

St. Petersburg College

SPC

PARALEGAL STUDIES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, March 22, 2021 – ZOOM Meeting

5:30pm-6:30pm

MINUTES

WELCOME & ROLL CALL:

**Dean Susan Demers
Dr. Christy Powers, Chair
College of Policy, Ethics, and Legal Studies**

Dr. Powers thanked everyone for being in attendance, and she mentioned having a great lineup of agenda items to go over.

Dr. Powers then asked everyone to introduce themselves and tell how long they've been with the committee.

(The following introduced themselves: Nathan Suedmeyer; Jerrick Rivera; Lynn McCormick McDonald; Caitlein Jammo; Jason Stearns; Andy Sasso; Laura Marx; Candi James; Iryna Bandaryk; Kaila Glaros; Rebecca Frank; Melissa Solevilla; Vitalia Shafer; Deborah Eldridge; Ian Banks; Robert Attridge; Elizabeth Bryson; Rachel Bennett) (A complete list of attendees is attached.)

Dean Susan Demers welcomed everyone and shared information about our ABA Interim Report. She mentioned that reviewing the ABA materials and the items that the ABA requires the department to report, gives you a different view of your program. She learned many things about the program. We have determined a couple of projects out of the report, which will be shared later in the meeting.

Dean Demers said that during her time as AAVP she heard the acting Paralegal Studies Dean's comments about the Advisory Committee. He told her that the committee was inventive and willing, with a strong group-think. She echoes all of those thoughts, because she's had a chance to see the committee's contributions in the ABA documents. (The Dean thanked everyone and left the meeting.)

Dr. Powers thanked everyone again for attending. She said she is happy that we went through the introductions because it gives everyone a chance to feel connected.

Dr. Powers also mentioned the ABA Report and how we will be doing the full report in 2024, which will be much larger with much more information to provide. In addition there will be an in-person site visit.

FOLLOW-UP FROM FALL MEETING:

Dr. Powers indicated that the college likes us to follow up on the previous meeting's minutes. The minutes are sent out after each meeting. But it's important to get approval of the minutes and adopt them in.

-Approve Fall 2020 Meeting Minutes - Dr. Powers made a motion to adopt the Fall 2020 Meeting Minutes. She asked for a second. The motion was seconded. With no objections the Fall 2020 Meeting Minutes would be adopted.

-New AS Degree and Schedule Changes (Launched Fall 2020) – Dr. Powers explained that we just recently switched to the New AS Degree and we are mandating six areas. We asked for advice for this a couple of years ago. At that time, Melissa Solevilla said that it would be difficult to teach all of the content of Civil Lit in 16 weeks. Our department has addressed this challenge, taking the two semesters of materials and combining them into one. This past fall we had Criminal Law and Procedure, Civil Law and Procedure, and Family law taught for the first time in the combined format. We had success in the first three classes. The other three classes, Real Estate Transactions, Estate and Probate and Business Organizations are being taught this Spring. The courses are on a 3/3 track and offered in Fall and Spring. The level of predictability in planning for our AS degree became much easier to navigate.

-Essential Functions Checklist: An online survey regarding the Essential Functions is taken in PLA 1003, Intro to Paralegalism each term. Again, we went over this checklist with the Committee many times regarding things such as critical thinking, organization, communication, etc. We introduce the list to the students in Intro to Paralegalism as a survey, so students are aware of the Essential Functions from the very beginning.

COLLEGE-WIDE UPDATES:

Dr. Christy Powers

Introduction of this evening's guests: Linda McCormick-McDonald, Associate Program Director of Learning Resources. Dr. Powers handed the meeting over to Lynn to explain the new

innovative things we are incorporating, and to introduce some new ideas for the committee's opinions.

-Library Resources Associate Program Director: Lynn McCormick-McDonald

Ms. McCormick-McDonald said that they were excited because the library side of learning resources is doing the liaison model based on the 10 communities. She and Heather Myer are the two liaisons for Paralegal studies. She loves it because she is in the Paralegal Studies Certificate Program so she's getting immersed in the curriculum, which makes it easier to build a collection that the students can appreciate. She is grateful for the training they have received from Dr. Bennett, especially with Legal Research and Writing. It's a specialty course, and even though we are librarians, we don't necessarily know how to do legal research. The liaisons are moving more toward connectivity with the curriculum and faculty members, so they are building the collection, building the online presence. The research guide is being completely rebuilt from the ground up. That will lead into the Learning Commons site, so it will be consistent. Also there is a library liaison web page, spcollege.libguides.com/liaisons/ethics. **Ms. McCormick-McDonald** went on to share and describe the web page. Heather is more in the realm of instructional, and Lynn is in the realm of collection development. She encouraged everyone to let her know if there are items that can boost the collection.

