

# Addendum Graduate School Catalogue and Handbook 2015-16

## Paralegal Program

### School of Business

*Park Center, Room 115*

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## Mission Statement

To develop in students the knowledge, skills and ethical understandings needed to begin a paralegal career and to perform competently and ethically in their chosen area of specialization; to assist them in obtaining positions in which they have opportunities to utilize their training; to provide them with a foundation of knowledge and skills in their legal research, writing, and analytical thinking that can serve as the basis for further career development, law school or graduate school; to serve program graduates and the local legal community with continuing paralegal education courses; and to promote public awareness of the role of paralegals in the efficient delivery of quality legal services.

## Student Learning Outcomes

Outcome 1: Students will develop critical thinking skills to perform paralegal tasks.

Outcome 2: Students will develop organizational skills that allow them to sort through and manage information

Outcome 3: Students will develop written and oral communication skills to communicate well with employers, peers, clients, and other entities in the legal community

Outcome 4: Students will develop a knowledge of legal ethics and develop their own statement of principles to guide their career

Outcome 5: Students will develop the skills to obtain employment and to work effectively and positively beginning on the first day of a new job

## Program Outcomes

Outcome 6: The Paralegal Program curriculum will stay current in its curriculum offerings and develop in its graduates the necessary paralegal skills to meet the needs of the legal community.

Outcome 7: The Paralegal Program will increase awareness in the general public and enhance paralegal utilization in the legal community

## Program of Study

**The curriculum for the Paralegal Certificate consists of five required courses:**

- **four core courses, which all students take, and**
- **one specialty course, which each student selects.**

**The specialty course is a 161 classroom hour course in one of three areas of law practice: Civil Litigation, Business Organizations or Real Estate.**

**To earn the certificate, students must earn a grade of C or better in each required course. The coursework is designed to be completed three evenings per week for two semesters. All coursework must be completed within two calendar years.**

## Unauthorized Practice of Law

In North Carolina, a paralegal cannot independently give legal advice to clients, represent clients in court, accept a case or set a fee. The American Bar Association has defined a paralegal as “a person, qualified by education, training or work experience, who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who perform specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.”

## Culminating Experiences

Students will complete a professional portfolio. Working paralegals will meet with each student prior to graduation to review each portfolio and conduct exit interviews.

## Outstanding Student Award

The Outstanding Student Award was created for the faculty to recognize one student each year who exemplifies the following qualities:

- Mastery of the class materials
- Sensibility regarding ethical issues
- Attention to detail
- Professional attitude
- Problem-solving ability

This award is given at graduation and has no cash value. A plaque outside of the Paralegal Program Office lists the annual winners of this award from 2005 to the present.

## Paralegal Program Course Descriptions

### LEG 010 – LEGAL SURVEY

*45 classroom hours*

Learning Outcomes: Students will gain an overview of the legal system and the major substantive areas of the law. Students will become familiar with basic legal concepts and will be able to understand and use legal terminology. Students will be able to identify and explain the function of various legal documents and procedures. Topics include: The federal and state judicial systems; civil procedure; torts; contracts; real property; wills, trusts and estate administration; domestic law; criminal law; corporations, agency and partnership.

**LEG 011 – LEGAL RESEARCH***45 classroom hours*

Learning Outcomes: Students will learn how to use the law library and Westlaw or Lexis to find legal authority that is on point. Students will learn the basic principles of legal analysis and writing, and will be able to brief a case and research and write an office memorandum of law. Students will be able to cite authorities correctly and to update and validate citations using Shepard's citations. Topics include: Federal and state statutes, cases, and administrative regulations; reading and understanding caselaw and statutes; use of encyclopedias, annotations, legal periodicals, and other secondary authority; use of digests, indexes, and other finding aids; citation form; cite-checking and validation of authority; use of Shepard's citations; research methods; legal resources available on the Internet. Pre-requisite/co-requisite: Legal Survey.

