

# Paralegals Connect Quarterly Magazine

Fourth Quarter

December 2023

Issue 22

MEET OUR AFFILIATE PARTNER



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Paralegals Connect is the leading online community for paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys. Currently, our groups have approximately 44k+ members worldwide.

[www.ParalegalsConnect.com](http://www.ParalegalsConnect.com)

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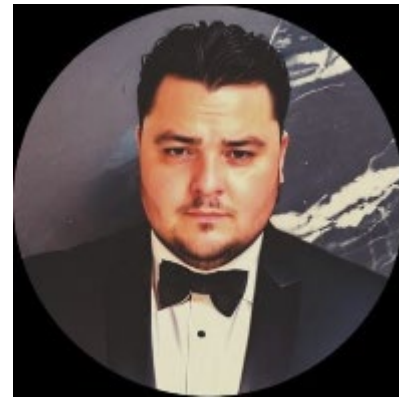
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# MEET THE FOUNDER OF PARALEGALS CONNECT

Crystal Cornett is the busy woman behind the scenes at Paralegals Connect. She works hard to keep Paralegals Connect a professional and helpful platform. Crystal is constantly creating new ideas to help paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys to succeed in the legal industry!



## **Crystal Cornett,** **Founder of Paralegals Connect**

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**[ccornett@nnlegalsearch.com](mailto:ccornett@nnlegalsearch.com)**

**Phone/Text 832-696-9315**

Crystal Cornett is a Paralegal with over 19 years of experience in the legal industry. Crystal earned her first Paralegal Certificate from the University of Houston in March 2006. In 2010, Crystal earned a second Paralegal Certificate and her degree from Center for Advanced Legal Studies. She is a member of the Lambda Epsilon Chi National Honor Society for Paralegal / Legal Assistant Studies (LEX). Crystal is a commissioned Notary Public in the State of Texas and a Commissioned Remote Online Notary (RON). Since 2017, Crystal has served on the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) for Center for Advanced Legal Studies.

Over the course of her paralegal career, Crystal has practiced in Family Law, Elder Law, Probate, Guardianships, Health Law, Social Security, heavy litigation in Intellectual Property and Bankruptcy, and residential and commercial Real Estate.

In 2013, Crystal founded Paralegals Connect, the leading online community for paralegals, future paralegals, and future attorneys worldwide. Our mission is to empower individuals at every stage of their paralegal career journey, providing assistance to those considering a paralegal career, studying in a paralegal program, seeking employment, exploring virtual/freelance options, or looking to enhance their professional skills.

In 2018, Crystal founded The Paralegals Connect Quarterly Magazine. Our magazine is published quarterly and features invaluable information and insights from legal field experts. With a membership of over 44k individuals worldwide, our reach and impact continue to grow. To stay connected and join the conversation, Paralegals Connect can be found on popular social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter, providing an interactive and vibrant online community for support and idea exchange. Visit [linktr.ee/ParalegalsConnect](https://linktr.ee/ParalegalsConnect) or [www.ParalegalsConnect.com](http://www.ParalegalsConnect.com) to learn more.

In February 2022, after 18 years of working as a paralegal, Crystal made the decision to resign from her position as a Real Estate paralegal marking the end of a successful chapter in a law office. However, Crystal's dedication to the legal community didn't stop there. In March 2022, she embarked on a new journey with Newhouse + Noblin, LLC, where she currently thrives as a paralegal recruiter. In addition to her recruiting responsibilities, Crystal also serves as a paralegal consultant, offering invaluable expertise and guidance in resume assistance, and sharing tips to help paralegals reach their career goals. With a passion for supporting paralegals and a wealth of industry knowledge, Crystal remains committed to making a positive impact in the legal community.

# WHAT IS PARALEGALS CONNECT?

**Where legal professionals come together to accelerate their careers.**

Founded in 2013, our community has experienced remarkable growth, evolving into four dynamic Facebook groups tailored specifically to the needs of aspiring and practicing paralegals, as well as future attorneys.

We understand the importance of staying informed and connected in the ever-evolving legal industry. Our mission is to provide you with valuable information, resources, and a supportive network to help you excel at every stage of your legal career journey.

**Join our vibrant community of over 44k members worldwide**, and tap into a wealth of knowledge, guidance, and opportunities.

Whether you're seeking career advice, professional development opportunities, or simply looking to connect with like-minded individuals, our groups are here to empower you.

Accelerate your paralegal journey, shape your future as a legal professional, and expand your horizons with Paralegals Connect. Join our growing community today and unlock your potential in the legal world.



**Website:** [www.ParalegalsConnect.com](http://www.ParalegalsConnect.com)

**LinkTree:** [linktr.ee/ParalegalsConnect](http://linktr.ee/ParalegalsConnect)

**Paralegals Connect (Main Group)** (22,061 Members)

[www.Facebook.com/Groups/ParalegalsConnect](http://www.Facebook.com/Groups/ParalegalsConnect)

Our first and largest support group created for paralegals and paralegals-in-the-making to interact with other paralegals worldwide and provide valuable information to succeed in the paralegal industry.

**Paralegals Connect: Employment Board** (11,876 Members)

[www.Facebook.com/Groups/PCEmploymentBoard](http://www.Facebook.com/Groups/PCEmploymentBoard)

A group designed for those seeking legal employment or internships, and for those seeking to hire legal professionals for their firm.

**Virtual/Freelance Paralegals Connect** (4,919 Members)

[www.Facebook.com/Groups/Virtual.FreelanceParalegalsConnect](http://www.Facebook.com/Groups/Virtual.FreelanceParalegalsConnect)

A group designed for Virtual, Freelance, or Independent Paralegals and those intending to break free of their 8-5 to go out on their own.

