

TEACHING CRUCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR AN EVER-CHANGING LEGAL SYSTEM

IN 1978, CAL STATE LA'S PARALEGAL STUDIES CERTIFICATE (PLS) PROGRAM RECEIVED ITS FIRST APPROVAL BY THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION (ABA). AMONG THE EARLIEST PROGRAMS OF ITS TYPE IN A UNIVERSITY SETTING TO RECEIVE THIS DESIGNATION, CAL STATE LA HAS PLAYED A UNIQUE ROLE IN TRAINING A CORE SEGMENT OF THE REGION'S LEGAL WORKFORCE.

In the 41 years since, the program has navigated the peaks and valleys of Los Angeles' legal services industry, adjusted its curriculum when necessary, and moved to the heart of the city, Cal State LA Downtown. Evolving to embrace change, the program has remained true to its mission of preparing individuals with the skills needed to pursue a career in the legal profession or accelerate their growth in the field.

The PLS program was a natural next step for alumna **Chrissy Davie** (2014). As a legal assistant, the program's content proved practical for her. "I was doing corporate legal work so the corporate and

contract classes were very beneficial. I was familiar with the work, but learned new concepts," she said. When the time came to move up in the field, Davie's paralegal certificate proved invaluable to her marketability. "Having the certificate definitely helped my search. Some jobs required it, while others highly encouraged it." In her current role as Director of Corporate Governance and Contract Administration for the Anschutz Entertainment Group, Inc. (AEG), Davie finds herself still putting the skills she gained from her program to work. "I was able to take classes in different areas of law, which provided me with knowledge that I'm able to access in my current position when needed."

For career changers, Cal State LA's PLS program has long served as a gateway to a new profession. This was true for PLS alumnus **Adam De Leon** (2014).

For De Leon, a paralegal certificate opened the door to an industry that could utilize skills he gained as an undergraduate. "I saw a paralegal certificate as a way to break into an industry where I would have a clear-cut job title and set of skills while simultaneously being able to apply past knowledge and experience," said DeLeon who received a bachelor's degree in criminology from University of California, Irvine.

Now, with several years of experience behind him, De Leon reflects on the integral role that the PLS program played in his success. "I use the skills I learned in

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ADAM DE LEON

my legal writing course every day. I also often use the skills I learned in my legal research course." Summarizing the value of the program, De Leon shared that it's "a low-cost way to enter an interesting and challenging career path."

Paralegal Studies Program Director Lisa Rauhauser believes a combination of instructional quality and a driven student population have proven crucial to its longevity. "The consistent earning of ABA approval means our program regularly meets or exceeds ABA requirements for academic excellence," she said. In addition, she sees Cal State LA's program as well-equipped to evolve with the changing profession. "With automation increasingly taking over some tasks, paralegals of tomorrow need to excel in technology. Our program talks about the future of paralegalism and how technology is a key growth factor. For Rauhauser, interacting with diverse students, remains her favorite part of the job. "I learn through interaction and the exchange of ideas, from students just as they learn from me."

**CAL STATE LA
+ HISTORIC PROGRAM
= FORMIDABLE
PARALEGAL
PROFESSIONALS**



Below, from Left to Right:
Lisa Rauhauser, Adam De Leon and
Chrissy Davie at the LA Law Library.

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