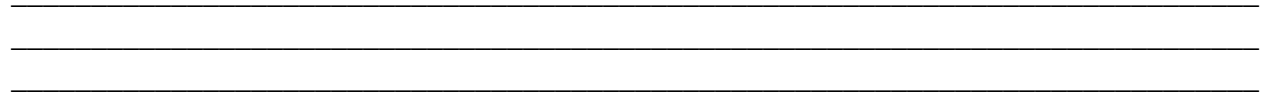


**PARALEGAL/LEGAL ASSISTING PROGRAM**

**Program Review**

**Follow-up Report**

**Spring 2008**



**Task Force Members:**

Chair: Dr. Sheila M. Merchant, Paralegal Program Manager, HCC

Dean, Jack Evans, Associate in Science Degree Programs, HCC

Dr. Michael Reichard, Criminal Justice Faculty Member, Program Manager, HCC

Ms. Maridru Clark, Director of Management Information Systems, HCC

Ms. Rebecca Tranthem, Attorney, Paralegal Advisory Committee, HCC

Ms. Teresa Nelson, Student Graduate of the Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program, HCC

Ms. Nitza Sada, Office Administration Lab Assistant, HCC

# PARALEGAL/LEGAL ASSISTING PROGRAM

## Program Review

### Follow-up Report

#### Spring 2008

A task force was assembled in the Spring Term of 2007 to conduct a review of HCC's Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program. Listed below are the six task force recommendations followed by a brief report of progress toward implementation. This report will be followed by a progress report one year following the review. Recommendations that have not been achieved within 12 months will be incorporated with the biennial objectives of the program to ensure a continued focus on their attainment.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. It is recommended by the Paralegal Advisory Committee that many of the nonessential courses now offered in the program be dropped and the program concentrate on offering the majority of the courses as paralegal/legal assisting (PLA) courses.

#### **Status of Recommendation: Completed – Implementation Fall 2008**

The Office Systems Technology courses and CGS 1500 Applied Word Processing were removed from the program's Specified Electives. This will leave the following courses in the Specified Elective Section for the program: Accounting courses, APA 2021, APA 2071, and eight Paralegal PLA courses: PLA 1700, PLA 1949, PLA 2223, PLA 2460, PLA 2531, PLA 2612, PLA2763, and PLA 2732.

2. It is recommended that the Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program continue to provide faculty-based advising to their majors and prospective majors so as to facilitate the accurate and expeditious dissemination of information they need as to degree options, course elections and schedules while creating a close training liaison with academic advisors to ensure uniformity in both understanding and advising students.

#### **Status of Recommendation: Completed**

- a. At the time of the original Task Force Report, out of 187 students registered in PLA sections for Summer 06, Fall 06, and Spring 07, 47 students (25%) were not coded correctly for program placement. For Summer 07, Fall 07, and Spring 08, Datatel reported that out of 216 Unduplicated Students, 39 students were not coded correctly for program placement, or 18%. This shows there has been improvement in advising and scheduling students in program placement.
- b. In the fall term of 2007, the Paralegal Program Manager attended the AS Programs Roundtable sponsored by the college's Academic Advisors. At this meeting, the program manager presented updated

information to the advisors as to new courses being offered by the program or soon to be offered and information concerning the deletion of nonessential courses.

- c. The program manager has continually met with students individually regarding program course selection and assisted advisors with program specific questions as needed.
  - d. Additionally, the program manager has volunteered to attend an Ybor Campus faculty in-service that will train faculty members to assist academic advisors in advising students regarding General Education courses as well as program specific courses. This in-service will be scheduled during the 2008 summer term.
3. It is recommended that the Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program implement and expand the follow-up of program graduates through student surveys.

**Status of Recommendation: Not Completed**

During the 2007 fall term, each of the members of the Paralegal Advisory Committee received a copy of a Student Exit Survey that had been used in the program in previous years to review for additions and deletions. From those reviews, an updated electronic Exit Survey will be developed to send to graduating students. This survey will also include information as to the graduate's employment status. The Paralegal Program Manager will continue to pursue this recommendation for completion.

4. It is recommended that the Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program develop a computer technology credit course that focuses the student on computer applications used in law firms today.

**Status of Recommendation: Completed – Implementation Fall 2008**

A course proposal for PLA 2732, Law Office Computer Applications, was approved by Academic Affairs Committee on January 18, 2008 and will be implemented as a WebCT course beginning with the fall term of 2008. This will be a 3 credit course and included as one of the program's Specified Electives.

5. It is recommended that the Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program contact local law firms and governmental agencies to offer participation in paralegal internship placements for the program's students.

**Status of Recommendation: Completed**

- a. The Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program currently offers internship placement with the United States Attorneys' Office in their local Tampa office. There have been six students who have had the

opportunity to intern for 20 hours per week for 15 weeks at the US Attorneys' Office. For fall 2008, two students have applied for a paralegal internship with this office.

- b. The Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program as of spring term 2008 now offers an internship with the Hillsborough County Attorneys' Office. One student was selected to intern there for spring term 2008.
  - c. When available, the program also offers an internship with the Office of the Attorney General, Economic Crimes Division, Tampa, Florida.
  - d. Beginning in fall term 2008, the Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program will offer the opportunity for a paralegal internship with the Office of the Federal Public Defender, Middle District of Florida.
  - e. The program also offers internships with local law firms that have expressed an interest in having student interns. Approximately 10 to 15 local law firms have had paralegal interns in the past or expressed an interest in having paralegal interns. The program director keeps on file a list of interested law firms and contacts them when students express an interest in pursuing an internship.
6. It is recommended that the Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program seek to establish a closer working relationship with the Ybor Campus Career Placement Office by soliciting their assistance in the placement of the program's students in career opportunities.

**Status of Recommendation: Completed**

- a. In the spring of 2007, the Paralegal Program Manager and the Career Center Manager met to discuss a job fair opportunity for students in the paralegal program. In July 2007, the Ybor Campus Career Placement Office sponsored a job fair for students in several AS programs, one being those in the Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program. Local law firms and businesses were invited to the Ybor campus to interview students for possible employment possibilities. Approximately 11 paralegal students were interviewed.
- b. In the fall term of 2007 and the spring term of 2008, the Career Center Manager was a guest speaker in the program's Introduction to Paralegal/Legal Assisting course to discuss developing resumes, professional dress codes, and interviewing techniques. She also discussed how the Career Center could assist them in job placements.
- c. Both the Paralegal Program Manager and the Ybor Career Center Manager are committed to working together to keep the students informed of the services the career center has to offer the program's students.