**Paralegals Connect: Study Group** (1,092 Members)

[www.Facebook.com/Groups/ParalegalsConnectStudyGroup](http://www.Facebook.com/Groups/ParalegalsConnectStudyGroup)

A group created for those attending a paralegal school or studying for a Paralegal Certification Exam where you can post questions about your legal studies.

**Paralegals Connect: Instagram** (1,411 Followers)

[www.Instagram.com/ParalegalsConnect](http://www.Instagram.com/ParalegalsConnect)

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**Paralegals Connect: X (Twitter)** (306 Followers)

<https://Twitter.com/ParalegalsCnct>

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**Paralegals Connect: Facebook Page** (1,272 Followers)

[www.Facebook.com/pg/ParalegalsConnect](http://www.Facebook.com/pg/ParalegalsConnect)

**Paralegals Connect: LinkedIn**

Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9052061/> (905 Members)

Company Page: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/paralegals-connect>

Founder: Crystal Cornett: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/crystalcornett/>

[www.ParalegalsConnect.com](http://www.ParalegalsConnect.com)

# MEET OUR AFFILIATE PARTNERS

We would like to thank our Affiliate Partners who make it possible to print and distribute the Paralegals Connect Magazine to our members, paralegal schools, and large firms throughout the U.S.

Becoming an Affiliate Partner with our groups offers worldwide visibility to approximately **44k+ combined group members** in the legal industry.

***\*Only our Affiliate Partners are permitted to advertise within our Groups.***



Paralegals Connect is always looking for Affiliate Partners that can offer our paralegals, legal assistants, future paralegals, and future attorneys the skills and services to help them succeed in their legal careers. We strive to provide information to the latest resources, education, and cost-effective opportunities that will enhance the skills, knowledge, and competencies of our members.

To become an Affiliate Partner with Paralegals Connect, please contact Crystal Cornett [Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com](mailto:Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com) or visit [www.ParalegalsConnect.com/Become-an-Affiliate.html](http://www.ParalegalsConnect.com/Become-an-Affiliate.html)

## Center for Advanced Legal Studies

**Center for Advanced Legal Studies** was founded in 1987 to provide education and training for those seeking to enter the legal profession as a paralegal. The **Paralegal Certificate** program provides students with essential paralegal skills and includes courses such as Introduction to Law and Ethics, Legal Research and Writing, Interviewing and Investigation, Corporate and Business Law, Civil Procedure, Computers and the Law, Family Law, and Personal Injury. Students can choose from on-campus morning or Saturday courses or attend 100% online.

Those seeking a more comprehensive preparation for their paralegal career, or those seeking their first college degree, can continue to the Associate of Applied Science Degree Paralegal Program which includes additional paralegal electives such as E-Discovery, Oil and Gas, Intellectual Property, and Immigration Law. Academic general education courses round out this paralegal degree program.



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Whatever It Takes Josh Chandler, CEO of Justice Solutions Group talks about 20 years as a real "P.I.", and the real reason he built JSG.

*"It's all about results...and helping good people that help others..."*



Visit them at [jsgfirm.com](http://jsgfirm.com) to learn more.

## Best Virtual Paralegal LLC

**Best Virtual Paralegal LLC (“BVP”)** (“The Attorney Panic Button™”) is an American legal support and educational service provider for the legal professionals of post Covid-19. Its mission is to revolutionize the way attorneys and paralegals work together.

The Best Virtual Paralegal Team’s vision is to solve legal professionals’ problems by providing the best legal support services, legal admin services, consulting, coaching, and educational services at a fixed rate, when possible, and a fair hourly rate by frequently communicating with clients to help improve productivity, maximize resources, and control expenses. We aim to empower today’s legal professionals to design a career and lifestyle that continuously grows at a sustainable rate, allowing them to achieve their career and lifestyle goals. The Best Virtual Paralegal Team is dedicated to helping lawyers and paralegals embrace technology, innovative strategies, mindset skills, and legal skills. As a result, together we can achieve the lifestyle that complements each legal professional’s career journey.

The Best Virtual Paralegal team consists of advocates, legal support experts, educators, and trained coaches exclusively focused on helping attorneys, paralegals, and legal associations solve their unique problems. Our services and pricing strategies use a holistic approach to ensure we meet the needs of each client’s unique problems, budget, and overall journey. We’d love to collaborate with you and your local communities to increase your productivity, profitability, growth and more.

## Solid Serve Legal

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Based in Oregon, we are proud members of the Oregon Paralegal Association and the Oregon Association of Process Servers. At the national level, we are also members in good standing of the National Association of Professional Process Servers, the National Notary Association, and the National Federation of Paralegal Associations. We stay actively involved in professional development, which means you can be sure the service we provide you is accurate and compliant with all laws and statutes. We're also experts in Microsoft Word which means your documents are always formatted correctly, EVEN WHEN they try to misbehave.

We'd love to chat about your next project!



**Holly A. Sheriff, MSLS, MCC** is a legal support expert and thought leader, an experienced litigation paralegal, a coach, & the founder of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC (BVP). She is committed to helping legal professionals A.C.E. their company, community, & workplace culture journeys! If you see her in the Paralegals Connect groups, drop her a “hi or hello,” and make her day!

Are you ready to scale, grow, & succeed? Let’s Connect & Chat Today! **Contact with the Best Virtual Paralegal Team**

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## On The Record, Inc.

On The Record (OTR) is a full-service trial presentation and litigation support firm specializing in the preparation, setup, and display of evidence. For over 30 years, On The Record has assisted thousands of attorneys nationwide and around the globe with the integration of documents, photographs, graphics, video, animation, and other exhibits into a clear and convincing computer-based courtroom presentation. Our staff can assist your team in preparing for trial. We specialize in trial hotseating (trial tech), document callouts, graphics and demonstratives, deposition video editing, audio and video editing, exhibit Bates stamping and stickering.

