

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

PROGRAM COMMITTEE NAME:		Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee			
CHAIRPERSON:	Rhonda Brashears				
MEETING DATE:	March 6, 2013	MEETING TIME:	12:00 pm	MEETING PLACE:	Room 113, Lynn Library, Amarillo College
RECORDER:	Lynne Seal			PREVIOUS MEETING:	October 15, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

List all members of the committee, then place an X in the box left of name of those present

	NAME	TITLE	EMPLOYER INFO	PHONE	EMAIL
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Janis Barnett	Certified Paralegal	AIG American General	345-7335	jbarnett@structuresag.com
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jeff Blackburn	Attorney	Blackburn & Tisdell, LLP	371-8333	blackburn@ipoftexas.org
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rhonda Brashears	Certified Paralegal, TBLS	Underwood Law Firm, PC	379-0325	rhonda.brashears@ualawcom
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scott Brumley	County Attorney	Potter County Attorney's Office	379-2255	scottbrumley@co.potter.tx.us
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Melba Dockery Fenwick	Judicial Paralegal	United States District Judge	324-2359	melba_fenwick@txnd.uscourts.gov
	Sharla Fowler	Paralegal, Civil Trial Law	Riney & Mayfield	468-3222	sfowler@rineymayfield.com
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Luis Gutierrez	President, Legal Society of AC	Student, Amarillo College	576-6207	luisg1230@gmail.com
	Misti Janes	Paralegal, TBLS	Underwood Law Firm, PC	379-0315	misti.Janes@uwlaw.com
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	David Kemp	County Attorney	Potter County Attorney's Office	379-2255	davidkemp@co.potter.tx.us
	Darin Mitchell	Attorney	Courtney Countliss Brian & Bailey, LLP	372-5569	d.mitchell@courtneylawfirm.com
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carl Mueller	CLAS	Burdett, Morgan, Williamson & Boykin	358-8116	cmueller@bmwb-law.com
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carolyn Ottoson	Reference Librarian	West Texas A&M University	651-2231	cottoson@mail.wtama.edu
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cathy Peek	CLA, TBLS	Sprouse Shrader Smith	468-3345	cathy.peek@sprouselaw.com
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Rita Saldierna	PLS, CLA	Wolfram Law Firm	372-3449	rita@wolframlaw.com
	Don Sanders	Owner	Sir Speedy Printing	342-0606 x23	don@sirspeedyamarillo.com
	Luisa Vigil	Coordinator	Legal Aid of Northwest Texas	373-6808	vigil@lanwt.org
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mark White	Attorney	Sprouse Shrader Smith	468-3306	mark.white@sprouselaw.com
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Christopher Wrampelmeier	Attorney	Underwood Law Firm	379-0392	Chris.wrampelmeier@uwlaw.com

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Jana Comerford	Instructor, Lynn Library	Amarillo College	271-5403	jkcomerford@actx.edu
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Russell Lowery-Hart	Vice President, Academic Affairs	Amarillo College	371-5226	rdloweryhart@actx.edu
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Paul Matney	President	Amarillo College	371-5123	jpmatney@actx.edu
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gay Mills	Professor, Office Administration	Amarillo College	371-5099	jgmills@actx.edu
	Jerry Moller	Dean, Arts & Sciences	Amarillo College	371-5297	jemoller@actx.edu
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bruce Moseley	Asst Professor / Program Coordinator	Amarillo College	345-5551	bamoseley@actx.edu
	Donna Pergrem	Advisor, Business Department	Amarillo College	371-5451	drpergrem@actx.edu
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regina Vieth	Instructor, Office Administration	Amarillo College	355-3236	reginavieth@sbcglobal.net

