The background of the cover is a photograph of a large, ornate building dome, likely a state capitol, viewed through a grid of window panes. The grid is dark and creates a pattern of squares over the image. The dome is light-colored with a greenish patina on its upper part. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

# THE PARALEGAL *Educator*

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*REFLECTIONS:*  
Leadership Opportunities

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**DEADLINES:** March 1, June 1, and November 1. Topics may express opinions or provide information on any matter appearing in *The Paralegal Educator* or otherwise be reasonably related to law, justice, and the education of paralegals. Articles should be approximately 500 words, double-spaced, in Microsoft® Word, 12-point Times New Roman. Publication and editing of submissions are within the purview of the Editors, President, and Executive Director.

The opinions expressed in *The Paralegal Educator* are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of AAFPE.

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Our front cover picture: Almost a century and a half ago, one of the legal cases that became a U. S. Supreme Court milestone, *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, had much of its activity in the Old Court House in St. Louis. This grand old building, shown here reflected in one of the city’s modern high-rise office buildings, is only a few blocks from the site of AAFPE’s 2003 Annual Conference. In its park-like setting, facing the St. Louis Arch, the building now is a museum focusing on exhibits of St. Louis and its role in the westward expansion of the United States.

## Meet AAFPE in St. Louis – Gateway to the West

*Susan Howery*  
Yavapai College

The soft lapping of the Mississippi River against the muddy Missouri riverbank was interrupted in 1796 when French fur trapper Pierre Laclède built a landing that was to become the first structure in what is now the city of St. Louis. Forty years later, Lewis and Clark passed through the settlement that had grown up around it on their way west. Soon thousands of men and women followed—all seeking a new life beyond the Mississippi. St. Louis had become not only a staging post for the pioneer; it was the gateway to a new life.

Today, St. Louis is still a gateway city, served by four interstate highways and looking equally to the East, West and Gulf coasts. It is the nation's second largest inland port and a leader in the aerospace and automobile industries. It's a city divided into three distinct sections.

### Start at the Riverfront

The riverfront is the best place to begin exploring St. Louis. At Laclède's Landing, 25 brick buildings, many with cast-iron facades, are registered National Historic Landmarks and are home to restaurants and stores for every taste. Just south of the area is the riverfront Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, dominated by the famous Gateway Arch. The nation's tallest monument, the Arch towers 630 feet above the city and gives visitors a panoramic view



from its observation deck. Adjacent to the Arch is the Museum of Westward Expansion.

### Go Downtown

Downtown St. Louis is where you'll find Busch Stadium, home of the St. Louis Cardinals, and the Anheuser-Busch Brewery, where daily tours offer "samples." Also a must-see on the list is the Eugene Field House and Toy Museum. Field, the author of "Little Boy Blue" and other poems, lived in St. Louis as a child. Other downtown attractions include the Cupples House and McNamee Art Gallery, a Romanesque-style mansion, built in 1890, that displays painting and sculptures in its former bowling alley. The Old Courthouse is a Greek Revival building where early stages of the Dred Scott slavery trial took place. Today, the building is home to exhibits devoted to St. Louis's role in the nation's westward expansion.

### Take a Trip to Forest Park

Farther west is Forrest Park, site of the 1904 World's Fair, where the art museum and part of the zoo remain from the exposition celebrating the Louisiana Purchase. This lush area is also home to the Science Center, the Steinberg Memorial Skating Rink, and the Missouri Historical Society.

### AAFPE Conference Hotel

AAFPE has selected a downtown headquarters hotel located right in the heart of a restored railroad terminal and historic landmark. The Grand Hall, with its memorable soaring arches, priceless Tiffany stained glass and intricate gold leaf designs, welcomes you to this member hotel of the Historic Hotels of America. The bustling train concourse is now 11 acres of restaurants, boutiques and entertainment centers under one roof.

The station, built in 1894 at a cost of \$6.5 million, was the largest single-level passenger rail terminal in the world and a dramatic gateway to the West. Designed by Theodore Link, this historic landmark is an ornate example of Romanesque architecture. Renovated nearly 100 years later, Union Station remains one of the most impressive public structures in the Midwest.

Each well-appointed guest room has the usual amenities (color TV with remote, direct dial phone with message alert, AM/FM clock radio, video check-out plus hair dryers, iron and ironing boards and telephones with data ports). Valet parking, soda, ice machine, an exercise room, and laundry service round out the amenities. The hotel is connected by MetroLink Lightrail

# AAfPE CONFERENCE

to the Gateway Arch, Busch Stadium, Laclede's Landing and Lambert Field International Airport. Experience the hospitality of a bygone era as you stroll among rich tapestries, original sculptures, artwork and antiques.

AAfPE's guaranteed room rate is \$129.00 single or double (plus

14.966% applicable tax).

Make a reservation by calling 1-800-233-1234 or call the hotel direct at 314-231-1234. Please identify yourself as attending the AAfPE meeting. Cut-off date is September 16, 2003. Reservation requests require a guarantee by a major credit card for one night's

deposit. Deposit is not refundable if the reservation is canceled after 3:00 p.m. the day prior to the guest's arrival.

Although the conference program has not been made firm as this goes to press, the outline below will give you some idea of what is in store.

## SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

*Tentative Schedule of Events—subject to change*

### ■ Wednesday, October 15, 2003

- 1:00pm Exhibit Hall Opens
- 3:00pm ABA Open Forum
- 4:15pm **Concurrent Sessions**  
Topics: First-Time Attendees Meeting, Service Learning, Professional Development, Intellectual Property
- 6:00pm Welcome Reception

### ■ Thursday, October 16, 2003

- 7:30am Exhibit Hall Opens
- 8:30am Opening General Session — Meet the Candidates
- 10:00am Concurrent Sessions  
Topics: Teaching Competition, Aids to Teaching: Videos, Dealing with Difficult People, Computer Courses for Paralegals
- 11:30am AAfPE Region Business Meetings and Lunch
- 12:45pm General Session — Ethics Topic
- 2:00 pm **Concurrent Sessions**  
Topics: Computer Courses for Paralegals, Dealing with Difficult People, Interdisciplinary Courses, LEX Chapters
- 3:30 pm Topics: Professional Development, Regulation, Organizational Skills, Pro-Bono Work for Paralegals
- 4:45pm ABA Initial Approval and ABA Reapproval Workshops

### ■ Friday, October 17, 2003

- 7:30am Exhibit Hall Opens — Committee Meetings
- 8:30am AAfPE Business Meeting
- 10:30am **Concurrent Sessions**  
Topics: Assessment Electronic Surveys, Interactive Teaching Techniques, Online Course Delivery, Employment Tracking and Tips
- Noon AAfPE Awards Luncheon
- 2:15pm **Concurrent Sessions**  
Topics: Advisory Boards, Interactive Teaching Techniques, Articulation, Practical Assignments Roundtable
- 3:45pm Committee Meetings

### ■ Saturday, October 18, 2003

- 8:30am General Session — Testing and Grading
- 10:00am General Session — 50 Quick Tips
- 11:30am Closing Brunch

Our theme this year is "Making a Difference in Paralegal Education". The National Conference Committee has gone all out to assure a variety of stimulating sessions that will lead you to reaffirm what you are already doing and, perhaps, suggest some new ways to make a difference in your teaching content or style. We are also bringing back the AAfPE Information Room due to popular demand! Stay tuned for a separate article on this topic.

Just as Pierre Laclede made a difference to the west-bound pioneers, so will AAfPE's Annual Conference make a difference in paralegal education. See you in St. Louis!



## AAfPE ADOPTS SHORT-TERM PROGRAM STATEMENT

*Joan Fraczek Spadoni*  
Bay Path College

AAfPE's Board of Directors met in St. Louis, Missouri, February 7-9, 2003. As you know, St. Louis is the site of the annual conference, October 15-18, and we are very pleased with the Hyatt Regency Union Station hotel and the location for our next conference. The board was very busy and we had many agenda items. Some of the issues included regional conferences, budget issues, vendors and marketing, publications, model syllabi (Family Law, Real Estate Law, Criminal Law and Procedures, and Sports and Entertainment Law will be available at the annual conference), CD projects, bylaws, articulation issues, and nominations for the fall elections. We also discussed the image of paralegals on NBC and other networks, and I have sent a letter along with numerous materials to NBC to help begin a dialog on this important issue. We also looked at ways to improve the AAfPE website. It was a very productive weekend.

The most important result of the board meeting was the unanimous vote and adoption of a Policy Statement on Short-Term Programs. AAfPE's voting membership unanimously instructed the board at the Orlando annual conference business meeting last year, to adopt a statement addressing the serious problems created by these short-term programs. To date, we have had an overwhelming positive response to this statement and there has been great interest shown by national law-related organizations.

The text of the Short-Term Program Statement follows this column. The board will meet again in Chicago, Illinois, May 30 – June 1, 2003. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions that you would like the board to consider, please contact me at [jspadoni@baypath.edu](mailto:jspadoni@baypath.edu).

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve as AAfPE President this year. ❖

### AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR PARALEGAL EDUCATION

#### POLICY STATEMENT REGARDING SHORT-TERM PROGRAMS

The American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE) is the only national organization for paralegal educators. This national organization, with over 450 members, has been serving paralegal educators and educational institutions since 1981. AAfPE's member schools currently enroll over 41,000 students and have nearly 191,000 graduates. AAfPE's primary mission is to promote high standards for paralegal education.