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## The Paralegal Writer™

**Jackie Van Dyke**, Certified Paralegal and owner of **The Paralegal Writer™**, inspires best writing practices and confidence in legal writing. She is a faculty member in the Paralegal Studies Program at The George Washington University and a Professor of Legal Research and Writing at the University of San Diego (USD) Law School Paralegal Certificate Program. Jackie is a Board Member of the San Diego Paralegal Association and also the Editor of OnPoint, NCAPA's quarterly magazine. She supports numerous paralegal associations throughout the country and has numerous published articles.

Jackie's passion is to help legal professionals at all levels, including paralegal students, with professional document and letter design, persuasive memoranda writing, precise legal citations, and improved grammar and punctuation. The Paralegal Writer offers a quarterly signature course, "**Pen A Memo™**," to support applicants taking the Skills Exam and those looking to master the art of IRAC. The Paralegal Writer also recently launched a Citation Workshop Series, which provides an hour of practice monthly. Mastering Legal Writing in 8 Weeks will launch in early March! Payment options are always available.



Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.  
Thank you!

Email your questions to [jackie@theparalegalwriter.com](mailto:jackie@theparalegalwriter.com).  
[www.theparalegalwriter.com](http://www.theparalegalwriter.com)

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## The Disability Teacher

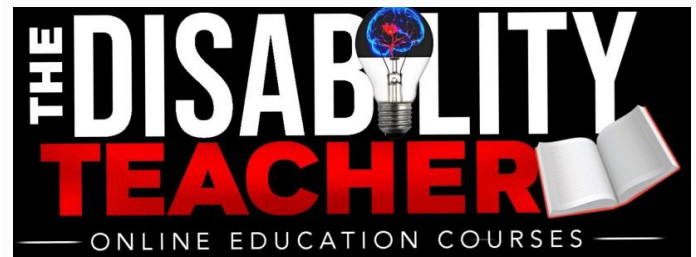
Most people are not aware that you do not have to be an attorney to get paid representing disabled people before the Social Security Administration. The main objective of The Disability Teacher® is to bring awareness to non-attorney representation of disabled people before the Social Security Administration. It is our mission to advance disability advocacy as a career choice for paralegals and other non-attorneys. Our mission is to **Educate, Equip and Empower** the Paralegal! We **Educate** paralegals for careers as Eligible for Direct Pay Non-Attorney (EDPNA) Representatives by teaching the knowledge and practical skills to **Equip** you to start and build your successful business as a Social Security Disability Advocate earning 25 % of back pay benefits up to \$7,200.00 per approval or favorable decision. We **Empower** you by teaching our step-by-step disability process, providing mentorship programs, and supporting you in entrepreneurship.

For more information about The Disability Teacher®, you may reach us through the platforms below:

Website: [www.thedisabilityteacher.com](http://www.thedisabilityteacher.com)

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Our course, Becoming A Disability Advocate, is offered as a six-week virtual course with weekly live instruction or you may prefer to take our self-paced, automated course. In our course, you will learn:

- How to apply the Social Security Rules to win cases early at the Initial and Reconsideration levels.
- How to attract the right clients for more favorable decisions.
- How to use the Social Security Rules and Regulations to receive the maximum payout for your client and your firm.
- How to complete Social Security Forms.

We also offer EDPNA study sessions in March, April and May for non-attorneys preparing to sit for the EDPNA examination in June.

## The Network of American Legal Support Services Professionals - ("The NALSSP")

NALSSP is excited to announce the new NALSSP.COM online directory to the Paralegals Connect community as an Affiliate Partner. Paralegals Connect members can save 30% at initial sign-up on new directory subscriptions through August 31, 2023, by applying the discount code [WELCOMEPARALEGALSCONNECT30].

The directory welcomes U.S. based legal support service professionals and businesses as well as those that support them with relevant products and services [professionals, suppliers, providers, podcasters, merch vendors, influencers, etc.]. Wherever professionals are within the legal support services ecosystem, The NALSSP is the place for them!

The NALSSP directory will be a multi-faceted resource for legal support service professionals. It will be a one-stop-shop – serving as an online marketing solution, a place to find colleagues offering other support services and providing business/professional development consulting.

NALSSP.COM is a community of real people being seen by real people. Social media is great. However, many such accounts are administered by social media managers (non-decision makers), AI bots and not actual prospective clients. These accounts may like your posts and your page, yet they have no real connection to anyone that is seeking your services. The NALSSP directory will connect you with clients in real life. Our professionals won't get lost in other overcrowded and spam filled online forums, job boards and groups engaging with irrelevant profiles.

The NALSSP online directory features twelve professional categories all in one place with easy search filtering: Appearance Attorneys, Court Reporters, Forensic Experts, Language Interpreters, Mediators, Medico-Legal, Notary, Paralegals, Private Investigators, Process Servers, Restorative Justice Practitioners and Security Services professionals. Users can search the directory by geographic location, service category, and keyword. Each general category will contain related service professionals. For instance, Legal Nurse Consultants will be listed under "Medico-Legal", and Proofreaders will be listed under "Court Reporter."

Process Servers are always in demand for paralegals. Our Process Server Quote Request feature gives paralegals a simple tool to request bids from multiple process servers in a given local area by zip code - reducing their workload (no need to make multiple calls or send multiple emails). Just fill out one form with all the details of a civil process assignment and submit it. An email will go out to each Process Server under that zip code. Even now, as the directory grows, your quote requests will be received, and you will be provided with multiple options from within the region of your assignment.



