

PARALEGAL STUDIES
Advisory Committee Meeting
August 16, 2010

Summary Notes

Present: Mr. Bruce Moseley, AC Paralegal Studies Coordinator
Ms. Rhonda Brashears, CP; Chair
Ms. Janis Barnett, CP
Ms. Ann Britt, AC Business Division Advisor
Mr. Scott, Brumley, Attorney
Ms. Jana Comerford, AC Library Network
Ms. Amy Dobberstein, Paralegal Studies Major
Mr. Ron Faulkner, AC Workforce Training Coordinator
Dr. Shawn Fouts, Dean-Career and Technical Education
Mr. David Kemp, Attorney
Dr. Russell Lowery-Hart, Vice President for Academic Affairs
Mrs. Gay Mills, Office Administration Coordinator
Mr. Carl Mueller, CLAS
Ms. Carolyn Ottoson, WTA&M Law Librarian
Mr. Don Sanders, Member-at-Large
Mr. Christopher Wrampelmeier, Attorney

Absent: Ms. Kim Davis, AC Continuing Education
Ms. Melba Fenwick, CLA, RP; AC Graduate
Mrs. Sharla Fowler, CP, TBLS
Mr. David Hernandez, AC Business Division Chair
Dr. Paul Matney, President
Ms. Carol McRoberts, CLA
Mr. Jerry Moeller, Asst. Dean for Academic Programs
Ms. Cathy Peek, CLA, TBLS
Ms. Donna Pergrem, AC Assistant Career & Employment Services
Ms. Rita Saldierna, PLS, CLA
Ms. Regina Veith, Member-at-Large
Ms. Luisa Vigil, Northwest Texas Legal Services

The Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee met for a 12:00 luncheon in the Private Dining Room of the College Union Building. Rhonda Brashears welcomed the committee members.

Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves.

Minutes of December 3, 2009 Meeting

The minutes were available for review; Carl Mueller presented a motion to accept the minutes as written. Amy Dobberstein seconded, and the minutes were approved as written by the committee.

Recruiting Ideas and New Brochures

Bruce told the committee that he has redesigned the Paralegal Studies brochure and will be mailing a cover letter and copies of that brochure to all area high school counselors. This mailing will cover the 26 counties of the panhandle. He thinks we need to get the word out to high school students. Most of our students are older, so there might be a market in the younger students.

Bruce has attended and will continue to attend all the AC recruiting events. We are struggling as a program and need all the students we can get. We have around 58 students and for this program to continue, we need at least 100 students. Right now we have two classes that have made with 12 students in each. Most of our classes have around 8 to 10 students. There is a new push to cut programs with low graduate numbers, so we need to increase our numbers in order for this program to continue.

Bruce has also been updating our website this summer. He asked the committee to view the website and give him any suggestions at our next meeting. We are getting some requests for information on the Paralegal Studies program, so we think that students are visiting our website. Bruce will analyze the data from the website visits and see if we can determine how we could use this information to reach additional students.

Rhonda Brashears suggested that we try to tap into the undecided majors. She suggested we sponsor a short cookie and soda meeting for the undecided majors. We could have four or five professionals visit with the students to answer any questions they might have.

Rhonda also suggested that we distribute the requirements for certification for paralegals to all attorneys so they could encourage their employees to get further training. Chris Wrampelmeir said that we could check with Joann Holt, the local ABA contact, and see if she has a distribution list. Rhonda said she will get the PDF and send it to Joann and ask her to get the requirements out.

Don Sanders asked Rhonda if legal secretaries might want to upstream to a Paralegal. Bruce said that he has attended some of their (NALS) luncheons. He said that NALS has changed their name and structure and most of their members are now paralegals and lawyers.

A question was asked about dual-credit courses being a way to get students interested in the paralegal field. Bruce told the committee that Lou Ann Seabourn has been trying to find an Intro to Law class that would be suitable for dual-credit. Now that we are into the Career Cluster, we would need to find a suitable class, Bruce would have to supplement this course, and then they would make sure of the competency. Bruce still thinks this is a good way to expose high school students to the paralegal field. Lou Ann will be sending out additional information on this.

Formation of Amarillo College Legal Society

Bruce told the committee that we had two meeting to try and get this club started. The same four students attended both meetings. He will try to get this club going again this year.

Job shadowing

Bruce has been working on this, but can't find lawyers who are willing to participate. Bruce asked the committee for suggestions.

Don Sanders asked if regular employees have to sign a confidentiality contract. Bruce said that it is more of an ethical understanding. Chris Wrampelmeir also stated that there could even be a conflict of interest later on if the student had seen some information on a case while shadowing, then later were hired by another firm that was involved in this same case. Don Sanders said if confidentiality is the issue, maybe the student could spend 15 to 30 minutes with each paralegal describing their duties rather than being case specific.

It was asked if Job Shadowing is still the term being used. Maybe it could be called work overview rather than shadowing. Ron Faulkner said maybe we could put together a written package. Ron and Bruce will continue to work on this issue.

Curriculum:

Bruce told the committee that he had checked on their idea to add a class for writing skills and at this time, there is nothing we can add. He said that in order to address the writing skills issue, all classes will have more writing assignments. Hopefully, these additional assignments will improve the students writing skills.

News Flash

Bruce told the committee that he has sent a News Flash letter to all high school counselors, all Amarillo attorneys, most AC employees, etc. He is planning on sending this out once a year. He asked the committee to send him any newsworthy stories.

Don Sanders asked if we had a Twitter or Facebook account for Paralegal Studies. Bruce told him at this time, we do not, but he is planning on getting this started. Don said that he would talk to some of the data people he knows and see if they could give us some suggestions on how to target potential students.

Graduate Surveys

Bruce told the committee that we are having trouble getting graduate students to complete the surveys. We only had one student respond, and this was not acceptable to the ABA.

It was suggested that the surveys become part of the graduation packet that students are required to complete prior to graduation. It was also suggested that maybe the instructor could give the graduating student the survey just before the course was completed. Bruce will check with the ABA and see if it would be okay for the instructors to get this information.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Butler
Senior Staff Assistant
Amarillo College Paralegal Studies