### Short-term Programs

In recent years there has been a proliferation of short-term entry-level paralegal training programs of very limited duration, some with as few as 125 clock hours (which is less than nine semester credit hours). These programs do a fundamental disservice to the legal profession by creating unrealistic expectations in both employers and students that a quality paralegal education has been delivered when such may not be the case. AAfPE opposes the proliferation of these short-term paralegal programs because these programs do not meet minimal standards recognized by virtually all paralegal educators, lawyers and paralegals. These programs undermine the legitimate educational efforts of AAfPE institutions that seek to provide quality entry-level paralegal education. These short-term programs are doing a disservice to the students who enroll in them, to those who employ paralegals, and to the legal profession.

These short-term programs harm students because

- Students spend significant sums of money in the hope that these short-term programs will provide an education that qualifies them to function as paralegals;
- Graduates often receive far less instruction than AAfPE and most paralegal educators view as necessary;
- Such brief programs cannot adequately present all of the content required of a quality paralegal education;
- Many such programs charge students at a significantly higher hourly rate than do those offered by institutions providing

*Continued on next page*

- superior programs; and
- The reputation of the colleges and universities that offer these short-term programs or that offer campus space to these programs may become tarnished, as do their legitimate programs.

These short-term programs harm those who employ paralegals because employers who hire graduates of short-term programs may assume that prospective employees from other programs are similarly ill prepared to cope with the demands of the paralegal profession; and

The profession is harmed by these short-term programs because consumers of legal services may receive lower quality services rendered by the graduates of such programs when those graduates are not capable of performing the complex duties required of today's paralegal; and

The paralegal/legal assistant profession reputation as a vital, cost effective, and reliable player in the delivery of legal services may be diminished.

While AAFPE believes that any education can be beneficial, AAFPE also believes that entry into the paralegal profession requires formal education of sufficient length, sophistication, depth, and quality to produce an entry-level paralegal who can function effectively in today's sophisticated legal environment. It is AAFPE's position that those attempting to provide students with a paralegal education must maintain certain minimum standards. The failure of short-term programs to live up to these educational minimums harms the public and everyone engaged in the legal profession.

## STATEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL MINIMUMS

Paralegal programs must be of sufficient length and quality to prepare students for the challenges of the paralegal profession. AAFPE has previously published two policy statements related to entry-level paralegal education. AAFPE's *Core Competencies for Paralegal Education Programs* specifically describes the exit competencies expected of students completing the curriculum offered in quality paralegal education programs. AAFPE's *Statement of Academic Quality* sets out the minimum standards for paralegal education programs in such areas as curriculum development, physical facilities, faculty, marketing and promotion, instruction, qualification of the program director, student competencies, and student services.

In 2001, AAFPE went a step further and created a document, the Position Statement of the American Association for Paralegal Education Regarding Educational Standards for Paralegal Regulation Proposals, that sets forth the following minimum educational standards:

A person is qualified as a paralegal with (1) an associate or baccalaureate degree or equivalent course work and (2) a credential in paralegal education from a paralegal program associated with an educational institution accredited by a nationally recognized agency completed in any of the following types of educational programs: associate degree, baccalaureate degree (major or minor), certificate, or master's degree.

In addition to, and because of its belief in quality paralegal

education, AAFPE, along with the five other major law-related associations, the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, the National Association of Legal Assistants, the Legal Assistant Management Association, the Association of Legal Administrators, and the Standing Committee on Legal Assistants of the American Bar Association, drafted the brochure, *Choosing a Quality Paralegal Education Program*. These organizations, all of which are dedicated to insuring the quality and growth of this profession, set forth the minimum education necessary to prepare a person to succeed in an entry-level position in the paralegal field. The collective wisdom of these law-related organizations is that a paralegal program must include at least 18 semester units of paralegal coursework and appropriate general education.

It is the purpose of this statement to make clear that short-term programs do not meet the minimum standards necessary to prepare students to enter the paralegal profession. These minimum standards include:

- Post-secondary coursework in substantive and procedural law, the American legal system, law offices and related environments, the paralegal profession, legal research and writing, ethics, and areas of legal practice such as those described in AAFPE's Core Competencies for Paralegal Programs;
- No fewer than 18 semester credit hours (or the equivalent) of substantive paralegal courses;
- The completion of a minimum of 60 semester hours (or the

equivalent) of total post-secondary study prior to graduation. A semester hour is equivalent to 15 classroom hours of at least 50 minutes in duration. The course offerings may be for credit or not for credit, but should meet these minimum time periods.

- A paralegal education program approved by the American Bar Association; or
- A paralegal education program offered by an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education and offering courses at the post-secondary level.

that may consider offering such programs, are encouraged to evaluate their offerings in light of the standards for paralegal education that have been adopted by the American Association for Paralegal Education, the recognized expert in quality paralegal education. ❖

The paralegal education program must be offered by an institution that is:

- An institutional member of the American Association for Paralegal Education; or
- A paralegal educational

### CONCLUSION

The continued growth of the paralegal profession requires quality education that meets established minimum standards. Institutions presently offering paralegal programs, as well as those

Adopted unanimously by the AAFPE Board of Directors on February 8, 2003, in St. Louis, Missouri, pursuant to the unanimous support of the AAFPE voting membership at the AAFPE Annual Business Meeting October 3, 2002 in Orlando, Florida.

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## CALL TO ARMS

*Diane Pevar, President-Elect  
Manor College*

There is snow on the ground and the promise of more to come, as I sit down to write this column, but by the time you read it many of us will have completed the school year, and all will be hoping for a well-deserved summer slow-down.

Regardless of the season, we are responsible, year round, for the welfare and continued growth of our programs. As the only national association for paralegal education, AAfPE has partnered with you to promote and encourage *quality* paralegal education. One way we have fulfilled this goal is by providing you with a variety of assessment tools: model syllabi,

surveys, portfolio and externship guidelines, capstone courses, and comprehensive exit examinations. We have revised and updated the Core Competencies, which are the benchmark for all paralegal programs, and we have provided guidance in outcomes assessment. But quality alone will not ensure the continuation of our educational programs.

The state of today's economy threatens many of our member institutions. Some of us have been subjected to budget cut-backs. Others are being challenged by our deans to justify our programs' existence in light of neighboring short-term programs. This is a call-to-arms! You are not alone in this fight. AAfPE will stand with you and help you educate your schools and the public about the need for quality paralegal programs. We will provide you with the weapons you need.

In the spirit of the partnership we have forged with each of you, AAfPE's focus will now turn to helping you more effectively market your programs.

AAfPE will continue to provide support in your fight against short term programs.

We will continue to publish our current marketing brochures, titled *What Does a Paralegal Do?* and *Paralegals: Key Players for the Legal Team*.

We will provide tech-mentors, who will help you create your own marketing tools using in-house desktop publishing.

In response to our recent Marketing Methods survey, AAfPE will develop more tools you can use to attract students to your programs.

We will give you the competitive edge in the student market by developing model syllabi geared to distance education formats.

AAfPE will continue to educate employers that quality paralegal education is a vital component of paralegal competency.

If we are to overcome the problems that face our institutions we must work together. AAfPE is an army of volunteers who bring knowledge, experience and wisdom to the mix. Some of us are generals and others more comfortably remain in the infantry. But war is no place for the timid. And this is war. The survival of our institutions is at stake. Each of you should take heart in having an ally in AAfPE. ❖

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*Diane Pevar  
Membership Chair*

### New Members

The following schools and individuals have become new members since *The Paralegal Educator* was last published.

### Institutional (voting):

Palm Beach Community College  
Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

### Barbara Scheffer

Added December 2002

### Associate:

Virginia College at Austin  
Austin, Texas

### Daniel Burleson

Added November 2002

National College of Business and  
Technology

Salem, Virginia

### Glenn Hammond

Added December 2002

Ursuline College

Pepper Pike, Ohio

### Anne Lukas

Added February 2003

### Individual:

### Theresa Prater, RP

Apache Junction, Arizona

Added November 2002

## MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS:

March 1, 2003

Institutional	325
Associate	26
Individual	12
Sustaining	8
Honorary	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>385</b>

### DUES 2004

Dues for 2004 will be \$350 for Institutional and Associate members, \$100 for Individual members, and \$400 for Sustaining members. Notices will be sent in September. Dues cover the period from January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2004.

## Professional Pursuits

**Dr. Bob Diotalevi, Esq.,** Legal Studies Program Coordinator of Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers, Florida, has had his manuscript, *AN EDUCATION IN ©COPYRIGHT: A PRIMER FOR CYBERSPACE*, accepted for publication in 2003 by the following two peer-reviewed journals: *The Electronic Journal of Academic and Special Librarianship* (E-JASL) of The International Consortium for the Advancement of Academic Publication (ICAAP), and *Library, Philosophy and Practice*.

The Ursuline College Accelerated Program (UCAP) in Pepper Pike, Ohio has added a new Legal Studies Program to its courses of study. The Bachelor of Arts and Post-Degree Certificate in Legal Studies provide a blend of liberal arts and general legal education to women and men interested in entering or advancing within the paralegal profession.

**Anne L. Lukas**, formerly of the Notre Dame College (Cleveland) paralegal program, is now the Director of the Legal Studies Program at Ursuline College. With her experiences at Notre Dame College as well as Cuyahoga Community College, Anne joins Ursuline College and UCAP with a solid background in developing and directing paralegal programs in the Greater Cleveland area.

