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Sarasota County Bar Association • Docket • May 2013

SCF paralegal internship program benefits attorneys and students

Whitney C. Glaser, Esq., SCD Paralegal Internship Program coordinator

Q. Why do you hire SCF paralegal interns?
A. Internships provide an opportunity for students to get a realistic perspective of what the job involves, and it is a nice opportunity for temporary staffing.

Q. How do students benefit from an internship with you?
A. Students typically find internships to be an eye-opening experience. I offer them a realistic glimpse of how to act in a firm and interact with clients and learn the type of work-product I expect from a paralegal. The experience offers them an opportunity to develop their skills and feel more confident as a paralegal professional.

Q. What are the benefits for law firms to host a paralegal intern?
A. The benefits include support staff for my paralegals and an opportunity to gauge the types of future employees that are coming out of school.

Q. What types of work/activities/tasks do your interns perform?
A. While interns perform general office administrative tasks, they also participate in estate planning document signings, assist in preparing probate estate assets, file documents with the court electronically and in person, coordinate evictions, learn about becoming a notary public and draft correspondences.

Q. What are rewarding or positive experiences for your interns?
A. Interns get excited when they have the opportunity to participate in the legal process, because they experience hands-on learning and take “real-world” steps involved.

Q. What advice do you have for attorneys who are considering hiring a paralegal intern?
A. Attorneys should consider whether they have tasks lined up to keep their intern busy and the time to offer educational concepts to help their intern make the most of their experience.

Q. Are there any other things you want to share?
A. I have learned that even if you are a paralegal for years, you shouldn’t rely solely on your memory. You should write down what the attorney asks you to do and never be afraid to ask questions.

Whitney C. Glaser is an adjunct instructor and Paralegal Internship Program coordinator at SCF.

Intern perspective:

Charissa Wood

Q. What led you to pursue a career as a paralegal?
A. I’ve always had a passion for law. In high school, I took a law class as an elective. At the time, my mom was involved in a difficult divorce, which sparked my interest in the legal system.

Q. What are the benefits of taking paralegal courses at SCF?
A. The SCF Paralegal Program provided me with knowledge of the law and specific skills necessary to be a successful paralegal, including drafting legal documents, performing legal research, and understanding rules and procedures. My education and paralegal training will set me apart from those without prior legal knowledge or experience.

Q. What was most exciting about working with attorneys and paralegals?
A. I have learned that even if you have been a paralegal for years, you shouldn’t rely solely on your memory. You should write down what the attorney asks you to do and never be afraid to ask questions.