**LEG 012 – LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT***45 classroom hours*

Learning Outcomes: Students will gain an understanding of the role of the paralegal in the law office. Students will gain a thorough knowledge of the N.C. Rules of Professional Conduct and their applicability to attorneys and paralegals. Students will be able to identify ethical issues a paralegal may encounter and determine the appropriate response. Students will become familiar with a variety of law office procedures and management techniques. Topics include: Definition, role and responsibilities of the paralegal; confidentiality; conflicts of interest; unauthorized practice of law; professional negligence; developing forms and systems; time keeping and billing; tickler systems; communications skills. Pre-requisite: Proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook. If you are not proficient in these programs, you should take computer classes at a local college or community college. Pre-requisite/co-requisite: Legal Survey, Legal Research.

**LEG 013 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT***15 classroom hours*

Learning Outcomes: Students will create a resume and cover letter and professional portfolio. Students will be able to identify several different types of legal employers and environments. Students will become familiar with employer expectations. Students will enhance their writing and oral communication skills. Topics include: Resume and cover letter writing, creating a professional portfolio, interviewing, the job search, employer expectations. Students will complete "Core Grammar for Lawyers" an interactive grammar program. Students will obtain the "Competent Communicator" Certificate from Toastmaster International. Students will meet with an e-mentor prior to the end of the program for a portfolio review and exit interview. Pre-requisite: Acceptance into the program

**LEG 020 – CIVIL LITIGATION SPECIALTY***161 classroom hours*

Learning Outcomes: Students will gain a working knowledge of the NC and federal court systems, the stages of civil litigation and the rules of civil procedure. Students will learn how to gather information and evidence in a civil lawsuit. Students will gain a thorough understanding of the discovery process and will be able prepare appropriate discovery devices and respond to discovery requests. Students will be able to draft complaints, answers and motions and will be able to file and obtain service of court documents. Students will be able to prepare a trial notebook and a settlement brochure. Topics include: Stages of a civil action; organization of N.C. and Federal court systems; personal and subject matter jurisdiction; rules of procedure; basic principles of tort and contract; role of the paralegal in litigation; confidentiality and conflicts of interest. Investigation of facts; evidence; interviewing of clients and witnesses; ethical considerations in interviewing; preparation of diagrams and maps; location and review of public records; obtaining and reviewing medical records; expert witnesses. Commencement of action; parties and capacity; requirements and drafting of complaint, answer, counterclaim, reply; affirmative defenses; joinder of claims and parties; process and service of process; motions addressed to the pleadings; case intake and management; docket control.

Purpose and scope of discovery under N.C. and Federal rules; preparing for and digesting depositions; drafting and responding to interrogatories; requests for production of documents; sanctions and protective orders. Preparation for trial; pretrial conference and order; preparation of settlement brochure and trial notebook; assisting at trial. Judgments and mechanisms for enforcement of judgments; appeals; notice of appeal and route of appeal. Electives: Within this specialty, students will enroll in five 4-week courses in substantive areas of the law. Students will receive one grade for the specialty course which will include the grades they have received in the short courses. Pre-requisite: Legal Survey, Legal Research, Law Office Management, Professional Development (semester 1)

**LEG 021 – REAL ESTATE SPECIALTY***161 classroom hours*

Learning Outcomes: Students will gain a thorough understanding of legal concepts and terminology pertaining to real property law, title examination, title insurance and transfer of interests in real property. Students will learn the techniques of title examination and will gain experience in conducting complete title searches. Students will become familiar with the procedures and documents used in a real estate closing. Students will gain a thorough understanding of the legal and ethical responsibilities of attorneys and paralegals in title examination and real estate transactions. Topics include: Principles of real property: estates in land, future interests, concurrent ownership, easements, fixtures; leases; recordation and priorities; title and title insurance. Types of deeds; legal descriptions, plats,