**Mary E. Ming**, Executive Director of Graduate Law Programs at Capital University Law School in Columbus, Ohio, serves as the chair of the Ohio State Bar Association.

**Donna Schoebel** has been promoted from her position as part-time director for Capital University Law

School's Dayton-based program to Associate Director for Graduate Law Programs in Columbus, Ohio. The graduate Law Programs include the post-baccalaureate paralegal and LNC programs, in Columbus, Ohio.

**Avram B. Segall, Esq.** of the Department of Legal Studies at Montclair State University, and former member of the AAFPE Board of Directors, recently received a professional advancement in rank. Commencing September 2003 he will be an Associate Professor in the department where he has taught as an Assistant Professor, half-time, since 1979.

The University of West Florida is pleased to announce that **Kimberly Tatum** has joined the faculty of the Legal Studies Program as an Assistant Professor in a tenure-track position. Kimberly earned her J.D. from the University of Florida and her B.A. in English (minor in Latin) from Louisiana State University. She has served as an Assistant State Attorney and an Assistant Public Defender in the First Judicial Circuit of Florida and is Coach of the UWF Mock Trial Team.

**Marsha Shields**, Director of Paralegal Studies at the University of Louisville, has been awarded the 2002-2003 Provost's Award for Exemplary Advising. Ms. Shields was nominated by program graduates, current students and her department chair. The official award presentation will occur in April.

**David J. Smith, JD**, associate professor of paralegal studies at Harford Community College in Bel Air, Maryland, has been selected as a Fulbright Scholar for fall 2003.

He will be teaching peace and conflict studies, and conflict resolution at the University of Tartu, in Tartu, Estonia. Founded in 1632, the University of Tartu is the largest university in Estonia with nearly 11,000 students. He has been on the faculty of Harford Community College since 1992. From 1992-2002 he coordinated the paralegal studies program, which received ABA approval in 1999. In 1996 he published *Legal Research & Writing* (Delmar/Thomson). In addition he has published in the *Baltimore Sun*, *Charlotte Observer*, and *Community College Week*.

**Marilyn Tayler**, Montclair State University, received a "range adjustment" from the University. This award required a demonstration of extraordinary achievements since promotion to the rank of full professor. The University award to all faculty who received it was retroactive to September 2000.

**Jean Volk**, Middlesex County College, Edison, New Jersey, was promoted to full professor, Fall 2001. Granted a sabbatical for Spring 2002, she authored a paralegal research workbook concentrating on New Jersey materials. Fall 2002 she assumed the position of Assistant Chair to the Accounting and Legal Studies Department.

**Karn L. Weirman, J.D.**, Director of the University of New Orleans Paralegal Studies Program, was awarded the Pro Bono Volunteer of the Year award for Distinguished Service on December 12, 2002 by the New Orleans Louisiana Pro Bono Project. ❖

## My Experience Participating in AAFPE's Teaching Competition

*Diane Tallarita*

*Lehigh Carbon Community College*

I entered the teaching competition at the last minute. I had been toying with the idea for some time and with a promotion pending next year, I believed that the experience would enhance me. In retrospect, it did more than that. The ground rules are easy, a fifteen-minute lecture to be taught to and judged by your peers at AAFPE's national conference. The thought of teaching to my peers was daunting, but I decided to take the plunge and enter.

First, I had to decide what to teach for the competition. Fifteen minutes is not a long time, so the law of perpetuities was out. I decide to think about something I did in class that could be taught without any introduction. Something that I could launch into without setting the stage for the information to be presented. I selected "Telephone Skills." The ability to answer phones properly and conduct effective conversation on the telephone was something that I

discovered the graduates were lacking. To add to the graduates' skills, I developed an interactive telephone lesson that is presented in the introductory course. The premise is easy, four scenarios, with the students playing the telephone callers and I am the paralegal answering the telephone and responding appropriately.

One scenario was an individual calling the office seeking firm information. The scenario was as follows: You are an individual calling the law office to ascertain information regarding divorce representation. Your first question after stating that you are wishing to find out information regarding a divorce is "How much will the divorce cost?" "How long does the process take?" "Can I take him/her for everything he/she has?" "What about the other person that my spouse is sleeping with, can I sue for alienation of affection?" These are only possible ideas for questions. The scenario will be based on the caller's questions that are inappropriate for an initial telephone conversation and the paralegal's responses. This was the lesson plan that I planned to use in the competition. It is best to select a topic that is self-contained and will translate well into a fifteen-minute time period.

I had my plan and was on my way to Florida for the conference. The teaching competition is held on the first night of the conference so I had a little bit of time from my plane landing to the start of the competition. There were three other participants for this event. I must admit that I was nervous and to top it off, I was sick with a cold and a sore throat. The flight to Florida was spent sucking on cold lozenges and drinking tea. Luckily, I arrived at the hotel at 3:30 p.m. and had two hours before the competition. Now, I had time to panic in a big way.

The time for the competition arrived. I had photocopied the scenarios on different colored paper, prepared notepages, and I entered the room ready to drop out of the competition. But, I did not; I asked for volunteers to be the telephone callers and waited for my turn. As I waited, I watched and learned from the other participants and still I contemplated dropping out. This was scary, teaching to teachers. I was sick, my thoughts were screaming at me "RUN" and I thought, "I could faint and be done," but I did not, I decided to compete.

It was my turn; the first caller "called" and I began. The callers were excellent and the room was

## Nominees for Honorary Membership

If you know of someone who has been a long-standing supporter of paralegal education and AAFPE but is no longer associated with a program, you may submit the name of the individual for consideration as an honorary member of AAFPE. Nominations must be supported by at least two letters of recommendation from two different voting AAFPE member institutions.

The deadline is May 31, 2003, and the nomination and letters should be submitted to:

Bur Sienkiewicz, Executive Director  
American Association for Paralegal Education  
407 Wekiva Springs Road, Suite 214  
Longwood, FL 32779  
(407) 834-6688 (407) 834-4747 (fax)  
info@aafpe.org

soon filled with laughter, questions, and my colleagues cheering for me. I was only able to complete three callers before the time was up. It was over, I was done and I was proud of myself for participating. I was proud of myself for completing something that I was afraid of, and the feedback from the others in the room was wonderful.

The next day during lunch, the teaching competition participants were announced and I was selected the winner. I was honored that I had won the competition. The winner received a Proclamation from AAfPE and check for \$500.00. This was a nice bonus, but the skills and confidence that I gained by competing was the real prize.

My college was thrilled that I had won the award and even highlighted my accomplishment on our web page. Take my advice and enter. Pick a simple topic that you and the group can have fun with and be interactive. The selection and preparation of the topic was not hard and it took approximately three hours to prepare. It was three hours well spent. I would not trade the experience for anything. It is something that I am proud to have done.

Overall, the experience was rewarding and I would recommend to anyone to take the chance and participate. ❖

[Diane Tallarita is the Coordinator and Faculty Member of the ABA-approved programs offered at Lehigh Carbon Community College in Pennsylvania. She is the developer of the program and has an M.P.A. from Kutztown University, Kutztown, Pennsylvania.](#)

## AAfPE Calendar of Events

### 2003

- April 25–27 South East Regional Conference, The Chattanooga Clarion Hotel, Chattanooga, Tennessee
- May 30–June 1 Board of Directors Meeting, O'Hare Airport Hilton, Chicago, Illinois
- June 1 *Educator* articles due to Editor-in-Chief for fall edition
- June 15 *Journal of Paralegal Education and Practice* final revisions due
- October 13–15 Board of Directors Meeting, Hyatt Regency at Union Station, St. Louis, Missouri
- October 15–18 Annual Conference, Hyatt Regency at Union Station, St. Louis, Missouri
- November 1 *Educator* articles due to Editor-in-Chief for winter edition

### 2004

- January 1 Membership dues must be paid to be included in the directory
- February 15 *Journal of Paralegal Education and Practice* manuscripts and abstracts due to Editor-in-Chief
- March 1 *Educator* articles due to Editor-in-Chief for spring edition
- March 15 *Journal of Paralegal Education and Practice* Editor assigned to work with author
- March 26–27 North East Regional Conference, The Mystic Hilton, Mystic, Connecticut
- March 18–20 Pacific Regional Conference, Sheraton Waikiki, Honolulu, Hawaii
- March (TBA) South Central/South East Regional Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana
- March/Apr (TBA) North Central Regional Conference, Omaha, Nebraska
- April 15 *Journal of Paralegal Education and Practice* second draft due
- June 1 *Educator* articles due to Editor-in-Chief for fall edition
- June 15 *Journal of Paralegal Education and Practice* final revisions due
- October 20–23 Annual Conference, Hyatt Albuquerque, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- November 1 *Educator* articles due to Editor-in-Chief for winter edition

## Reflections: Leadership Opportunities

*Robert J. LeClair*  
*Kapi'olani Community College,*  
*Nominations Committee Chair*

It is once again the time of year when AAFPE calls upon and invites each of you to take charge of your association by offering your candidacy for one of the elected leadership positions in the organization. At the annual conference this October in St. Louis, AAFPE will elect these important officers and directors:

- President-elect
- Treasurer
- Director, North East Region
- Director, Pacific Region
- Director, Associate Degree Programs
- AAFPE Nominee to the ABA Approval Commission — Associate Degree Representative

Please consider this article as a personal invitation to become a leader and to share your creativity and expertise in paralegal education with AAFPE and your fellow AAFPE members. I know we all will benefit from your commitment to support and improve what AAFPE already does well, and to help shape and guide AAFPE's progress in new and worthwhile activities. Of course, there is time and effort involved in such a role, but there is the satisfaction of contributing to the future of the paralegal profession and paralegal education.