Ms. McCormick-McDonald described the newest posting, Procetas-LTA, Legal Technology Assessment. She said it's a great product that gives a chunk-by-chunk walk-through of MS Applications that are useful to paralegal students. (She presented the program to the committee and explained some of the functions that paralegals should know.)

Ms. McCormick-McDonald invited everyone to reach out to her if they see anything that would benefit the students that the library and/or learning resources should have.

Dr. Powers asked everyone what they thought about the new library resources and the way we've addressed it with Lexus, Fast Case and Procetas. **Candi James** thinks it is brilliant. **Dr. Powers** went on to say that LTA has basic training in all the MS applications so students can get familiar with the basics and then move on to legal functions. This came from Perkins Funding which was helpful. Most law schools use this, including Stetson.

Dr. Powers added that we have been looking at ways to close the technology gap and make sure our students are prepared for the work force. She asked the committee if we should be adding more technology skills. **Candi James** said that it is critical right now to have Adobe skills because of signing and certifying sections of documents. **Jason Stearns** added that their firm is constantly trying to give training to their paralegals and associates in e-document platforms. Even though many of these have been available for a while, the reality is that many people still

struggle. **Dr. Powers** said that we offer Computers and the Law Office and we are looking to overhaul/update that class. E-discovery is commonplace now. If there are any specific programs or software that you think is useful please let us know. She said that we can overhaul Computers and the Law in the upper division and Law Office Management in the lower division. **Kaila Glaros** said that she did try looking at the e-filing seminar again. And she did go through the Procertas. It didn't look like the program did step-by-step training on e-filing. **Dr. Powers** said that Kaila and Caitlein did an on-site e-filing seminar a couple years ago where the students could walk through and see how it worked.

Laura Marx stated that Adobe is a very powerful program and many people don't understand how to use half of the functions of it – from redacting to reviewing docs to e-sign, etc.

Dr. Powers added that we were lucky with Perkins grant that allowed us to have the program for a year. She said we can track each student's progress so we can report growth. And we encourage the students to update their resume each time they learn a new skill. **Melissa Solevilla** asked about Case Management systems. She wanted to know if the students are exposed to the more popular case management systems. **Dr. Powers** asked Kaila Glaros if they explore case management systems in Law Office Management. **Kaila** said that they do, but they do a comparison of different programs, going through front end and back end tasks, billing, etc. She said they ask them to choose their top three Case Management software products. (There was further discussion regarding the merits of Case Management Software.) **Dr. Powers** asked that everyone let her know if they are having particular success with a particular Case Management Software. She thanked everyone for their assistance in this.

Dr. Powers then introduced Jerrick Rivera, Recruitment Advisor.

-Recruitment Advisor: Jerrick Rivera – Jerrick started with some background information. He was a student graduate but not paralegal studies. Recruitment has gone through a restructuring, and now he is specifically dedicated to 3 communities, one of which is Paralegal Studies. He explained that his role is to increase exposure, get to know program directors, better understand the programs and build relationships. **Dr. Powers** thanked Jerrick for joining us. She said that when it comes to recruitment we are always reaching out to our Advisory Committee for ideas. Jerrick's role in working with our program, is to not only look outside, but to look inside at our institution and to make sure our students are transitioning into our Bachelor's when they get their general AA degree.

Dr. Powers then indicated that she had Homework for the Committee. She said that our Bachelor's degree has about 30 electives, but the students only need to select 8. So she would like the members to look at the electives, and determine which courses would be most applicable if the student were to come to work for them. We would like to build an elective

track that would satisfy certain conditions. For example, if a student were to work in criminal law, they would take criminal law, evidence and that line of courses. If they're getting into litigation, they take civil litigation, evidence, etc. You know what you would like to see. She would like the committee to select from all the electives we have, 8 – 10 that they would like to see a prospective employee have.

Dr. Powers introduced Robert Attridge, Student Tutor, thanks again to Perkins Funding. She asked Robert to tell everyone about what he's doing and what his experience is this Spring.

