular students?

Andy asked where students learn word and basic computer functions.

Demers said basic office class and SPC has a computer proficiency class or test-out option.

Daryl mentioned Workforce Institute at EPI have non-credit classes to help improve skills.

Melissa states that on interviews she asks applicants how they organize themselves including reminders for follow up utilizing calendaring and

Joe Boyd stated that time management skills are truly in need of improving which translates into accountability.

Dr. Powers asked for other final thoughts on improving the Essential Functions Checklist. Jason, Melissa, Darryl, Candi, and Dr. Bennett all made remarks in the following areas to improve the Essential Functions Checklist: require full check on resume for elements of style; review social media etiquette and standard email responses; assure students are able to explain gaps in time on the resume; and how stay-at-home functions do translate into skills sets on the resume.

Candi reiterated the need to also explain why there were many positions help in a short period of time.

To assist with Job Placement, Joe Benavides and Darryl offered the idea of requiring students to complete a short term internship called, "A Day in the Life of a Paralegal."

Dean Demers noted that the Legal Studies Society have hosted and will continue to host workshops for interviews and guest speakers.

Bob Shumaker offered to volunteer with the LSS to hold mock interviews. Everyone in the committee concurred that mock interviews are very helpful in understanding what occurs during an interview. Research the firm or job opportunity before interviewing.

Joe Benavides said that students are welcome to the newly situated Clearwater Campus Library and receive career service advice and assistance.

Andy Sasso discussed UPL and asked if we as professors and career service advisors offer dialogue about discussing difficult past(s) and how to confront this with a potential employer. He stated students need to be able to articulate what to do in an uncomfortable situation, even in practice.

Dr. Bennett then discussed job titles for students and hiring scenarios. She asked the committee what could be done for students to distinguish themselves.

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Candi mentioned that Raymond James is utilizing the job title "Assistant Paralegal" to acquaint the new hire with the position. This way the new hires are learning the job from the ground up. Also, they have recently hired an SPC graduate as a corporate litigation paralegal.

Bob Shumaker stated that there is no true definition that attorneys use for hiring a "paralegal" and that many standards are set by big firms.

Other recruiting options were mentioned via the local bar organizations and the Paralegal Association of Florida.

Dean Demers gave closing remarks.

Christy Powers thanked everyone for attending.
Meeting ended at 6:11 pm.