What is it like to be in one of these positions? Some of the current board members share their thoughts with you so you will have

an idea of the responsibilities and rewards each position can bring.

### **Diane Pevar— *President Elect***

"The office of President-elect is a three-year position (President-elect, President and Immediate Past President), which begins as a training period that allows you to learn about becoming the voice of AAFPE during the following year as President. I have been able to meet with and talk to many new people and see, first-hand, how much impact AAFPE has, not just on paralegal education, but also on the practice of law in this country.

The primary responsibility of the President-elect is to oversee the membership process: reviewing new member applications, spearheading the annual dues/membership drive, and assisting in the compilation and publication of AAFPE's annual membership directory. Helping you along the way are the President and Immediate Past President, as well as the Executive Director.

This is an incredible opportunity to become involved in AAFPE's future and to provide you and your school with significant exposure. You don't have to be a born leader to do this job. You just have to want to make a difference.

### **Ronald Goldfarb — *Director, North East Region and Susan Howery — *Director, Pacific Region****

"The American Association for Paralegal Education has a structure similar to that of many membership organizations. The members vote for a board of directors that is responsible for much of the day-to-day operation of the group.

Since AAFPE is made up of several distinct constituencies, the board is composed of representatives from each. In addition to a member from an associate, baccalaureate and certificate granting institution, there is a delegate from each of AAFPE's five geographic regions.

Though elected only by members from a specific region, that board member is involved in all aspects of AAFPE decision making. We are, and have been, blessed with a board of directors that works well together in seeking out the best course of action for the organization as a whole so parochial interests have rarely been a consideration. The February board meetings are held at the hotel where the current year's annual meeting will be held while the June meetings are usually held in Chicago. The board also meets several times during the annual meeting. The meetings are lively and interesting, and we look forward to them. Imagine that — a meeting you want to attend!

One key role of the regional director is to coordinate all activities in connection with the regional meeting. The director must see that a committee is formed and that the members understand the purpose of the regional conferences, and that they are given the resources necessary to plan a successful meeting. The regional director should also encourage planning for the meetings in subsequent years. At the annual conference, the regional director will meet with all the members, decide on a location for upcoming regional conferences, and poll the group for topics of interest for the educational sessions. The regional director is also responsible for keeping the members advised of AAFPE events

and important business. The annual conference is a good opportunity to share this information with the members and to get a feel of what is happening in the region.

Additionally, regional directors are involved in LEX, both membership and scholarships; seeking and welcoming new members; and are mentors and information sources to everyone in the region. Regional directors keep in touch with their members using the AAfPE listserv, and encourage members to keep them advised of the happenings in their region.

The job is a fun and rewarding one, and we highly recommend it. It is a wonderful opportunity to make new friends and to become involved in critical issues which affect our students and our profession."

### **Joan Marler — Treasurer**

"My term is coming to an end, and this position is up for election in October. I want to encourage anyone in our membership who feels they can handle financial matters to run for this office. Initially, it seems a little daunting, but it really doesn't take long to get acclimated. You receive a lot of support not only from our new headquarters office, but also from other Board members.

What does this job entail? The treasurer reviews monthly financial reports (mainly Balance Sheet and Income & Expense Reports) prepared by headquarters; reviews invoices and signs checks; prepares

a proposed budget for each new year which is then submitted to the full Board for their input and ultimate approval; serves on the Finance & Management Committees; is the National Coordinator for Lamda Epsilon Chi (LEX), the national paralegal honor society; oversees the LEX scholarship committee; prepares financial and LEX reports for each Board meeting and the end of the year report to the membership at the Annual Conference each October. Yes, it keeps you busy, but it is also very rewarding to serve your fellow members of AAfPE. Please consider running for this office, and I promise to assist you any way I can."

### **Ted Maloney — Director, Associate Degree Programs**

"The director of associate degree programs, like the directors for the baccalaureate and certificate programs, serves a term of three years and is responsible for helping to promote AAfPE's mission of quality paralegal education. In addition, the director communicates with associate degree program directors to ascertain their issues and concerns, and advocates those positions with respect to potential board action. Like any board position, this director may be involved in overseeing projects and task forces and lends his/her unique perspective to AAfPE's continued success. The director attends all board meetings and is assigned committee responsibilities by the president."

### **Margaret Lovig — Member of the ABA Approval Commission**

"As a member of the ABA Approval Commission, you will participate in and chair site visits to programs applying for approval and reapproval and attend Approval Commission meetings twice each year at ABA Headquarters in Chicago. As an AAfPE representative to the commission, you will also represent the association in discussing issues that arise during commission meetings and in electronic communication between meetings. It is important to have a strong background in paralegal education, a thorough knowledge of ABA Guidelines, as well as the ability to devote the appropriate amount of time to prepare for and complete Commission responsibilities, including review of site visit reports, recommendations to SCOLA on each program's application and discussing guideline interpretations."

AAfPE needs you to take a more active role in the future of this great organization. In order to help you make your decision, we are including the ten most frequently asked questions about being on the board of directors and a nomination form. Nomination forms must be received at AAfPE headquarters by **June 1, 2003**. Campaign statements are due at AAfPE Headquarters by **June 15, 2003**. If you have any questions, please email me at [leclair@hawaii.edu](mailto:leclair@hawaii.edu).

## NOMINATION FORM

Notice of Nomination

I nominate the following individuals:

**President-elect** (three-year term)

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**Treasurer** (three-year term)

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**Director, Associate Degree Program** (three-year term)

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**Director, North East Region** (three-year term)

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**Director, Pacific Region** (three-year term)

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**AAfPE Nominee to the ABA Approval Commission - Associate Degree Representative**  
(three-year term beginning August 2004)

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I am the designated representative of an institutional member of AAfPE in good standing.

Signature:

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Name:

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Institution:

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Date:

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- Elections will be held during the Annual Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, October 15-18, 2003.
- Campaign statements are due to AAfPE Headquarters by **June 15, 2003**.
- If you are a candidate for the ABA Approval Commission, please send your resume also.

Please return this form no later than **June 1, 2003** to AAfPE Headquarters:

American Association for Paralegal Education  
407 Wekiva Springs Road Suite 241  
Longwood, FL 32779  
Telephone: 407-834-6688 Fax: 407-834-4747  
E-mail: [info@aafpe.org](mailto:info@aafpe.org)

## Ten Frequently Asked Questions About Serving as a Board Member

### 1. What is the composition of the AAfPE Board and how long do members serve? How are the AAfPE Representatives selected for the ABA Approval Commission?

#### A. AAfPE Board Composition and Terms

The AAfPE Board is composed of 13 members. The president-elect serves for three years: one year as president-elect; one year as president; and one year as immediate past president. All other officers and directors serve for three-year terms. Other officers are the secretary and treasurer. The membership of each of the regions (North Central, North East, Pacific, South Central, and South East Regions) elects its regional directors. Additionally, the general membership elects a representative from each of the three major types of programs (Associate, Baccalaureate, and Certificate programs.)

#### B. Election of Three AAfPE Representatives to the ABA Approval Commission

For a number of years, AAfPE has recommended three representatives from AAfPE to serve on the ABA Approval Commission. Each person serves three years on the Approval Commission and represents the interest of associate degree, baccalaureate degree, or certificate programs. Since 1999, AAfPE institutional

members have voted to select one nominee. This nominee's name is then forwarded to the ABA for its consideration. The final authority to appoint is held by the ABA, not AAfPE.

### 2. What are the requirements and general duties of Board members?

All Board members must be from a voting institutional member in good standing. Only one educator or administrator of a voting institution can serve on the Board at one time. An important duty of the Board is to hire and supervise the Executive Director of AAfPE. Other requirements and general duties are spelled out clearly in Article IV of the AAfPE Bylaws. (See AAfPE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY)

### 3. When do Board members' terms begin and end?

Board terms begin at the first meeting after the elections at the October annual conference, which is traditionally held the Saturday after the conclusion of the annual conference. Therefore, if you are a candidate for office, you should plan to attend the annual conference and remain for the Saturday afternoon Board meeting. Terms end at the annual conference.

### 4. How often does the Board meet?

The Board meets three times during the calendar year: in February, June, and October (during the October National Conference). These meetings are usually two to three days in length.

### 5. How are travel expenses to AAfPE Board meetings handled?

AAfPE reimburses travel, hotel and meeting expenses for Board members for February and June meetings. In October, Board members pay their own travel and other expenses for the annual conference, including registration fee. During the October conference, AAfPE pays for any extra hotel and meal expenses for Board members due to pre-conference Board meetings but not for the Saturday night following the conference.

### 6. How important is attendance at Board meetings? Do Board members communicate between Board meetings?

Since most business of the association is accomplished at these three Board sessions, attendance by all the Board members is expected.

Board members communicate and work between Board meetings. E-mail, faxes and telephone calls are frequent means of communication. Even some "on-line" Board votes are taken between Board meetings.

### 7. Do Board members speak for AAfPE?

Only the President of AAfPE is authorized to speak for the Association.