-Student Tutor: Robert Attridge - Robert said that this experience was eye-opening and that he didn't realize how difficult teaching is. The biggest issues he sees is students being unsure about the technology – they know about Lexus but not how to use all of the features or how to narrow searches. He also said they don't know how to use other systems, Fast Case, for example, and they use Lexus as a default. Some students are switching to a different style of writing, from long meandering sentences to short declarative ones. And some students just need to talk to someone without bothering an instructor, and they end up discovering the answers for themselves. Robert indicated that he sees people at all levels from Freshmen to Seniors.

Dr. Powers said that it's a treat to have Robert on board because students are still nervous with the faculty, so to have a student-to-student interaction in a tutoring capacity is really wonderful. One of Robert's jobs is to create a blueprint for the next student we hire, so they have the protocols for working with future students. She mentioned that having a tutor specifically for Legal Research and Writing is something the department has been requesting for several years. Students usually went to Dr. Bennett or Dr. Banks. Dr. Powers said that the tutoring is going great, and it's being documented as well, so it's hopeful that improvement is seen with the students who are taking advantage of the tutoring.

Robert added that he thinks the faculty is doing an amazing job. The level of improvement in students he's gotten to interact with is very high because of Professors Feher, Rankin and Chase. He said the fact that the students are learning so much and retaining so much is due to the level of the educators.

Dr. Powers asked the members how many had gotten tutoring when they were in law school. There was a show of hands. (There was further discussion regarding personal experiences with tutoring in law school.) **Dr. Powers** said that in the Fall we'll be able to show what Robert's put together as a training manual for his successor.

-COVID-19 Updates - Dr. Powers indicated that we are Live Online, and summer is Live Online and we'll probably 50/50 for Fall and will have some more face-to-face offerings.

Dr. Powers introduced Deborah Eldridge who has prepared a document regarding Program Learning Outcomes. It's a way for students to take a look back at their outcomes.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS/INTERNSHIPS: Full Time Faculty, Dr. Deborah Eldridge

Dr. Eldridge began by thanking everyone for referrals. She said it's been a wonderful experience, so she asked them to keep referring. She told them about the AS Degree internship as well as the upper degree Co-op.

-Update Program Learning Outcomes – Dr. Eldridge shared her screen to show a document she created so students can track their learning outcomes. Dean Demers asked her to create a way for students to actually see how the Learning Outcomes are applying to the classes they are taking. There are 9 Learning Outcomes: Critical Thinking, Organization, Communication, Legal Research, Legal Writing, Computers - which is fluid because things are always changing –Interview and Investigation, Professionalism and Ethics, and Law Office Practice and Technology.

The idea behind this is to create a physical and online format for students to go through their degree and be able to insert information so they can see how what they are learning is translating into the learning outcomes. **Dr. Eldridge** said that she listed the courses they are taking that apply to the specific learning outcome, and identifying the learning outcome, the application of the student outcome to the practical application, and how that translates from the learning outcome through the class to the skills they are learning for their skill set. Breaking it down further, they identify the actual skill they are learning, and then student observation of the skill learned. (The 9 Learning Outcomes and Table are attached.)

Dr. Eldridge said that's what we are looking at and she would love to get feedback from the committee members as to suggestions of other categories or how we can elaborate on the specific categories.

Dr. Powers asked the committee what they thought about the learning outcomes. In each class they are documented, the students will look at the assignments and work product and look to see how they evidence the learning objectives. This will be sent to the members and if they have any feedback to please let Dr. Powers know. **Andy Sasso** said that it might be helpful when the table is sent out to fill in examples of what would be an ideal completion of the form.

-New Sites & Ongoing Opportunities during COVID-19 - Time did not permit discussion of this topic.

PROGRAM UPDATES: Dr. Christy Powers, Chair

-ABA Interim Report Submitted March 2021 – Dr. Powers mentioned that there is a large section of the ABA Report that is dedicated to the Advisory Committee, and they take a look at participation, what the members do and how we are applying what we discuss in the

meetings. Dr. Powers indicated that the report is 279 pages and that we are very proud of our work. It is a wonderful collection of everything we've done in the past four years, including our transition during COVID.