The demand for freelance and remote paralegals is rising. NALSSP.COM provides paralegals with affordable online marketing to prospective clients who are searching for such services. As both the demand and number of freelance paralegals continues to grow exponentially, The NALSSP online directory will be the connecting link. We encourage paralegals to position themselves now by signing up for a new directory listing.

Paralegals can also sign up on our directory as individuals for career advancement. As the directory grows, many other legal support service professionals, potential employers and recruiters will be viewing our site. Our professionals can showcase themselves in a clean and well-presented online profile.

The NALSSP online directory is currently in the Early Enrollment Period for new professionals. We are marketing [NALSSP.COM](http://NALSSP.COM) to a cross-section of professionals throughout the legal community who are prospective subscribers and clients. As they subscribe and create their listings, we intend to be the go-to resource for legal support services nationwide. The growth of the directory will take time. We look forward to seeing the development of The NALSSP community.

In addition to directory listings, subscribers will have access to private social media groups with professionals from among all categories within the directory.

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<b>Virtual / Freelance Paralegals Connect Facebook Group</b>	<b>4,919 Members</b>
<b>Paralegals Connect: Study Group Facebook Group</b>	<b>1,092 Members</b>
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## Why Should We Hire You? Give a FAB Response!

**By: Tami Riggs,**  
**Director of Outreach and Career Services at**  
**Center for Advanced Legal Studies**



**FAB is an acronym for Features, Advantages, and Benefits.**

FAB is a common 3-Step strategy employed in sales and marketing to generate interest in products. However, the technique can also be utilized during an interview to SELL yourself and fit any expertise acquired through experience, education, and training to specific job requirements. Consider the following when organizing your FAB responses:

**Feature** – What key factors, attributes, and skills do you have as required by the position?

**Advantage** – What strengths do your accomplishments, abilities, or past performance indicate relative to the competition?

**Benefit** – What is the result or value an employer can anticipate from hiring you?

A paralegal job description will typically require the ability to prepare legal documents and correspondence as well as the ability to organize and maintain files. The examples below illustrate how you can use the FAB method to focus your responses, so they are more impactful.

### Example 1

**Feature:** You earned a Paralegal Credential

**Advantage:** You understand the legal process and terminology better than someone without a credential

**Benefit:** You are qualified through education and training to perform substantive legal work that requires knowledge of legal concepts, and as a result, can complete the work more quickly and effectively.

### Example 2

**Feature:** You devised a new process at work with specific rules for creating and tracking files

**Advantage:** Employer had better quality control over documents

**Benefit:** More efficient operations and timely retrieval of information in vital situations

**In any sales presentation, the objective is to make a product come to life. During the hiring process, that product is you!** All candidates who interview have an opportunity to “tell” a potential employer about their background, competencies, and accomplishments. Unfortunately, many stop just short of meaningful answers to questions that actually “show” how they stand out. Great communication and customer service skills, 2 years of experience, and a degree are general talents and strengths. While they may be important, generic responses like these can be less effective as they don’t link your competencies to performance outcomes.

**To transform your interviewing power, communicate a FAB message that not only gives weight and depth to your skills and abilities but also demonstrates how they add value to the position.** Results matter! You are more likely to ace the interview by selling an employer on what they can gain by hiring you. The FAB model can help you state facts about yourself, highlight accomplishments, and then quantify how they can make a tangible difference to the organization.

**Having a compelling list of FAB statements before each interview that connects your skills to a solution for a potential employer is foundational to any job search.**

With thoughtful preparation and planning, the time that you invest in preparing your FAB can help you stand out above other candidates. What does the employer need? What are the key qualifications specified in the job description? What can you offer to build your authority in these areas?

**Hiring managers and recruiters want details – evidence of capabilities that enable them to envision you in the role.**

Match your unique features to the job posting and convert them to advantages. Then think about how to translate them further into a benefit for the organization. If you can answer, “what’s in it for the employer,” and back that answer up with advantages and benefits, you will likely rise to the top of the candidate pool.

**The FAB approach allows you to show precisely how you can improve or add value to an organization.** This is how to use it. Pick two or three of the most important qualifications listed in any job description and match them to your strongest skills. Doing so will help you provide concrete examples and concisely sum up how you meet the top requirements with a powerful answer. This technique may also help with other questions like, “Why do you want to work here?” and “What are your strengths?” **Remember, you are a competitive product. The hiring manager is your customer. It's up to you to transform features into benefits that close the sale and get you the job.**

[Center for Advanced Legal Studies](#) provides career services to recent graduates and alumni, enabling them to prepare and compete for paralegal positions in the greater Houston area and throughout the United States. Visit us at [paralegal.edu](#) to learn more about the [paralegal profession](#) and our [accredited paralegal programs](#).



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### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Tami Riggs is Director of Outreach and Career Services at [Center for Advanced Legal Studies](#) in Houston, Texas. She has an extensive and varied professional background that spans criminal justice, paralegal education, and international school marketing and communication. Her career has been guided by a focus on developing strategic partnerships that facilitate school growth and student opportunity. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from Texas State University. Connect with Tami on [LinkedIn](#).

## Tips For Building Confidence

By: Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP

On behalf of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC  
A Paralegals Connect Affiliate Partner Article

If you are unhappy with your career, your current position may not be the problem. Your unhappiness with your career could be residual effects from anxiety that is driven by the lack of inner confidence. Bottom line your lack of confidence could be the root cause of all your unhappiness with your professional and personal life. People like to call this type of doubt or unhappiness imposter syndrome. Imposter syndrome is associated with self-doubt, negative self-talk, and negative self-image.

