

Administrative Office Technology (AOT) Advisory Committee

Legal Secretary and Legal Office Procedures

November 13, 2006

Those in attendance were: Ms. Pam Bennett, Ms. Tosha Birmingham, Ms. Janis Montgomery, Ms. Stephanie Tellen, Ms. Lisa Adkins, and Ms. Jenean Jones.

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Jenean Jones welcomed the committee to Oklahoma City Community College and thanked them for taking the time to help us with our program and also reminded them of the important role they each play as Advisory Committee members.

Concerns of Legal Program:

Jenean Jones explained the Legal courses have low enrollments and it is getting difficult to justify holding a low enrollment class. The AOT faculty presented a 2-year schedule plan which may help with the low enrollment problem. With the new schedule plan, the legal courses will only be offered once every two years. The committee recommended trying the new plan to see if enrollments increase for the courses.

The 2-year plan will not work for the current Legal Office Procedures certificate. The committee and faculty discussed how to get the certificate program to fit with the new schedule because it is a program that would be a great benefit to potential students – short term but will all the courses they would need for a legal secretary position) They recommended changing the certificate status to Inactive until a solution to the enrollment problem was found, then approach the changes to the certificate. (Since the meeting, the Dean recommended not changing the status to Inactive, but change who the certificate is designed for. The certificate will be marketed for part-time students only – those who still have to work and will only take a few hours each semester. They will need longer to complete the program. For full-time students, we'll still recommend the 2-year degree.)

The committee also recommended the minimum grade requirement for all AOT classes change from a “C” grade to a “B” grade. It would allow the OCCC student to compete in the job market and will give them the knowledge they need to do the job successfully. In addition, the committee stated students should also be required to make a minimum grade of “B” in BUS 2033 – Business Communication and BUS 2073 – Legal Environment of Business.

Overview of Required Classes

The committee said the current legal course offerings are sufficient for the program. Some areas should be emphasized in the curriculum: need for skills such as proofreading, grammar/ punctuation and typing/formatting correspondence such as memorandums and letters, needs more emphasis. Jenean explained the material could be covered more in AOT 2453 - Office Information Processing if some curriculum changes were made, such as concentrating more on these skills in the first 1/2 to 2/3 of the course and include transcription at the end 1/2 to 1/3 of the course. They recommended changing the current course to include the new format.

The committee also stated the use of research software in the AOT 1813 – Legal Office Procedures course is not needed. There are many free sites available for research and these sites are used by legal offices. In addition, the legal secretary will not do the majority of the research so a small introduction into research is sufficient.

Students need more experience in typing legal forms such as briefs, citations, indexes. They also need to know how these are typed for the different court systems. The time in Legal Office Procedures would be more beneficial to the student if these topics were covered instead of the research topic. The committee also stated a portfolio containing the legal document formats and other pertinent legal information would be beneficial to the student as well. The AOT faculty will determine how to incorporate a portfolio into this course.

The committee expressed a need for more “ethics” to be taught regarding the use of work computers, the use of Internet in the workplace and the use of the work phone for personal calls. These continue to present a problem in the workplace. Lisa Adkins explained these topics are discussed in detail in the AOT 2443 – Administrative Office Procedures class, but she will find ways to stress more of this information.

They also expressed a concern about the format of emails they receive. Individuals are not using proper business communication guidelines and it is presenting a problem. Lisa explained this is also covered in Administrative Office Procedures and she also requires student to sign a contract stating they will follow guidelines or their emails will not be read. She has seen a difference in the email formats she is getting, but she will stress this topic more in the Administrative Office Procedures class.

Committee Recommendations

- Trying the new 2 year schedule plan to increase the Legal program enrollments.
- Although the Legal Office Procedure certificate is a valid program, changing the certificate status to Inactive until a solution to the enrollment problem was found, then approach the changes to the certificate. (Since the meeting, the Dean recommended not changing the status to Inactive, but change who the certificate is designed for. The certificate will be marketed for part-time students only – those who still have to work and will only take a few hours each semester. They will need longer to complete the program. For full-time students, we’ll still recommend the 2-year degree.)
- Increase the emphasis of skills such as proofreading, grammar/ punctuation and typing/formatting correspondence such as memorandums and letters by changing the curriculum for AOT 2453 - Office Information Processing to include more concentration of these skills
- Reduce the amount of research taught in the Legal Office Procedures class and increase the instruction of legal forms to include typing legal forms such as briefs, citations, indexes and how to these are typed for the different court systems.
- Increase the instruction on “ethics in the workplace” which should include the use of work computers, the use of Internet in the workplace and the use of the work phone for personal calls which continue to present a problem in the workplace
- Increase the instruction on proper business communication guidelines, particularly regarding email guidelines and letter/memo format.
- The committee also recommended the minimum grade requirement for all AOT classes change from a “C” grade to a “B” grade. It would allow the OCCC student to compete in the job market and will give them the knowledge they need to do the job successfully. In addition, the committee stated students should also be required to make a minimum grade of “B” in BUS 2033 – Business Communication and BUS 2073 – Legal Environment of Business.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Adkins
Recording Secretary