### 8. Are materials available to Board members for further details and explanation?

Yes. Each new Board member receives a general handbook of AAfPE's procedures. Before Board meetings, each Board

*Continued on page 17*

## Technology – The Educational Link Between Legal Theory and Practical Application

Stacey Rowcliffe

Crowley, Haughey, Hanson, Toole & Dietrich

As the face of the legal field changes, so too must the paralegal classroom. Paralegals who have not been taught the necessary legal technology skills will find it difficult to obtain gainful employment in the legal workplace. The days of typewriters, calendars and telephones have been replaced with personal computers, palm pilots, email and voice mail. As technology becomes increasingly more prevalent in law firms and courtrooms across the nation, I believe it is incumbent upon educators to incorporate relevant technical tools in order to prepare their students to compete for job opportunities in the legal field.

There are hundreds of digital courtrooms throughout the United States today, and this number is growing at an exponential rate. Increasingly, judges and magistrates are requiring that technology tools be used to help expedite trials and provide visually compelling evidentiary materials for jurors.

Last year, *Legal Assistant Today* magazine identified six technology areas expected to affect practicing paralegals' duties in the May/June 2002 issue entitled "Tech Trends." They were as follows:

- **Electronic Discovery**—email, hard drives, etc.
- **Travelless Meetings**—via video conferencing
- **Imaging Emergence**—scanning and use of digital documents

- **Productivity Devices**—palm pilots
- **Data Protection**—firewalls
- **Continuing Education**—via the Web

According to *Legal Assistant Today's* Annual Technology Survey results published in the March/April 2000 issue, 98.7 percent of working paralegals surveyed used computers daily, and of this percentage 50.5 percent ranked their technology expertise and experience as above average. Fifty-four percent of paralegals polled indicated they are included in their firm's/department's technology decisions.

The hard fact remains that paralegal students who graduate without an extensive knowledge of legal technology are not marketable to the law offices of today. As a result, paralegal educators are being forced to take on yet another complicated duty in the education of paralegals. This task can be overwhelming, especially since technology is constantly evolving, but can be done if approached proactively by utilizing the proper resources.

The instructors' primary goals remain the same when pertaining to legal technology:

- 1) engage each student in a meaningful way for them individually,
  - 2) tie in practical application to theoretical study,
  - 3) obtain the students' enthusiasm and maintain their interest, and
  - 4) provide relevant material that will help students to be competitive in the workplace.
- I see these as the four primary goals of all educators committed to providing their students with the best quality education.

Delivering on this commitment can often pose significant challenges.

Most textbooks and teaching aides available to instructors are antiquated and fail to offer cohesive links between theory and real world application. None have offered content that fully explores current technology and tools used in the practice of law today. However, technology can actually be used by the instructor in the classroom to educate the paralegal student.

A key element involved in successfully educating others has always been connecting with the student. Each student, being unique, learns differently. In general, there are three types of learners:

- 1) **Visual**—individuals who learn by seeing;
- 2) **Auditory**—individuals who learn by hearing and
- 3) **Kinesthetic**—individuals who learn by body movements and/or touch.

Each of these three types of learners employs the use of a dominant sense to comprehend material being presented. Past cognitive neuro-psychological studies have discovered that employing multiple senses increases an audience's retention rate substantially.

In order to connect with a majority of the students in their class, an effective instructor must teach in a manner that is receptive to each of the three primary learning types. This can prove to be very difficult. Fortunately, the technology tools readily available to today's instructors can make this task much easier. Computers, computer software, video conferencing, computer animation and the Internet are just some of the technology tools available to assist the instructor.

Similarly, in the workplace, the essence of litigation is education. Attorneys arguing their case are

educators of the jury and judge. The attorney who successfully argues a case has connected with the jury and educated them about the case. Connecting with the jury is a key element for attorneys during trial, just like it is a key element for instructors while educating their class.

In courtrooms throughout the United States, judges, attorneys and other legal professionals have recognized the value of using technology to educate juries. Graphics, timelines, digital exhibits, computer animations and trial presentation software are changing the way lawsuits are tried in this country. Judges are requiring the use of courtroom technology to speed up the trial process while increasing the jury's retention and comprehension of litigated cases. There are hundreds of digitally enhanced courtrooms in the United States today and that number is expected to do nothing but increase.

During classroom lectures, computer software can be used to display documents and present slides or graphics that reinforce the information being provided in an auditory form. This teaching

method combines both visual and auditory stimulus, enabling more students to connect with the instructor and learn from their teaching method. Software programs make creating demonstratives easy. Outline slides can be created in PowerPoint; charts can be created from Excel spreadsheet, and pictures or other graphics can be inserted into Word. Software allows you to combine text and graphics in a variety of ways. You are only limited by your own imagination.

Kinesthetic learners can be readily connected with through the use of computers. Having the students work through case documents, databases, internet websites and investigative materials during class exercises provides them with the kinesthetic stimulus some students need in order to effectively learn the material. Computer lab exercises are invaluable to paralegal students, providing them with hands-on experience. Paralegals in the work force spend a large majority of their time at a computer generating documents, investigating cases and researching legal issues. Providing these types of exercises during a paralegal's education provides the instructor and the

student with an ideal opportunity to utilize the technology tools that are an integral part of the law offices of today.

If you teach a litigation course, I would strongly encourage taking your students to a local digital courtroom, if one is available in your area. Arrange for your students to work with the equipment that they will likely be running for their attorney during hearings and trials. If you do not have a digital courtroom in your area, then you could invite a digital trial presentation vendor into the classroom to speak and demonstrate use of the equipment. Such an experience will undoubtedly drive home, for both instructors and students, the important role technology plays in the practice of law today and tomorrow. ❖

Stacey A. Rowcliffe is a paralegal at Crowley, Haughey, Hanson, Toole & Dietrich in Billings, Montana. Ms. Rowcliffe is also co-author of the paralegal textbook "Civil Litigation in the New Millennium," published by Aspen Publishers. Additional feedback or questions can be emailed to Ms. Rowcliffe at [srowcliffe@crowleylaw.com](mailto:srowcliffe@crowleylaw.com)

## Ten Frequently Asked Questions About Serving as a Board Member (continued from page 15)

member receives a Board packet, which includes the agenda and reports to be discussed at the upcoming meeting. Since the Board is a decision-making body, all members are expected to arrive at meetings prepared to discuss each issue.

### 9. Do Board members attend other meetings?

Board members are expected at their expense to attend the regional conferences in their respective geographical area.

### 10. Why do members serve on AAFPE's Board?

Board members believe in quality paralegal education and realize the privilege of serving in an AAFPE leadership position. Finally, hard work is mixed with pleasure and the Board members enjoy working and laughing together. ❖

## Quality and Consistency in Distance Learning

The Second in a Series

*Brian Halsey*  
Peirce College

In the first article in this series, *Paralegal Education's Online Toolbox*, I wrote about many of the tips and tricks that can make the distance learning experience more successful for both instructors and students. Students in this medium thrive on consistency, clarity and well-defined boundaries within the online classroom. In that article we talked about the first steps that you, as a distance learning instructor, can take to create an effective online classroom.

In this article, I address another more concise set of three tools. These are practices that we use in our program at Peirce College to ensure that we deliver a quality product to our students.

### Course Review Sessions

The first tool is the course review session. The course review session stemmed from a variety of factors coming together as we placed our paralegal studies classes online. We found that adjunct professors were at times hesitant about their first distance learning course. At the same time, some members of the faculty were discovering their own tips and tricks that would enhance their classes, and other faculty members, especially the newer adjuncts, had a nagging insecurity about whether or not they were teaching their courses effectively (after all, teaching from a laptop is far different from the classroom experience most of us are familiar with).

We hit upon a solution that is notable in its simplicity and effectiveness.

The adjunct and full-time faculty assigned distance learning classes at Peirce meet before the start of each semester. At the meeting, each faculty member details for the rest of the attendees the substance of their online class by taking the room through a "guided tour" of their course. We all then have a chance to ensure that we are using the same methods, tools and techniques throughout our courses.

These course review sessions allow us to pick up on errors or omissions in the courses, to touch base as a faculty to share the latest tools and techniques, and to teach and reassure the faculty who are newer to the medium.

### Course Shell Monitoring

The second tool is as effective as the first. Each full time faculty member is primarily responsible for one or more online courses. What that means is that they are tasked to create the course in compliance with ABA quality guidelines, to perfect the course in its first few runs, and then to monitor future offerings when adjunct professors become a part of the course rotation.

Practically, this means that each of our full time faculty is assigned to assist any adjuncts who are teaching courses within their area of responsibility. That full time professor acts as a mentor to consistently monitor the online course and the adjunct's performance, and to deal with technical, procedural or content related questions that the adjunct may have.

Because of the close relationship between the full time faculty and the adjunct staff, we have found that many times the adjuncts, who are practitioners steeped in the current thinking and practice in the course area, have valuable insights into the structure of the course. These insights add value to the final product presented to the students.

As a result, we can be assured of the quality of our offerings, while the adjunct can be assured that they are "doing the right thing" (a common concern) as they lead their classes.

### Integration of Distance Learning into Campus Offerings

As I mentioned in my previous article, consistency in the presentation of distance learning courses to the students is the key to a successful rollout. Each course should have the same look, feel, and utilize the same basic tools so that students only face a technological learning curve in their first classes, instead of in every online course.