-Employer & Graduate Surveys - Dr. Powers stated one thing that we need the members' help on is our graduate and employer surveys. She indicated that we don't get the best response on those. Our graduate and employer surveys make a difference. She asked the members to let us know, when we send the survey for their review, if they think something needs to be changed or there is a better way to get people to respond to the survey. She also asked them to think about passing it forward to different offices. **Kaila Glaros** asked if there was a list of who they are sent to. **Dr. Powers** said that in reporting to the ABA, every single graduate and where they are employed is reported, and that list is given to Intellectual Effectiveness, and they contact the graduates' employers. Dr. Powers thinks that they don't see "Paralegal Studies" specifically and hesitate to respond. That may be a fix to that problem. **Laura Marx** indicated that she's filled them out before, but it's important who in the firm you send the survey to. **Dr. Powers** said that that's something to work on to clarify and reduce the list down to people we know will answer and not be sent to info@ABCLawfirm. It's a great idea, to refine the list and look at it every couple of months to make sure it's accurate.

-Viability Report Data – Time did not permit discussion of this topic.

CLOSING REMARKS/ADJOURNMENT: **Dr. Christy Powers, Chair**

Dr. Powers said that we are closing in on our time; we have discussed many topics; and have given you some homework. As we transition into Summer and Fall, we'll send out more documents. But we will give you three things to complete in a follow-up email: the electives to choose depending on what kind of paralegal you will be; the learning objectives document filled out with examples; and the surveys.

Dr. Powers asked if there were any closing comments or remarks.

Dr. Eldridge mentioned that Max Lovato is a senior in our program and he's going to be joining the advisory committee. Dr. Eldridge introduced Max to the group. **Max Lovato** introduced himself. He did his bachelor's in Art and is now in the paralegal program.

Dr. Powers thanked everyone for their time. We will forward everything to everyone by the end of the week.

(Meeting was adjourned at 6:35 PM.)

| Name | Email | RSVP | Attendance |
|----------------------|--|-------------|-------------------|
| Ms. Heather Arbuckle | arbuckle.heather@gmail.com | Accepted | |
| Ms. Irnya Bandaryk | iryna.bandaryk@citi.com | | Present |
| Mr. Ian Banks | Banks.ian@spcollege.edu | Tentative | Present |
| Mr. Joseph Benavides | benavides.joseph@spcollege.edu | Accepted | |
| Ms. Rachel Bennett | bennett.rachel@spcollege.edu | | Present |
| Ms. Lisa Brody | lbrody@bals.org | Accepted | |
| Ms. Susan Demers | Demers.Susan@spcollege.edu | | Present |
| Ms. Deborah Eldridge | Eldridge.deborah@spcollege.edu | Accepted | Present |
| Ms. Rebecca Frank | | Accepted | Present |
| Mrs. Kaila Glaros | kailaglaros@gmail.com | Accepted | Present |
| Mrs. Erika Hartman | ehartman310@yahoo.com | | |
| Mr. Darryl Henderson | darryljhenderson@gmail.com | | |
| Ms. Kandice Hyatt | khyatt1@live.spcollege.edu | | |
| Ms. Candi James | candi@jimjames.org | Accepted | Present |
| Ms. Caitlein Jammo | caitleinj@jpfirm.com | Accepted | Present |
| Ms. Anona Johnson | anona@laronpatentlaw.com | | |
| Ms. Laura Marx | laura@roberteckardlaw.com | Accepted | Present |
| Mr. Jason Nicholson | Nicholson.jason@spcollege.edu | | |
| Ms. Ellen Poole | Ellen.Poole@piperfire.com | | |
| Ms. Christy Powers | Powers.Christy@spcollege.edu | Accepted | Present |
| Mr. Andy Sasso | ABS@macfar.com | Accepted | Present |
| Mr. Robert Schumaker | rschumaker@brasfieldlaw.net | Accepted | |
| Ms. Vitalia Shafer | diazshafer@gmail.com | present | Present |

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|-------------------------|--|----------|---------|
| Ms. Melissa Solevilla | msolevilla@careyandleisure.com | Accepted | Present |
| Mr. Jason Stearns | jstearns@freeborn.com | Accepted | Present |
| Mr. Nathan Suedmeyer | nathan@laronpatentlaw.com | Accepted | Present |
| Invited Guests | | | |
| Marilyn Browne | | Declined | |
| Jerrick Rivera | | Accepted | Present |
| Heather Myer | | Declined | |
| Lynn McCormick-McDonald | | Accepted | Present |
| Robert Attridge | | Accepted | Present |