and surveys; transfers by deed, will or inheritance; administration of estates; transfers by judicial sale, adverse possession, and operation of law. Purpose and methods of title examination; running a chain of title; abstracting deeds; estates; adverse conveyances; objections to title; restrictive covenants and zoning; city and county taxes; special assessments; U.C.C. filings; judgments, liens, lis pendens, and special proceedings. Preparation of exceptions sheet and report on title; organization of base title file. Contracts of sale; preparation for closing; closing checklists; preparation of notes, deeds, deeds of trust; closing statements; tax proration. Electives: Within this specialty, students will enroll in five 4-week courses in substantive areas of the law. Students will receive one grade for the specialty course which will include the grades they have received in the short courses. Pre-requisite: Legal Survey, Legal Research, Law Office Management, Professional Development (semester 1)

#### **LEG 023 –BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS**

*161 classroom hours*

Learning Outcomes: Students will gain a thorough understanding of the laws pertaining to the structure, formation and operation of corporations and partnerships. Students will be able to prepare and file articles of incorporation and to prepare bylaws, minutes, notices and other documents for corporate meetings. Students will learn to maintain corporate minute books and shareholder records. Students will be able to prepare documents relating to mergers, acquisitions and dissolutions. Students will become familiar with the basic principles of contract, employment and business regulatory law and will learn to draft contracts and other documents relating to corporate financing and other corporate transactions. Topics include: types of business organizations; sole proprietorships, partnerships, 15 corporations; considerations in selecting form of organization; non-profit and professional corporations. Organizing the corporation; subscription agreements; articles of incorporation; bylaws; filing and formalities; shareholder agreements; foreign corporations; qualification in other jurisdictions. Financial structure of corporations; equity and debt securities; classes of stock; capital; dividends and distributions to shareholders; repurchase of shares; federal and state securities laws; registration requirements and exemptions. Corporate meetings: organizational meeting; directors' regular and special meetings; annual meeting of shareholders; shareholder rights and duties; voting; minutes; action without meeting.

Regulatory statutes and compliance: consumer protection; environmental protection; antitrust; employment laws. Agency; employment agreements; restrictive covenants and covenants not to compete; trade secret protection. Secured transactions; notes, security agreements and financing statements. Changes in corporate structure and dissolution; amendment of articles of incorporation; merger and consolidation; sale of assets; liquidation and dissolution; rights of dissenting shareholders. Litigation involving corporations. Electives: Within this specialty, students will enroll in five 4-week courses in

substantive areas of the law. Students will receive one grade for the specialty course which will include the grades they have received in the short courses. Pre-requisite: Legal Survey, Legal Research, Law Office Management, Professional Development (semester 1)

#### **LEG 033 –INTERNSHIP (OPTIONAL)**

*161 classroom hours*

The internship is not required. The purpose of the internship is to give the student exposure to a law office environment and the opportunity to observe and practice the skills learned in the classroom. Students are placed with local law firms and government offices and work under the supervision of an attorney or paralegal. Placements are arranged and monitored by the program director. Internships are structured as an 80-hour class during the second half of spring semester. Students arrange their own work schedule with the employer, generally working two mornings or afternoons per week. In general internships are unpaid. Students keep a journal of their activities and are evaluated by the employer at the conclusion of the internship. Please note that placement is not guaranteed. The internship is not available to a student who has received a C in any class except by special permission of the instructor. Pass/fail credit is awarded upon completion of the internship.

#### **PRO BONO CLINIC**

Meredith College's Paralegal Program, in conjunction with Legal Aid through their Lawyer on the Line (LOTL) program, has created a pro bono clinic for students to help a pre-screened client in one of the following areas of law-private landlord/tenant, public and subsidized housing, Medicaid, disability and non-disability issues in Social Security matters, consumer collections, employee rights, custody, guardianship and simple estates. Paralegal students will work with a supervising attorney to talk with clients through telephone interviews; from that interview, information will be provided to the supervising attorney who will work with the students to provide advice or discrete services to pre-screened Legal aid clients.