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AGENDA ITEM	ACTION / DISCUSSION / INFORMATION	RESPONSIBILITY
Old Business:	Focus Group report Student/employer surveys	Rhonda Brashears Rhonda Brashears
Continuing Business:	Legal Society of Amarillo College (LSAC) update Student/graduate professionalism Mock interviews ABA approval process Substitution policy for LGLA.CERT.PRO	Bruce Moseley Bruce Moseley Bruce Moseley Bruce Moseley Rhonda Brashears
New Business:	Introductions Introduce new student member Practical assignments	All Members Bruce Moseley Bruce Moseley
Curriculum Decisions:	Amarillo College adding First Year Seminar (EDUC 1300) – need to cut 1 major course Law Office Management (LGLA 2307) vs. Law Office Technology (LGLA 1317) Electives: consider remove GOVT 2306; add BCIS 1401 and ENGL 2311	Rhonda Brashears Rhonda Brashears Rhonda Brashears
Other:	Maintaining ABA approval	Rhonda Brashears
KEY DISCUSSION POINTS	DISCUSSION	
Old Business	<p>A Focus Group was held in May of 2012 to discuss employer expectations of Paralegal Studies graduates. Included in the group were Mike McDearmon, Misti Janes, Luisa Vigil, Dave Kemp, Sharla Fowler, Cindi Barela Graham, and Rhonda Brashears. Key factors addressed by the group were professionalism, hands-on experience, computer experience beyond word processing (spreadsheets, presentation software, databases), writing skills, and familiarity with research methodology. Committee members discussed the lack of writing skills in the workplace, in general, and how important that skill set is. Bruce indicated that with regard to hands-on experience, the internship program with Legal Aid of Northwest Texas is productive, offering as many as 5 internships each year.</p> <p>Committee members were provided the results of two surveys conducted in late 2011-early 2012: one of recent graduates and their employment/educational progress post-graduation, and one of local employers and the utilization of paralegals and required skills sets. Survey results are in line with the findings of the Focus Group and the direction provided by the Advisory Committee and program leadership. Bruce indicated that the market for paralegals in Amarillo remains strong.</p>	

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<p>Continuing Business</p>	<p>Legal Society of Amarillo College is now firmly established. In November 2012, eleven students and two faculty members toured Washington, DC. A trip to the state capitol in Austin is planned for late April. A public debate is planned for early May on the legalization of marijuana. Luis Gutierrez, LSAC's President, is the new student representative on the Advisory Committee, assuming the spot vacated by the recently graduated, Michelle Tyree.</p> <p>With regard to improving the level of professionalism of paralegal students, Bruce incorporated a segment on professionalism in the Intro course in Fall 2012. Amarillo College now has a dedicated Career and Employment Services Department that offers workshops on resume writing and interviewing skills. Students are awarded additional points toward their final grade for participating in those workshops.</p> <p>Bruce will implement a mock interview segment in the Intro course for Fall 2013. Currently in planning stages. Will choose a Tuesday evening during class hours, each student will submit a resume and cover letter, and will participate in 3 interviews that evening. Bruce called for potential interviewers and most indicated a willingness to participate.</p> <p>ABA response received regarding program approval, requiring additional revisions and clarifications. Revised report is due by April 22, 2013 and is in progress.</p> <p>A written policy needs to be established with regard to substitutions/transfer credits for students in the LGLA.CERT.PRO program. How many credits will a student be permitted to substitute/transfer and for which courses? Discussed were: no substitutions for the four major course requirements; some time component regarding how recently the course was taken; some limitation regarding the final number of hours that must be in residence; care be taken to ensure that a student is qualified by this program's standards and that the program is not being watered down. Bruce will contact the ABA to determine if any guidelines exist and what policies other programs have in place. Bruce will update the committee and propose a policy for the committee to discuss and vote upon.</p>
<p>New Business:</p>	<p>Introductions were made around the table, members introducing themselves, position title, and place of employment.</p> <p>Bruce introduced Luis Gutierrez, student representative, to the committee and summarized his academic, employment, and community background.</p> <p>Practical assignments are continually being added to LGLA courses. A list of the variety of assignments and the courses in which they are utilized was shared with the group. Specifically mentioned were the "mock trial" spearheaded by Rhonda Brashears in her Civil Litigation course and the "interview a paralegal" assignment in the Intro course. Bruce called for committee members to review the list and offer additional suggestions.</p>
<p>Curriculum Decisions:</p>	<p>Amarillo College has added EDUC 1300 – First Year Seminar as a required course beginning Fall 2014. Gay Mills, who teaches in part of this program, indicated its purpose is to assist incoming students to identify a career focus, become academically prepared, develop professionalism, etc. This addition, however, will require that one course be dropped from the major course requirements for Paralegal Studies. Current program requirements were reviewed.</p> <p>Considering eliminating LGLA 2307 – Law Office Management in favor of LGLA 1317 - Law Office Technology. Committee members were provided with the course description from the Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM).</p>

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	<p>Considering eliminating GOVT 2306 – Texas Government from the General Education Electives in favor of BCIS 1401 – Microcomputer Applications (for MOS Certification) and ENGL 2311 – Technical Writing.</p> <p>The discussion of curriculum changes will be renewed at the Fall 2013 Advisory Committee meeting.</p>	
Other:	<p>A discussion was initiated regarding the efficacy of maintaining ABA approval. Various pros and cons were discussed. Bruce will compile a list of these issues for ongoing discussion. Committee members were in agreement that this issue is worth discussing, but that no decision will be made without additional thought and discussion, as well as data collected from students and the community.</p>	
Chairperson Signature:	Date:	Next Meeting: To be announced