

PARALEGAL STUDIES
Advisory Committee Meeting
May 2, 2006

Summary Notes

- Present:** Ms. Debbie Bailey, AC Paralegal Studies Coordinator
Ms. Rhonda Brashears, CLA; Chair
Mr. Scott Brumley, Potter County Attorney
Mrs. Jana Comerford, AC Library Network
Ms. Kim Davis, Director of C.E.
Ms. Melba Fenwick, CLA, RP; AC Graduate
Ms. Sharla Fowler, CLA, TBLS
Ms. Susan Grim, CLAS
Dr. Steven Jones
Ms. Gay Mills, Office Administration Coordinator
Mr. Delton Moore, AC Director of Institutional Research
Ms. Carolyn Ottoson, WTA&M Law Librarian
Ms. Rita Saldierna, CLA
Mr. Robert Sloger, AC Business Division Chair
- Absent:** Ms. Frances Abernathy, Coordinator, AC Job Placement
Mrs. Paula Badger
Mr. Tom Boyd, Attorney
Mr. Ron Faulkner, Workforce Training Coordinator
Mrs. Rebecca Grantham, Paralegal Studies Major
Ms. Janice Joyner, Business Division Counselor
Mr. Mike McDearmon, Firm Administrator
Ms. Carol McRoberts, CLA
Dr. Paul Matney, VP
Ms. Cathy Peek, CLA
Mr. Don Sanders, Member-at-Large
Mr. Mike Smiley, Attorney; Paralegal Supervisor
Ms. Shirley Vessel, Legal Assistant
Ms. Regina Vieth, Member-at-Large
Ms. Luisa Vigil, WT Legal Services

The Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee met for a 12:15 luncheon in the Private Dining Room of the College Union Building. Rhonda Brashers and Debbie Bailey welcomed the committee members

Introduction of New Committee Members:

Scott Brumley, Melba Dockery, and Sharla Fowler

Minutes of December 7, 2005, Meeting:

The minutes were available for review; Kim Davis presented a motion to accept the minutes as written. Susan Grim seconded, and the minutes were approved by the committee.

ABA Approval:

Rhonda drew the attention of committee members to the letter from the American Bar Association granting approval to the Paralegal Studies Program (dated February 21, 2006). She thanked Debbie Bailey for her effort in gaining approval and mentioned that AC is one of only twelve approved programs in Texas.

Status Report on Continuing Education Courses for Paralegals:

Kim Davis, Linda Reed, Susan Grim, Rhonda Brashears, and Debbie Bailey met recently to plan Continuing Education programs for paralegals. Kim Davis said that she plans to offer training on ProDoc in October or November by ProDoc trainers. It will be offered both during the day and in the evening. Kim asked the committee representatives to finalize a date; the deadline is May 10. She suggested offering 7-hour courses to earn State funding. Discussion followed about the software programs that are currently being used in legal offices, and the most popular software programs appear to be ProDoc/Small Office Suite, Trial Director, and Summation.

Kim said she would try to make the courses affordable; she also suggested that a portion of the tuition be designated for scholarships for Paralegal Studies majors through the AC Foundation (a possibility of paying the \$40 Lexis fee was mentioned).

Results of Electronic Survey for Paralegal Studies Graduates:

Delton Moore reported that he was pleased with the response; 15 surveys were e-mailed to graduates, and 12 responded. He explained that the first set of questions updated personal information--he made the following notations: Present answers in Questions 21 and 22 in groupings rather than specific numbers

Question 33 may need to be reworded

Questions 34 and 35 indicated an excellent evaluation of AC's Paralegal Program

Delton summarized the survey as a very positive reflection on AC's program; Debbie will share the results with all instructors for their feedback. Debbie noted that ABA requires the Committee to distribute and review the surveys periodically (within 3-6 months following graduation) and recommends follow-up surveys. It was also noted that e-mail proved to be a very effective means of delivery. Delton will make the survey results available to committee members, and Debbie encouraged everyone to peruse it and send suggestions and comments to her.

Part-Time Faculty Certification:

Debbie congratulated Mia Moustakis, Instructor of the Interviewing and Investigating course, for completing the Part-Time Faculty Certification. The 8-week program presents topics such as teaching styles, lesson plan preparation, and syllabi examples. Rhonda Brashears completed the program last year.

Immigration Law Course:

Debbie told the Committee that an attorney approached her about teaching an immigration law course. Discussion followed; the curriculum is already full, but Immigration could be offered as an option between two required courses (Ex. Bankruptcy **OR** Immigration Law). It was generally agreed that there is not enough local demand (it is believed that only two Amarillo attorneys deal with immigration law). It was mentioned that 0% of the graduate survey responders work with this specific type of law, and the consensus was that specific areas of the legal field can be learned if a strong/general educational foundation is laid.

Spring 2006 Enrollment:

Debbie reported that enrollment is slightly down, but there are eight 2006 graduates. Graduate job placements have been good.

Practicum for Students:

Debbie asked for locations for a student needing a practicum this summer (consists of 320 clock hours performing paralegal duties under the supervision of an attorney or a paralegal). The practicum can be a positive experience for both the student and the employer. The student's supervisor is required to complete three evaluations. Anyone interested can contact Debbie.

Job Announcement for Paralegal Studies Coordinator:

Bob Sloger announced that Debbie will be moving to Office Administration as full-time faculty in the fall. He asked for input before submitting the Job Announcement for an Instructor/Coordinator for Paralegal Studies. He asked committee members to peruse the announcement and call Debbie with suggestions. The job posting must be approved, and grade/salary range will be assigned by Human Resources. Bob suggested sending the job announcement to the committee members who are not in attendance at the meeting today.

Bob Sloger brought for Committee consideration the Coordinating Board compliance issues. He asked the committee for suggestions to encourage male students to enter the program. There were no male graduates in 2003-04, and only one male graduating in 2004-05. This situation could eventually affect funding. Two men in the field, Norman Clark and Carl Mueller, might have suggestions and be invited to the Advisory Committee meetings and serve as class speakers. The suggestion was also offered to attend high school career days to promote the program. Another possibility is to link with WTAMU and their pre-law program.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gay Mills, Coordinator
Office Administration