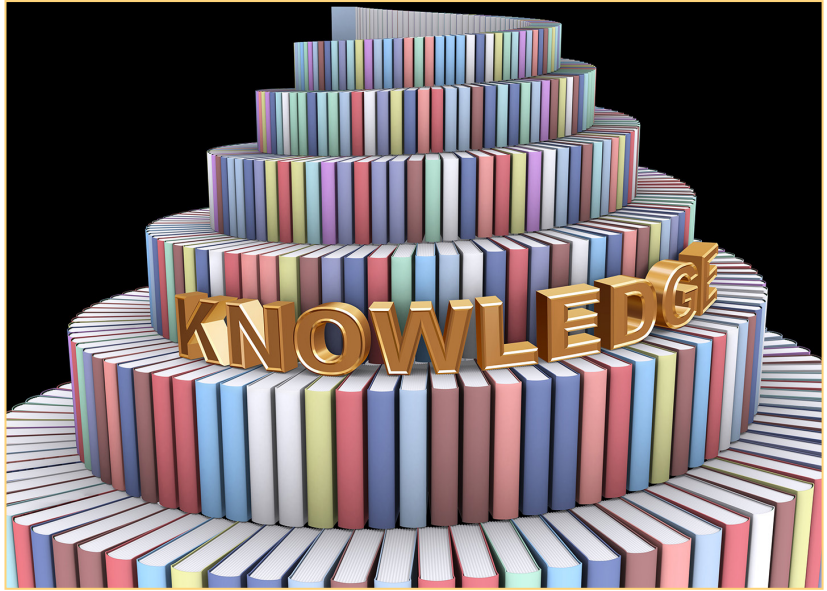


Excerpt from FRP Times



Can a Practicing Paralegal Help Future Paralegals?

By: Jacquelyn M. Jernigan, ACP, FRP

Paralegal - Alley Maass Rogers & Lindsay, P.A.

The answer is Yes! In March 2019, I was invited by Palm Beach State College (PBSC) in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, to participate in a focus group to provide an external assessment for revising and improving their existing Paralegal Program to meet American Bar Association guidelines.

The focus group was facilitated by PBSC representatives (not Paralegal Program faculty) and consisted of local practicing paralegals in Palm Beach County, Florida, from all areas of law with varying degrees of experience along with several recent graduates from PBSC's Paralegal Program who are now entering the legal work force. The focus group provided an opportunity for practicing paralegals to listen to questions and concerns of recent graduates from the program and share their insight regarding the ever-evolving paralegal profession, as well as to offer critical suggestions and recommendations to PBSC for ways to best meet the needs of the paralegal community.

The group's discussion addressed the "nuts and bolts" of the role of the paralegal in a law office or other legal setting and the ways PBSC's curriculum, activities and overall academic programming can best meet the needs of students to help them achieve success as paralegals after graduation. Discussion included the daily realities of the profession outside of the classroom, and suggestions for what the Paralegal Program can incorporate into the curriculum to best prepare students for those realities. Of particular interest was adding a time for local practicing paralegals to speak to incoming students during one of the Introduction to Paralegalism classes at the start of the Paralegal Program each term.

Those of us attending brought our insight on topics related to The Florida Bar Professional Expectations, the local 15th Judicial Circuit

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Administrative Orders and Rules, navigating the 15th Judicial Circuit's website, as well as the importance of networking with other paralegals through our local chapter of the Paralegal Association of Florida, Inc. and our local Bar Association

at monthly CLE dinner meetings, seminars, meet and greets, etc. Everyone agreed that it is crucial for the long-term integrity and recognition of the paralegal profession to obtain state and national credentials following graduation such as the Florida Bar's Florida Registered Paralegal (FRP) designation and the Certified Paralegal (CP) and Advanced Certified Paralegal (ACP) designations by the National As-

sociation of Legal Assistants (NALA).

Whether you are a newly practicing or a seasoned paralegal, you have valuable insight to contribute and other college paralegal programs throughout the State may benefit from a similar focus group opportunity.