Whatever you call these negative feelings does not change the facts.

**Fact one:** Imposter syndrome affects everyone. They are not being honest if they say otherwise.

**Fact two:** Imposter Syndrome is normal.

**Fact three:** Imposter Syndrome can prevent you from excelling professionally.

**Fact four:** You can develop strategies to mitigate imposter syndrome's impact. Despite your feelings of inadequacy and shortcomings, you can achieve your goal.

**Fact five:** Imposter syndrome is impossible to eradicate. The belief that you can always remain confident is unrealistic. Self-doubt will always creep in. Recognizing it and doing something about it before it takes root is the key to overcoming it.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Holly A. Sheriff, ASPS, BBA, MSLS, MCC, CCC, PCC, LPC, CPP, is the founder of Best Virtual Paralegal LLC (BVParalegal). Holly is currently the President of the New York City Paralegal Association. She has worked as legal consultant, paralegal, & certified coach in multiple disciplines for over 30 years. Holly has been an affiliate contributor & expert with Paralegals Connect since 2020. Holly is currently accepting new clients who want to build & grow successful legal careers. Contact Holly at (717) 747.3588 text/voice | [LinkedIn](#) | [@bvparalegal](#) on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn & Instagram | [Holly's links and Biz Card](#)

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Once you accept the foregoing facts, you can start reframing your thoughts before the negative ones take root.

Here are some of my favorite ways to overcome imposter syndrome:

1. Write positive self-talk in a journal. Your journal is your wish list for what someone would say about you. Read it daily.
2. Instead of saying, "Nothing works out for me. Try saying, "Everything always works out for me."
3. Instead of saying, "I never win." Try saying, "I always win. I'm a winner."

Confidence takes work. It is tough. Confidence isn't automatic for even the happiest people. Have you ever met someone and thought, "Wow!" Judy always wins door prizes, parks in the best spot, and everything works out for her?" Judy's thought process likely focused on winning the best parking spots and the door prizes and thinking everything would work out.'

The next time you start to think you are unhappy with your job or career, stop and take a quick audit of your mood vs. joy, try to reframe the situation from the inside out. **Building confidence is hard work, yet it is the most valuable tool you have!** Build it and it will serve you well!





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## Bachelor of Arts: Law and Business Degree Program Announced

By: Eric H. Happe, Associate Director, and  
Tami Riggs, Director of Outreach and Career  
Services, Center for Advanced Legal Studies



Center for Advanced Legal Studies (CALS) is excited to announce the availability of a new bachelor's degree program designed specifically for paralegals and other legal support professionals. Classes in the **Bachelor of Law and Business** degree program begin **January 29, 2024**.

CALS has specialized exclusively in paralegal education and training since 1987 and has helped thousands of graduates enter this exciting and rewarding profession through the completion of accredited certificates and associate of applied science degrees. This new bachelor's degree, intended primarily for graduates of paralegal programs at CALS and other accredited institutions, is designed to help paralegals enhance and advance their legal careers and to better qualify for opportunities in the commercial and business sectors.

There is a strong demand for this type of degree. During the 2021-2022 reporting period for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), accredited institutions reported 10,459 paralegal credentials conferred, with nearly half (5,022) being 2-year associate degrees. Another 4,128 were undergraduate certificates. Completers of these programs who wish to pursue bachelor's degrees often encounter difficulties when attempting to transfer their credits into traditional colleges and universities due to differences in accreditation standards or other institutional roadblocks. Center for Advanced Legal Studies understands this and welcomes transfer credits from other accredited institutions. Equivalent or closely related college-level courses may be eligible for transfer, and CALS will work with incoming students to determine equivalencies for older courses. There should be no need to repeat college courses because of differences in accreditation or because courses were taken several years in the past.



### Program Development

Center for Advanced Legal Studies has a successful history of delivering quality paralegal programs and has supported and prepared students to become paralegals for 36 years. However, paralegal certificates and associate degrees at CALS (and elsewhere) are designed to help those interested in pursuing a paralegal career **enter** the legal profession. Many employers now require or at least strongly prefer paralegals to hold a bachelor's degree to qualify for employment or to be considered for more prized positions. While this is understandable, it also creates a 'paper ceiling' that can be difficult to overcome without attaining a higher level of education. The purpose of this new **Bachelor of Law and Business** degree is not only to help paralegals enhance and advance their careers but also to equip them with the very thing needed to remove career enhancement barriers that arise from not having a 4-year degree.

The **Bachelor of Law and Business** program is the culmination of years of diligent effort by CALS staff with the input and support of its faculty, students, alumni, employers, and Program Advisory Committee (PAC). Through internal reviews aimed at improving and enhancing academic quality, it was clear that the addition of common-sense business courses to the already strong law curriculum would best serve paralegals and other legal support professionals and provide them with appreciable value in an advanced degree program.

To begin working on a bachelor's degree level program, CALS first had to apply for and become approved by a new accrediting body. This was because CALS' existing accreditation only approved up to 2-year degrees. After a stringent review process, CALS received accreditation through Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC) in May of 2020. ACCSC is an institutional accreditation body recognized by the Department of Education with an emphasis on career education and training.

## Curriculum

Paralegal students at Center for Advanced Legal Studies have historically taken a core law curriculum that addresses primary legal practice areas with courses such as Civil Procedure, Legal Research and Writing, Family Law, Personal Injury, Real Estate, Intellectual Property, and Criminal Law, among others. These courses are designed to provide students with the essential knowledge and skills necessary to begin a paralegal career and work in the more conventional areas of practice. The bachelor's degree program presents the opportunity to add new, advanced law courses such as Administrative Law, Employment Law, Bankruptcy Law, Legal Ethics, and Constitutional Law and Civil Liberties to extend the reach of the legal curriculum. These additional courses will be taught at a higher academic level (3000/4000) and are designed to encourage a greater and more thorough analysis and evaluation of legal principles.