It has become increasingly common in recent years for schools to utilize tools like Blackboard and eCollege to supplement their traditional courses with electronic lecture notes, slideshows, links to research materials, and the like. At Peirce, we utilize the same eCollege platform for our on-campus and online classes.

There is a hidden beauty here. The situation allows us to train our students for online learning while they are in the classroom. We design our electronic classroom supplements to mimic the look and feel of our online courses. Materials that are found in every class

regardless of delivery system (like syllabi, research links, grade books, etc.) are placed in consistent places on both the full online versions of our courses and in the electronic supplements to our brick-and-mortar ones as well. We also require that traditional on campus students submit their papers through the class companion, to utilize the course materials there, and to generally become familiar with the system.

The result? Many of our students are what we call “mosaic” students. In our parlance, that means that these students take many classes in

the traditional on campus format, but they also take online courses when it meets their needs. When these students move to the online world, we have already trained them in the technical aspects of the courses — from logging on to the course websites to submitting their assignments for grading. This approach has made for a much smoother transition and a much shallower learning curve for the students (and instructors making the transition, too). The students are happier, the instructors are therefore more effective, and the course experience becomes far more productive.

## Conclusion

These tools and techniques are constantly evolving and changing. We develop new methods of coping with the ever changing world of distance learning each day. I’ll continue to share my thoughts in my next article. And of course, I’m always available for questions or comments. ✦

Brian Halsey is an Assistant Professor teaching in the Paralegal Studies and Business Law programs at Peirce College in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He can be reached at [bhalsey@peirce.edu](mailto:bhalsey@peirce.edu).

## Revisiting Paralegal Faculty Meetings: Building Team Work and Providing Professional Development

Lynne D. Dahlborg  
Suffolk University

Four years ago I wrote an article for *The Paralegal Educator* about using paralegal faculty meetings for professional development. After conversations at the last AAFPE Conference and a recent inquiry on the Listserv, I am drawn to the topic again. As a program director for the last eighteen years, I have lots of experience with adjunct faculty. In the years since the ABA made regular faculty meetings a requirement, I have expanded my experience in designing and conducting these meetings. Following are a few of the ideas that have worked for me. In reviewing my earlier article, I see

that I had gotten some of the ideas from the AAFPE Listserv, and made them my own.

### Create a System for Scheduling Meetings

After a rocky start, I settled on a system where my faculty and I meet three times a year; before the fall semester, before the winter/spring semester, and in late spring, before the summer term. The advantage of creating this system is that it is easy for me to select the dates for our meetings, and easy for faculty to remember them from year to year. Also, meeting before the beginning of the two “big” semesters allows us to talk about current issues when they are timely. Early evenings are best for my faculty, and so the meetings always begin at 5:30, although the length varies.

### Feed Their Bodies and Their Minds

Depending on the length of the meeting, we offer light snacks or a light meal. Offering food simplifies the timing for my faculty, and

encourages their attendance. I then plan some “meat” to the meeting so that they leave feeling they have learned something useful for their teaching.

### Make the Meetings Mandatory

It is no fun planning a meeting and having only a few folks show up. I tell my faculty that their attendance is mandatory, and I mean it. The dean of my college supports me in this, and I remind the faculty that they are required to come. Sometimes it doesn’t work for one or two of my 12-15 adjunct faculty members, but the attendance rate is very good.

### Plan a Theme for the Year

For a number of years I used this approach, and it helped me think about what I would do at each meeting. “Computer Applications in All Courses” was a theme one year; we talked about CALR and did a brief training at one meeting, then we talked about possible software applications at another. The third meeting that year was a

*Continued on next page*

joint meeting with the Advisory Committee for the program, with everyone asked to share ideas about computer use and application in their fields. Another year's theme was "Assessing our Students' Knowledge," and we talked about framing multiple choice questions at one meeting, about framing assignments and essay questions at another, and at the third and final meeting of the year, everyone brought in one or more successful assignments to share and discuss. Even for those teaching a substantive course no one else teaches, we can borrow from the ideas of others.

## **Use the Wisdom of the Faculty to Help Everyone Grow in their Teaching**

We have had stimulating, practical and very helpful conversations about both mundane and fascinating aspects of teaching. Talking about grades and how they are calculated, discussing what to do when a student challenges a grade and considering grade inflation are some of the productive topics we have discussed.

## **Invite a Recent Graduate to Speak to the Faculty**

As program director, I read all of the graduate surveys and I make the summarized results available to my advisory committee. However, I do not routinely hand the summaries to my faculty, assuming that they don't need more to read. However, several times I have invited to our spring faculty meeting a graduate from the previous year, asking for an update on the job search and early employment experience, and also asking "What are you really glad you learned while in the program? What do you wish you had learned?" The answers of

graduates have sometimes surprised and always enlightened us.

## **Review Creation of an Effective Syllabus**

Periodically, it is worth having faculty bring in a syllabus for a current or recent course, and talk about what works. At one meeting, I had everyone pass their syllabus to the person next to them, and then asked each faculty member to imagine they were a student and see if they could discern what the course was about, and what was expected of them. Then we took the time to talk with each other, one on one, about the syllabus. I used this session also to remind everyone that I expect to see on their syllabus language about accommodating students with special needs. I also encourage them to include language about plagiarism that I picked up at an AAFPE conference. This is an especially good exercise for the beginning of the academic year and when you have a handful of new faculty.

## **Get Out of the Conference Room and Onto Campus**

We have left our meeting room to have an introduction to accessing Lexis/Nexis at the college library computers, to tour the law library in the newly constructed law school, to review Westlaw and how to access it in the computer lab, and to visit a "smart" classroom to learn to use the technology increasingly being available.

## **Take Time for Announcements and Updates About Your Program**

Allow some time at the meeting to let adjunct faculty know what is happening with enrollments, larger institutional issues, law school admission rates (if applicable) or

transfer rates for a two-year program, new programs being instituted, and so on. And give them time to ask questions about things that have happened for them in the classroom or with students.

In my last article on faculty meetings, I mentioned that one program director who contacted me felt no need for faculty meetings because his faculty members were prepared, experienced teachers who attended CLE. After many years of running these faculty meetings, I see that in addition to professional development as educators, which I believe is an important goal, adjunct faculty work best when they perceive themselves as part of the program and institution where they are teaching. Seeing each other regularly, having an opportunity to ask good questions and learn from each other, and knowing what is happening with the program are all things that help the faculty feel a part of something larger than their individual classrooms. With that sense of belonging, they can better answer students' questions, decide what is especially important to teach, and bring their best selves to the classroom. The work that a program director puts into faculty meetings can pay dividends for both faculty and students. ❖

[Lynne D. Dahlborg left full-time lawyering for full-time teaching over twenty years ago. She has served as program director for the Legal Studies Programs at Suffolk University in Boston since 1985. During that time, the program has added a Bachelor's degree and received ABA approval. She has supervised almost 30 full-time and adjunct faculty and held many faculty meetings.](#)

## Public Records Research for Paralegals

*Bernadette Agresti*  
Gannon University

The challenge of preparing paralegal students to enter legal settings and to become immediate assets to their employers includes teaching them many important skills, including expertise in accessing public records.

Having taught a course formerly called Preparation of Legal Title Abstracts at Gannon University in Northwestern Pennsylvania for 15 years, I have learned from graduates and employers how beneficial the skills learned in that course have been. The paralegals surprisingly were not always working in the real estate area of law. Many were working in litigation, wills and estate administration, criminal law, the courts, etc. This finding resulted in changing the name of the course to Public Records Research and Real Estate Title Abstracts. The name change came about because I realized that the focus of teaching paralegals to understand the mechanics of completing real estate title searches was not enough, although the graduates working in the real estate specialty areas found it extremely beneficial. I found that most paralegals would not be interested in completing title searches themselves, but would benefit if they understood how, why, how quickly and for whom the work is completed, and what the findings meant. I also knew that most real estate paralegals didn't have a clue what title searchers do on a daily basis and that they only

knew how to read the cover sheet (summary page) of a title report.

I started thinking about the role of a title searcher, who is truly an investigator of public records. I then developed the course with a different perspective of what outcomes were expected.

Paralegals access records of several court offices: assessment, clerks of courts, prothonotary, register of wills, marriage records and recorder of deeds, federal clerk, and bankruptcy court, to name a few. In reviewing records of these offices, paralegals learn much about corrective documents, procedures and releases, terminations, discontinuances, satisfaction of liens, and lawsuits. They also learn the order of filing documents. In fact, one of the larger law firms in the community began to send all of their new associates and law clerks to follow their paralegal/title searcher for one week as part of their orientation training, although the new associate was not going to be specializing in real estate.

Teaching paralegals how to access public records when access is ever changing can be a difficult task, confusing to students and even seasoned professionals. The first thing that must be accomplished is explaining the function of the different court offices. A tour of the court offices where the records are kept is helpful after the functions are explained in the classroom.

The major function of each office is, of course, the quality care of recorded public documents. Helping students understand what documents are kept in each office and how to access them is crucial, but no easy task today as the way

we access public records has changed more increasingly from paper documents to electronic documents. However, as counties face funding crunches, accessing information in electronic format is limited depending on when each court office was ready financially and staffing was ready to make the change. In different counties, different court offices began using an electronic index in different years. For instance the recorder of deeds and register of wills may have began an electronic record in 1992, and other offices in 1996. To complicate matters even further, the imaging of public documents began at later dates. Imaging is a tremendous help to bankers, realtors, and of course, legal professionals, who are all paralegal employers. Imaging has made it possible to view and print documents from the convenience of home offices, although utilizing the electronic indices online can be costly and sometimes does not give enough information about the documents.

