SCF’s Paralegal Internship Program
Benefits Attorneys, Paralegals and Students

By Whitney C. Glaser, Esq.,
SCF Paralegal Internship Program coordinator

State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota’s (SCF) paralegal internship program provides additional support for law and government offices and nonprofit and corporate legal departments while also giving them access to prospective paralegal employees.

SCF paralegal students spend 150 hours in a semester during their final year of studies gaining practical experience by applying what they learned in the classroom, including document preparation, ethics, legal research and writing, and civil litigation.

Representing the Manatee County Attorney’s Office, James A. Minix, chief assistant county attorney, and Carol Owsianka, CP, FRP, paralegal and paralegal intern program coordinator, discuss their experiences with SCF’s paralegal program after hosting Jodi Bell, a May 2013 SCF graduate and recent paralegal intern.

Q. What led you to hire a paralegal intern from SCF?

A. When the Manatee County Attorney’s Office first became involved with the SCF internship program in February 2010, we viewed the SCF paralegal internship program as a win-win situation for both our office and paralegal interns.

Q. What changes have you noticed in your interns’ skills and confidence?

A. As the internship progresses, it is enjoyable to see interns transition from their initial tentativeness to confidence in knowing how to perform the legal tasks they are assigned.

Q. What are the benefits for government agencies to host a paralegal intern?

A. Since tight budgets require us to do the same work with fewer employees, our office has reaped the benefits of SCF’s paralegal internship program while also performing an important community outreach function by offering on-the-job training to students. We’ve been so impressed with the knowledge that these student interns bring from their classes that we have taken the opportunity to acquire new ideas from them.

Q. What types of work/activities/tasks do your interns perform?

A. Our interns train with three paralegals and our workers’ compensation claims adjuster. Instruction is given in law office library and records management, workers’ compensation, bankruptcy, mortgage foreclosure, personal injury, contract and land use law. Interns gain experience in drafting pleadings and motions, drafting discovery requests and responses, reviewing medical records, summarizing depositions and maintaining and using a law library.

Q. Do you find the experience with interns rewarding?

A. Yes, it is a great experience to help paralegal interns begin their careers with the on-the-job skills they need to succeed. We have had the pleasure of teaching some very capable and intelligent paralegal interns.

Q. What advice would you give to attorneys or government agencies that are considering hiring a paralegal intern?

A. We believe the time invested by your staff will be repaid many times over with the assistance provided by well-trained SCF paralegal interns who are eager to learn real-world skills.

To learn more about an SCF paralegal intern’s perspective of the internship program, look for the next issue of Inter Alia, which will feature Jodi Bell, a May 2013 SCF graduate and recent paralegal intern at the Manatee County Attorney’s Office.

Whitney C. Glaser is an adjunct instructor and Paralegal Internship Program coordinator at SCF. For more information about the internship program and to be added to a contact list made available to prospective student interns, email Glaser at paralegal@scf.edu.