In addition to the core law curriculum, **Bachelor of Law and Business** students will also receive a core business curriculum designed to provide access to and familiarity with valuable, practical business topics. Core business courses will include Introduction to Business, Accounting Principles, Business Communication, and Management. Students will select 4-6 business electives from Marketing, Business Ethics, Human Resources, Finance, Project Management, and International Business.

During the development of this degree program, surveys and feedback from students and alumni revealed a strong interest in criminal justice topics as well. Therefore, students will complete two criminal justice courses including Introduction to Criminal Justice and Criminology.

To complete the degree requirements for the bachelor's degree, students must either transfer in or complete at CALS a total of 120 semester credit hours as detailed below.

<u>Course Level Requirements</u>	<u>Semester Hours</u>
Required Core Occupational Courses	42
Lower Division (1000/2000) Law electives	9
Upper Division (3000/4000) Law electives	9
Upper Division (3000/4000) Business electives	12
Academic General Education Courses	30
Other Required Courses	6
Additional Electives (Law and/or Business)	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>

A complete breakdown of the courses required along with additional information can be found at <https://www.paralegal.edu/law-business>

### Application and Transfer of Credit – CALS Graduates

Graduates of Center for Advanced Legal Studies have a direct path available to enter this new program. It was specifically designed to provide them with easy access to a meaningful bachelor's degree. Those with an associate degree from CALS are already halfway finished with their bachelor's degree! All previous credits, except the Externship, will transfer directly into the bachelor's degree. Undergraduate students who completed their Paralegal Certificate may be better served completing the associate degree first before entering the full bachelor's degree program.

### Application and Transfer of Credit – Other Institutions

Students from other institutions are encouraged to provide their official college transcripts to Center for Advanced Legal Studies for evaluation. As with all transfers of credit between educational institutions, there could arise difficulties in aligning credit. However, CALS is committed to accepting as many transfer credits as possible to help shorten the length and cost of the degree.

Those interested in applying for admission to the new **Bachelor of Law and Business** degree program, or any of the other paralegal programs available at CALS, should submit their application online at <https://www.paralegal.edu/online-application> early to allow time for college transcript evaluations and to conduct personal interviews with Admissions.

### Course Delivery

**All courses in the bachelor's degree program will be delivered 100% online.** Center for Advanced Legal Studies utilizes **Canvas LMS** as its learning management system, and **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra** for live, synchronous classes. Through Blackboard Collaborate students and instructors can see and hear each other in real time, view PowerPoint® and other presentations, share applications such as Microsoft Word® and Westlaw®, and participate in breakout groups for more advanced classroom collaboration. Live classes are best experienced on a desktop or laptop computer, but students can join live classes via smartphone or tablet when necessary.

Students enrolled in programs at Center for Advanced Legal Studies are issued subscriptions to **Cengage Unlimited** for textbook access which provides immediate digital access to textbooks used in courses through Canvas. Additionally, students can conveniently access their textbooks on the go through the Cengage Mobile App. Students can also elect to purchase or rent their books directly through Cengage if they prefer a physical textbook. The current rental price per textbook is just \$9.99 for a course term.

Students attending programs at CALS also receive **Microsoft 365** accounts which provides a designated @paralegal.edu email address as well as access to Microsoft Office desktop applications. Active students also have access to **Fastcase** and **Westlaw** for online legal research.

### Final Thoughts

The paralegal profession can be an exciting and rewarding one for those who are interested in the law and have a desire to make a positive impact in the legal system. While there are many paths one can take to become a paralegal, most find that a formal, accredited paralegal credential such as a paralegal certificate or an associate degree provides the most direct path. For those who have previously earned these credentials, a related bachelor's degree that includes valuable business and upper-level law courses might be an option for enhancing or advancing their careers.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

*Eric H. Happe* is Associate Director at Center for Advanced Legal Studies in Houston, Texas. He is a graduate of the Paralegal Certificate program and worked as a paralegal for six years before returning to Center for Advanced Legal Studies in various administrative capacities. Eric managed the development of online paralegal programs at CALS and works closely with faculty and staff to provide students with quality paralegal education and training opportunities both on campus and online. Please feel free to connect with him on [LinkedIn](#)

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## Bachelor of Arts: Law and Business

"This bachelor's degree program is designed specifically to allow paralegals and other legal professionals to enhance and advance their careers."

Students at Center for Advanced Legal Studies enroll in paralegal programs because they are interested in law and desire to pursue or advance their paralegal or related careers. This has been, and remains, the primary mission of CALS since its founding in 1987. However, many students recognize the benefits of earning a higher level degree after completing their **paralegal certificate or associate degree**.

The **Bachelor of Arts: Law and Business** provides students with the additional knowledge and skills required to further their chosen careers. Whether they seek to enhance their existing paralegal career, qualify for jobs that require a 4-year degree, or want to pursue opportunities in the business sector, this program can help promote many professional objectives.

## Designed for Graduates of Paralegal Programs

Whether you are a graduate of Center for Advanced Legal Studies or another accredited paralegal program, this bachelor's degree program has been designed for you!

**Students begin where their previous studies ended by transferring in prior credits from their paralegal certificate or degree program** and then taking only those courses necessary to satisfy the bachelor's degree requirements. Combined with their previous paralegal education, graduates of this bachelor's degree program will be well-prepared for future career options and opportunities.

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Attend your degree program in a highly interactive online classroom where students can see and speak with their professor and classmates in real-time. Attend classes on your computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet. We bring the classroom to you.