Teaching students how and where to find specific legal documents will involve making a chart of the types of documents, in which offices they are kept, and in what format the document will be found at different times of each office's history.

A class project that I have implemented in the course is for the students to make their own reference guide indicating which documents could be retrieved and where to retrieve them during specific time periods, for example 1985-1995. Completing this type of project helps students to remember where to find things without having to spend valuable

*Continued on next page*

time when given assignments to retrieve information for an internship supervisor or employer. It is a reference guide they can take along and alter when they find employment in other counties, as well.

Local counties when faced with space crunches had to resort to combining indices that were separate for centuries into one index. The indices merged at different time periods. For instance, contract indices were merged with deed indices and later deed and mortgage indices merged into Record Books. This can be confusing to legal professionals, making it more important than ever that paralegals become familiar with how to find documents and how to access records from specific time periods.

Recently, counties attempting to make access more efficient for the public are working at feverish rates to keep up with newly recorded information and are finding time to

go back and image older documents so they can be accessed electronically by the public from outside of the courthouse walls.

The skill that I find to be the most useful for paralegals is how to use PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records). This very cost efficient federal courts search engine is a great way to access information from your desktop: [www.pacer.org](http://www.pacer.org). Another useful local web site is [www.mypropertyrecords/eriecountypa.gov](http://www.mypropertyrecords/eriecountypa.gov).

Other helpful projects to assign paralegal students include:

- What functions each court office performs.
- What records are recorded and stored in each court office.
- Whether the records can be attained through electronic means.
- The cost of accessing the records.

Teaching students what records may be useful when on the job is also important. Following are some local examples:

- Clerk of Courts: Criminal records — charges, aliases, sentences, fines, court costs.
- Prothonotary: civil lawsuits, judgment liens, municipal liens, delinquent real estate taxes, UCC filings, divorce and child custody records, mechanics lien waivers, mechanics claims, commonwealth liens.
- Register of Wills: decedents estate records that can show inventory of assets, listings of heirs, wills and codicils.
- Marriage Bureau: marriage license applications, marriage records that include number of prior marriages, occupations, parents' names, etc.
- Recorder of Deeds: deeds, mortgages, rights of way, easements, agreements for sale, oil and gas leases, UCC filings, restrictions, recorded subdivision maps.

## 2003 Membership Directory Now In Distribution

The 2003 edition of the AAFPE membership directory should have reached member's offices by the time you receive this issue of *The Paralegal Educator* through the joint efforts of AAFPE and Aspen Publishers, to whom AAFPE expresses its appreciation.

This year's directory goes back to the format of two years ago when much more detailed information on AAFPE's Institutional Members was published. This information will be further enhanced for the 2004 edition. The publication also adds a comprehensive catalog of Aspen's publications.

If you have not received your copy (every member is entitled to one copy as part of the membership benefits) by the end of April, please notify the AAFPE office through [info@AAFPE.org](mailto:info@AAFPE.org). Additional copies of the directory may be purchased by members from AAFPE. As the mailing list was prepared in February, it is possible that some members may have been omitted from the list. Plans are already being made to simplify the information gathering process for the 2004 edition.

- Assessment Office/Map Room: owners of real estate by name, address, or tax ID's; assessed valuation; acreage; age of a home and additions to a home.
- Federal Clerk's Office: federal civil liens, federal criminal liens.
- Bankruptcy: filings and dispositions of cases, list of creditors, list of exemptions.

Locating records, both manually and electronically, is a skill that

attorneys repeatedly say they wish they had acquired before they began their careers. Teaching this skill to our students will make them attractive to potential employers and will help them immensely as they begin their careers. ✦

*Bernadette Agresti is a paralegal who holds an AA Paralegal, BA Political Science, and MS in Counseling Psychology. She has worked in the area of real estate and child custody for the past 27*

years. Her work with research in the real estate title industry has given her insight into the mechanics of access to public records. She has been teaching Public Records Research to paralegal students for 14 years and has been the Program Director of the Legal Studies Program and the Pre-law Advisor at Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania for the past ten years.

## ABA Hears Testimony on Proposed Practice of Law Definition

*Ted Maloney  
Skagit Valley College*

An ABA task force heard testimony in response to its proposed definition of the practice of law on March 7, 2003, at the ABA's mid-year meeting in Seattle. Because of the proposed definition's potential for restricting the scope of law-related services provided by non-lawyers, it has generated considerable criticism from a wide variety of groups (including one of the ABA's own sections).

At the AAFPE Board meeting in St. Louis Feb. 7-9, 2003, Board members discussed the significant opposition to the proposed definition that had been reported in the press, including from the likes of the Federal Trade Commission, Department of Justice and the ABA's own Antitrust Section. The AAFPE Board also reviewed comments in opposition to the proposed definition that had been submitted to the task force by the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA).

The ABA's Antitrust Section commented that "the ABA would better serve the interests of the public by educating them on the reasons why they should turn to attorneys, rather than encouraging adoption of broadly worded UPL statutes that may, for example, be used to prevent non-lawyer credit counselors from helping consumers negotiate payment plans with their creditors or to prevent laypersons from assisting poor immigrants fill out INS forms." The Section went on to say that "the ABA should focus its efforts on seeking to serve the interests of the public, rather than engaging in efforts that may, unfortunately, be viewed as primarily attempting to unduly protect the economic interests of the profession."

NFPA commented that "[t]he continued existence of unmet needs should be of paramount concern to lawyers, paralegals and non-lawyers alike. The legal community must strive to provide a greater variety of legal services to allow more freedom of choice, easier access to professional services for the public, and reduced costs."

At the St. Louis meeting, AAFPE Board members expressed similar

concerns, especially in light of AAFPE's long-standing definition of a paralegal, which does not limit paralegal practice only to that supervised by a lawyer.

While no further comment period or hearings have been announced by the ABA task force, the AAFPE Board would like to hear from its membership about this issue. A decision on whether to submit formal comments or take other action will be considered at the AAFPE Board meeting in Chicago on May 30-June 2.

If you would like to review the ABA's draft definition and the public comments received, go to URL [http://www.abanet.org/cpr/model\\_def\\_home.html](http://www.abanet.org/cpr/model_def_home.html) If you have any comments about the draft definition and whether AAFPE should take a position on it, please post to the listserv or contact me directly at [maloney@skagit.ctc.edu](mailto:maloney@skagit.ctc.edu). I will compile and report your comments to the AAFPE Board. ✦

*Ted Maloney is Program Director at Skagit Valley College in Mount Vernon, Washington. He serves on the AAFPE Board of Directors representing Associate Degree Programs. He can be reached at [maloney@skagit.ctc.edu](mailto:maloney@skagit.ctc.edu)*

## ABA UPDATE

*Peggy Wallace*

*Staff Director,*

*ABA Standing Committee on Legal Assistants*

Final approval was granted to Boise State University, Legal Assistant Program, Boise, Idaho, during the Midyear Meeting of the American Bar Association House of Delegates.

The following programs were granted reapproval by the House of Delegates at the Midyear Meeting of the American Bar Association in February, 2003: Cerritos Community College, Paralegal Program, Norwalk, California; West Valley College, Paralegal Program, Saratoga, California; South University, Paralegal Studies Program, Savannah, Georgia; Loyola University Chicago, Institute for Paralegal Studies, Chicago, Illinois; Southern Illinois University, Paralegal Studies Program, Carbondale, Illinois; Elms College, Paralegal Program, Chicopee, Massachusetts; Oakland Community College, Paralegal Program, Farmington Hills, Michigan; Mississippi University for Women, Paralegal Studies Program, Columbus, Mississippi; Berkeley College of New York City, Paralegal Studies Program, New York, New York; Genesee Community College, Paralegal Program, Batavia, New York; Suffolk County Community College, Paralegal Studies Program, Selden, New York; Central Piedmont Community College, Paralegal Technology Program, Charlotte, North Carolina; Columbus State Community College, Legal Assisting Program, Columbus, Ohio; Greenville Technical College, Paralegal Program, Greenville, South Carolina; Southwest Texas State

University, Legal Studies Program, San Marcos, Texas; and Laramie County Community College, Legal Assistant Program, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

A complete listing of ABA-approved programs can be found on the website of the Standing Committee on Legal Assistants at <http://www.abalegalassistants.org>.

The Standing Committee welcomes inquiries from approved and unapproved programs regarding the approval process. Anyone with questions concerning the approval process should contact Merrillou Rauch ([rauchm@staff.abanet.org](mailto:rauchm@staff.abanet.org)) who will be happy to respond to your questions. ❖

## Legal Association Management Association Update

*Annette Schlaf*

*LAMA President*

The Board of Directors of LAMA met in early February at the Hyatt Regency at Union Station in St. Louis, the site of our 2003 conference. The Board has a number of projects underway and utilized the meeting time to not only review the status of those projects but also to plan strategically for the coming year.

LAMA is again partnering with Altman Weil, Inc. to conduct an annual Compensation Survey. The survey collects information for legal assistant manager positions and all levels of legal assistant positions. As last year, we hope to again see an increase in the number of survey participants. Survey results are expected to be ready for purchase mid-May.