Center for Advanced Legal Studies has been approved to participate in the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements. NC-SARA is a voluntary, regional approach to state oversight of post-secondary distance education. Accordingly, students residing in the 49 participating states (CA residents see below) may enroll in programs offered by CALS. Center for Advanced Legal Studies is registered with the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education and therefore authorized to admit students from California.

## Accreditation, Memberships & Associations

**ACCSC** Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges



Council on Occupational Education<sup>1</sup>



Higher Education Coordinating Board



Texas Workforce Commission



Texas Veterans Commission



American Association for Paralegal Education



National Federation of Paralegal Associations



National Association of Legal Assistants



Paralegal Division of the State Bar of Texas

<sup>1</sup> Council on Occupational Education, 7840 Roswell Road, Building 300, Suite 325, Atlanta, GA 30350, Telephone: 770-396-3898 / FAX: 770-396-3790, www.council.org

## Curriculum

**Bachelor of Arts: Law and Business**  
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### Core Occupational Courses (42 hours)

Introduction to Law and Ethics  
 Criminal Law and Procedure  
 Legal Research and Writing  
 Civil Procedure  
 Personal Injury  
 Corporate and Business Law  
 Family Law  
 Real Estate  
 Computers and the Law  
 Contracts  
 Introduction to Business  
 Accounting Principles  
 Business Communication  
 Management

### Law Elective Courses\* (18 hours)

Interviewing and Investigation  
 Wills, Trusts and Probate  
 Intellectual Property  
 E-Discovery  
 Immigration Law  
 Advanced Civil Procedure  
 Advanced Research and Writing  
 Oil and Gas Law  
 Administrative Law  
 Bankruptcy Law  
 Legal Ethics  
 Employment Law  
 Constitutional Law and Civil Liberties

### Business Elective Courses\* (12 hours)

Marketing  
 Business Ethics  
 Human Resources  
 Finance  
 Project Management  
 International Business

### Additional Electives (12 hours)

Students complete the degree requirement by selecting 4 additional law or business electives from those listed above.

### Other Required Courses (6 hours)

Introduction to Criminal Justice  
 Criminology

### Required General Education (30 hours)

English Composition I  
 English Composition II  
 Introduction to Sociology  
 Introduction to Speech Communication  
 Contemporary Mathematics  
 General Psychology  
 American Government I  
 Anatomy & Physiology I  
 Principles of Economics  
 Comparative Politics

\* Electives subject to availability

### Tuition and Fees†

Tuition	\$42,000.00
Registration Fee	100.00
Student e-Services	1,580.00
Learning Resources	1,980.00

**TOTAL \$45,660.00**

† Tuition and fees are reduced with transfer credit. For example, graduates of CALS' associate degree program can complete the bachelor's degree in 20 months with tuition and fees of \$22,880. Graduates of other accredited programs are encouraged to contact admissions and request a complete degree plan. Please be prepared to provide official college transcripts for all courses to be considered.



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### **Paralegals Connect (“PC”): Could you tell us a little bit about your history and the services you offer?**

**OTR:** For over 30 years, On The Record (OTR) has utilized advanced and cost-effective technologies and proven itself as an industry leader with a long history of meeting and exceeding every imaginable courtroom challenge. This wealth of experience and knowledge allows us to lend invaluable support in each step of the litigation process – from initial trial preparation through closing arguments.

Advanced presentation technologies are a specialty area for our staff. Beginning with the first multimedia courtroom presentation system ever used in a courtroom trial proceeding (Alpo Pet Foods v. Ralston Purina) in 1988, the principals of On The Record have been providing litigators with unparalleled courtroom presentation support. Almost two thousand and two hundred trials later, OTR remains committed to providing the highest level of trial presentation services. We work as a part of your trial team to integrate document images, photographs, graphics, video, animation, and other exhibits into a clear and convincing courtroom presentation. The presentation technology allows for instantaneous and random access of all courtroom evidence, including demonstratives, exhibits, and video deposition clips.

### **PC: There are a lot of trial presentation companies out there – What sets OTR apart from your competition?**

**OTR:** On The Record has vast experience in most State and Federal courthouse venues around the country. In addition, International Arbitrations have become a specialty area of expertise for OTR, having supported both ICC and ICSID litigation matters around the globe for over two decades. Venues have included Paris, London, Stockholm, Zurich, Manila, and even Washington, D.C.

To ensure a professional presentation, OTR stocks a wide variety of top-of-the-line equipment to transform any venue into a modern electronic courtroom. We utilize only the most advanced technologies, including high resolution projection units, widescreen monitors, the latest in computer systems, and other peripherals.

Using these presentation tools, we work with you, your trial team, and the courtroom personnel to design courtroom and war room systems that are customized specifically for the needs of your trial or arbitration. In addition, our trial consultants coordinate the delivery, setup, and management of the technology. This frees the trial attorney to concentrate on what is most important - the strategic issues of the case.

### **PC: What is a more recent service that lawyers and law firms might be surprised that you provide?**

**OTR:** On The Record understands the demanding needs of litigators. With the advent of the pandemic, those needs have unfortunately, unexpectedly, and drastically changed. Our experienced Trial Consultants can facilitate your next trial, arbitration, or hearing in our virtual courtroom – *CourtroomNext*. In addition to coordinating a secure, virtual, private meeting space, our trial technicians will present exhibits, video deposition testimony, and demonstrative graphics during the proceedings. Participants can join using a computer, tablet, or smartphone. A hard-wired computer is recommended, however. Another option is to listen in by phone.

### **PC: What’s the best way to contact you? Do you do free estimates?**

**OTR:** Yes! All our initial estimates for trials are free, and we welcome the opportunity to speak with our law firm clients regarding their trial needs and what we can do to help. Since budgets vary from trial to trial, OTR might provide a full array of services or only some on a limited scope, like simply having a hot-seat trial tech or maybe solely video editing for a smaller trial. Please visit us on our website at [ontherecord.com](http://ontherecord.com) and send us a message or feel free to email any of the principals directly. We look forward to speaking with the experienced paralegals here in the Paralegals Connect community.

## Paralegals' Contract Management Wizardry with CLM Software

By: Sean Heck  
CobbleStone Software



In a realm where legal documents and contracts can often seem like a labyrinth of complexity, paralegals stand as the unsung wizards of the legal world, tirelessly conjuring order from chaos. Yet, even the most skilled practitioners of legal wizardry face daunting challenges. Mountains of paperwork, intricate compliance requirements, and the relentless pursuit of precision can transform their enchanting craft into a burdensome peasant's quest. This is where the magic of contract lifecycle management (CLM) software comes into play. Like a powerful spell, CLM software essentially promises to streamline the mundane, automate the tedious, and bring a touch of sorcery that allows paralegals to focus on the truly magical aspects of their profession.

### **Manual Paralegal Contract Management: When the Magic is Weak**

*Imagine a mystical library, vast and ancient, filled with scrolls and tomes of every legal contract ever written. In this library, our paralegal wizard, Elara, is tasked with the monumental duty of managing these countless documents. Each day, she weaves through the aisles, painstakingly updating, revising, and reviewing contracts. Her spells of organization and attention to detail are powerful, but the sheer volume of work is overwhelming. Contracts need to be constantly monitored for compliance, deadlines for renewals loom like shadowy specters, and the ever-changing legal requirements are like a maze of shifting walls.*

*Elara's studious quill, once a source of pride, now struggles to keep pace. She spends more time searching for specific clauses and ensuring proper signatures than practicing her higher-level enchantments. Her once vibrant energy is drained by the mundane, leaving little room for the strategic magic that truly showcases her skills.*

This is the plight of many paralegal wizards, who find themselves bogged down in the mire of administrative tasks, yearning for a spell that can bring back the joy and efficiency to their magical craft.

### **CLM Software: A Solution So Natural, It's Nearly SUPERNatural**

As Elara stands amidst the labyrinthine aisles of her vast library, a wise old sage presents her with a set of enchanted tools, each designed to alleviate her burdens.

First, he unveils contract auto-redlining and a pre-approved template and clause library – in the form of a three-part spell. This mysterious technique can be honed to update newly introduced contracts with the most preferred framing, legalese, and contract terms.

Next, he reveals electronic signature software in the form of a mystical quill that can replicate Elara's signature across multiple documents with a single incantation. This quill not only saves her from the tedium of manual signings but also virtually ensures that each signature is perfectly placed and legally binding – complete with desired placeholder options, approval workflows, and digital signature attestation.

The sage then presents the Collaboration Crystal, a shimmering orb that, when gazed upon, reveals clauses locked for approval by their owners, document versions, internal and external contract negotiation, and comprehensive audit trails.

Lastly, the sage shows her the Proceeding Pact Pendant, a small amulet that vibrates gently when a contract deadline approaches. This enchanted item helps Elara manage renewals and deadlines effortlessly, essentially ensuring that no contract ever lapses unintentionally.

With these magical tools at her disposal, Elara can now navigate the complexities of contract management with ease, freeing her to focus on the strategic and creative aspects of her wizardry. The mundane tasks that once drained her energy are now automated efficiently, allowing her to rediscover the joy and artistry in her magical paralegal profession.



## Get Started with Spellbinding Contract Software Success!

As our tale of Elara and her newfound magical tools comes to a close, we are reminded of the transformative power of the right instruments in the hands of a skilled practitioner. The aforementioned sage has provided these paralegal tools. That wise sage is CobbleStone Software.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Sean Heck is a Content Marketing Manager at CobbleStone Software



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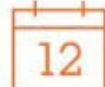
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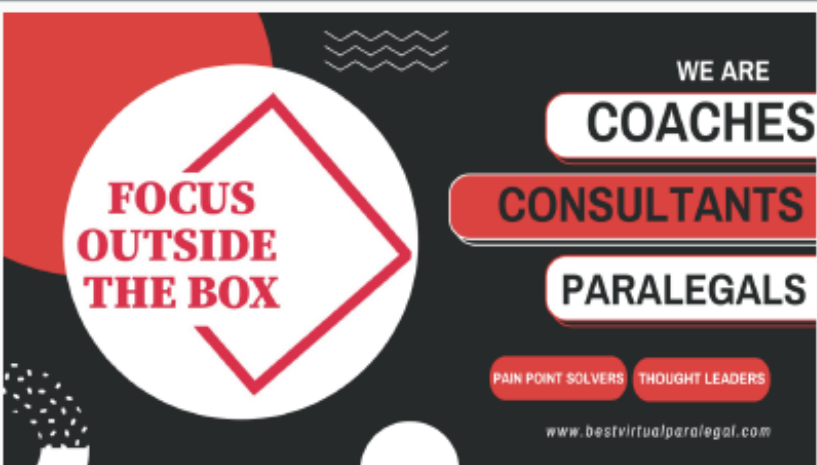
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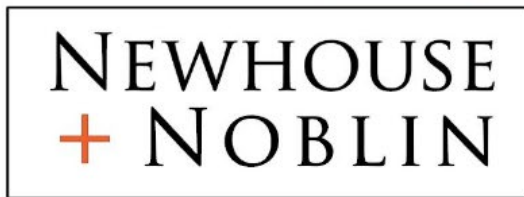
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