Coming in April is LAMA's second annual Skills for New Managers Seminar. This weekend event will cover a variety of topics of interest for both new and veteran legal assistant managers. The seminar will be held April 26-27 at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

LAMA recently completed an online Utilization Survey and the compiled results can be viewed on our website at [www.lamanet.org](http://www.lamanet.org). The Utilization Survey Task Force is currently looking into the possibility of creating a trend analysis based on past surveys and the current survey.

Our Annual Conference Committee is busy with program planning for our upcoming annual conference scheduled for November 5-8 at the Hyatt Regency in St. Louis. The theme for this year's conference is "Putting Knowledge to Work: Strategies for Excellence."

Finally, the Membership Committee and Marketing Committee are busy looking for opportunities to increase LAMA's visibility within the legal community and among potential new members. LAMA is partnering with Northstar Conferences LLC on its upcoming paralegal seminars in San Francisco and New York City.

The 2003 LAMA Board of Directors looks forward to a productive year and to a continued strong working relationship with AAFPE. ❖

*Annette Schlaf is president of the Legal Assistant Management Association as well as Manager of Legal Assistants at Baker Botts L.L.P. in Houston, Texas.*

## National Association of Legal Assistants Update

*Kenneth Frakes*

### New Internet Services for NALA Members

Members of NALA may now view *Facts & Findings* on line, and they may sign up for important Association news and notifications by e-mail if they wish. These new member services augment the authoritative NALA website serving the entire profession at [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org).

The magazine is posted in PDF format at [www.nala.org/factsandfindings](http://www.nala.org/factsandfindings) where a user name and password assigned by NALA Headquarters is required to access the pages. Members who already have user names and passwords may access the magazine pages immediately. Those without the required codes should contact NALA Headquarters by e-mail at [nalanet@nala.org](mailto:nalanet@nala.org), or by phone at (918) 587-6828 to be assigned user names and passwords.

For timely notification of Association news, dates and deadlines, members may now sign up for e-mail from NALA. This capability to send e-mail to all NALA members is an opportunity for the Association to provide cost-efficient and nearly instantaneous communication to members.

### Vicki Kunz Re-elected President

Vicki J. Kunz, CLAS, has been re-elected President of NALA for 2003-2004. She was elected to her second term in the top post by the Board of Directors at their March 1 meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Her second term officially begins on July 1.

Ms. Kunz is a Risk Management Specialist with MDU Resources Group, Inc., Bismarck, North Dakota. She has been a legal assistant since 1984 and has been deeply involved in NALA leadership since 1986. She is a charter member of the Western Dakota Association of Legal Assistance, and has been a paralegal member of Big Muddy Bar Association since 1991. She has frequently been a featured speaker at symposiums and meetings for NALA and other organizations, and is involved in a number of professional and civic organizations in Bismarck.

### New Educational Services Manager

Krista Lower, a meeting planner since 1989, is the new Manager of Educational Services for NALA. Many members will remember Ms. Lower (formerly Marlin) through her work on NALA meetings with Spears Travel and formerly with Southern Hills Travel in Tulsa.

Her responsibilities include the administrative side of planning the annual convention education program and promotion of the Association's web-based educational offerings. Because continuing education is a top NALA priority, this new position was created to facilitate greater organization and effectiveness of all educational programs, according to Executive Director Marge Dover.

### 'Remember the NALAMO!'

It is time to make plans to attend NALA's 28th Annual Convention July 9-12, 2003, at the Hyatt Regency San Antonio on the Riverwalk. Convention announcement brochures and registration forms have been mailed, and details are on the NALA website at [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org).

The education program this year includes study tracks in criminal

law, civil litigation, and intellectual property, with "Institutes" in Social Security and in Probate and Estate Planning. Workshop topics include cyberterrorism, forensic animation, international trademarks, tax laws, civil liberties, and electronic filing. The concentrated course in "Essential Skills" for paralegals is also back by popular demand.

Member Exchange Presentations this year will be by Kelly A. LaGrave, CLAS, legal assistant with Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith law firm, Lansing, Michigan, and Cyndy T. Schroeder, paralegal with Powell, Goldstein, Frazer & Murphy law firm in Atlanta, Georgia. The annual Affiliated Associations meeting will feature presentations by Belinda Pruitt, CLAS, and Anita Watts Wing, both members of the North Carolina Paralegal Association, and Kim Cantu, CLA, President of the Legal Assistants of North Texas Association.

The general session on Wednesday morning officially opens the convention with remarks by NALA President Vicki Kunz, CLAS, and the keynote address by The Hon. John G. McBain, Fourth Judicial Circuit Court Judge, Jackson, Michigan. Focus groups and the Membership Forum on Thursday offer members a chance to express their ideas and network as well as an opportunity to meet and chat with officer candidates. The 28th Annual Meeting on Friday gives members a chance for direct input in Association business.

Exhibitors will be presenting their products and services from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the first two days of the convention, and the affiliated associations will take over the exhibits area on Friday with displays explaining their programs and advantages for paralegals in their localities.

*Continued on next page*

## NFPA NEWS

*Karen Belcher, RP*

*NFPA President*

### PACE News

We have some exciting news at NFPA. Our new video, "Leveraging with Paralegals, Setting the PACE for the Future" has won an Award of Distinction from the Communicator's Awards group. There were 3,242 videos submitted in this international competition. Each video is judged on its own merit as to how it meets with the criteria the group has established. This video was underwritten by LexisNexis and produced by Media Force in Dallas, Texas.

### British Columbia Association of Legal Assistants

Ann Halkett, Vice President of the British Columbia Association of Legal Assistants (BCALA) contacted our PACE Coordinator, Susan Witherspoon, RP. BCALA is exploring ways to provide a credentialing program for legal assistants, which would include various types of education. BCALA is hoping to establish a program that will require legal assistants to complete a specific standardized course of study in order to achieve a type of certification.

The Law Society of British Columbia has established a subcommittee to study the credentialing of legal assistants. The Law Society is actually the driving force behind this effort. The Law Society does not want to certify everyone currently working in the profession; however, they are looking for some type of

mechanism that would ensure that legal assistants meet a certain minimum level of "safe" practice. Legal Assistants work under the direct supervision of lawyers. The Law Society is looking at whether or not legal assistants may be permitted to take part in limited advocacy roles before courts, tribunals, etc. Ms. Halkett is a member of this subcommittee and has been charged with researching the credentialing of legal assistants and the cost of such a program. Ms. Halkett was researching the experience NFPA had when developing PACE. Currently, it is not known if PACE will help their efforts or could be modified to suit their needs.

### ABA Proposed Definition of The Practice of Law

NFPA was the only national paralegal association to provide both written and oral testimony to the American Bar Association regarding their proposed definition for the practice of law. NFPA respects the ABA's attempt to create a model definition of the term "practice of law"; the practice itself encompasses so many factors that it is often easier to determine what violates the practice of law. NFPA is aware that this attempt to define the practice of law is in reaction to the many times that people commit UPL or practice law without a license and is an attempt to protect consumers from such acts of UPL. NFPA highly discourages the practice of law without a license. However, NFPA was unable to support this proposed definition. We felt that this definition not only severely limited the paralegal profession but also took away from

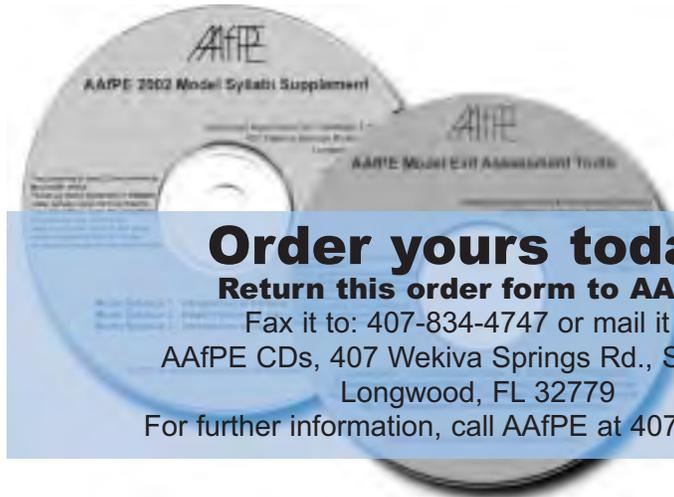
some of the duties that paralegals are currently performing. In the end, if this definition is adopted, we feel that it will prevent the ABA from achieving one of its goals, that of making legal services more affordable and user friendly for the legal consumer. If adopted, this definition will also severely limit paralegal advocacy. There are some boards and agencies that allow for paralegals to act as advocates on behalf of a client. This model would severely limit that ability, thereby driving up the cost of legal services.

NFPA will continue to respond to the ABA and offer comments in their efforts to define the practice of law.

### NFPA Annual Convention

NFPA will be holding its annual convention in Newport, Rhode Island from March 27 - March 30. During this convention we will offer seminars that allow for CLE credits, association management workshops, region meetings, officer elections and our policy meeting. The policy meeting allows the delegates representing our member associations to debate topics that are of concern to the paralegal profession and develop NFPA's policy concerning these topics. One topic that may be up for discussion is the "exempt/non-exempt" pay status. Another topic that is of great concern to NFPA is the "tiering" of the profession and also the quality of on-line education. Usually NFPA has two conventions per year; however, this will be the only NFPA convention this year. ❖

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