October 2019 Newsletter

Paralegal Student Association

Email: psa.nvcc@gmail.com

Visit: blogs.nvcc.edu/allegal/paralegal-student-association/

Meet Your Fall 2019 PSA Officers!

President _____ **April Claros**

April is in her final year of the Paralegal Studies Program. After changing majors, April began an internship at Mughal Law Firm where she was subsequently hired as the Senior Legal Assistant. Thanks to studying abroad in Bolivia for almost four years, April is fully bilingual in English and Spanish, which has been a huge asset in the immigration work she does at her firm. In her free time, April enjoys baking and rereading the Harry Potter series.

Vice President _____ **Amie Shafer**

After getting injured on the job at Starbucks, Amie got bit by the legal bug when she took the huge coffee corporation to court *pro se* to reimburse her for time off and medical bills. Ever since, she has been taking Paralegal classes at Nova to better prepare her for the end goal: law school. For fun, Amie enjoys crafting, watching movies, planning her 2021 wedding, and napping with her pets, the Notorious D.O.G. and his feline rival, Suge Knight.

Secretary_____ **Elyse Porter**

Elyse is currently in her 4th semester of the Paralegal Studies program. After nearly a decade of working in video production, Elyse switched careers in 2017 and landed a job as a Legal Staff Assistant at the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. When not working or studying, Elyse enjoys photography and exploring the DMV's hiking trails.

Treasurer _____ **Gwendolyn Will**

Gwendolyn is in her final semester of the Paralegal Studies program. After leaving school to have a daughter and enjoy being a stay at home mom, she came back to NVCC to finish her degree. When not studying, Gwendolyn enjoys spending time with her family and doing Zumba workouts.

From left to right: Gwendolyn, Elyse, Amie & April

Mark Your Calendars!

Next PSA Meeting

Monday, October 28
5:30-6:30pm | Room AA-475
Come to the 2nd PSA meeting for a Q&A session with working paralegals, and a chance to win a $20 gift card for Amazon!

Important NVCC Dates

Tuesday, October 29
Last day to withdraw without grade penalty (16-week session)

Monday, November 4
Last day to withdraw without grade penalty (14-week session)

Monday, November 11
Open registration for the Spring 2020 semester begins

Other Noteworthy Dates

Sunday, November 3
Daylight Savings ends. Set your clocks back an hour!

Tuesday, November 5
Election Day – Play a part in your democracy by voting for local laws and officials.

Into Studying

If you're carving a Jack-o-Lantern this Halloween, don't scoop all those slimy pumpkin seeds into the trash just yet! According to the American Heart Association, **snacking on pumpkin seeds** can lower blood pressure, improve memory function, and prevent migraines[1]. Google "easy recipes for baking pumpkin seeds" for a savory snack to get you – and your brain – through Midterms.

Then pack your books and start **studying outside**, as BestColleges.org recommends a "change of scenery" to increase concentration and retention skills[2]. If you're feeling especially motivated, hike, bike, walk or run as **exercising before studying** gives your brain a happy boost of oxygen and energy to retain all of that incoming information ahead.

Finally, you either love or hate "P.S.L. Season," that time of year when Starbucks closes the door on summer and unleashes the Pumpkin Spice Latte. Maybe more of us should show it some love, since WebMD recommends **consuming caffeine and sugar** in "Brain Foods that Help You Concentrate.[3]" (Since it's the first time we've clicked on WebMD without it saying we have some form of cancer, we'll take it.)

– FROM THE DESK OF –
Professor Joyce McMillan, J.D.

Ever wonder how class schedules for the Paralegal Studies (LGL) program are created?

- ✓ Class schedules are carefully designed to meet the needs of the majority of students.
- ✓ *Introduction to Law*, *Legal Research*, and *Legal Writing* are offered in the day and evening in both spring and fall semesters.
- ✓ In most instances, the remaining LGL courses rotate between the day and evening in the spring and fall. This gives all students an opportunity to take those courses.
- ✓ *Legal Writing* and *Estate Planning and Probate* often meet on Saturday.
- ✓ Online courses meet the needs of both day & evening students.
- ✓ The summer class schedule is strategically planned so that those courses do not negatively impact enrollment numbers in the fall.

Students are strongly encouraged to meet with their program advisor every semester. Advising appointments are available in person, by phone, or email.

Additional information is available on the program website:
https://blogs.nvcc.edu/allegal/frequently-asked-questions-faq/

Our very own VP, Amie Shafer, gives her eight legal thriller recommendations for October.

The Exorcism of Emily Rose
Based on true events, this film follows the murder trial of a priest (Tom Wilkinson) for the death of a teenage girl he performed an exorcism on. While the prosecution argues the girl suffered from schizophrenia, the defense attorney (Laura Linney) starts to believe the priest may be telling the truth about what really ailed – and killed – Emily Rose.

The Devil's Advocate
When a young lawyer (Keanu Reeves) accepts a position with a powerful law firm, little does he know he signed a deal with the devil (Al Pacino). As his career accelerates, the mental health of his wife (Charlize Theron) rapidly deteriorates. Will he choose his career over his marriage, and give the devil his due – the soul of his beloved wife?

The Crucible
After a married man (Daniel Day-Lewis) ends an affair with his mistress (Winona Rider), she accuses his innocent wife (Joan Allen) of witchcraft out of spite. Adapted from the Arthur Miller play bearing the same name, this film exposes the horrifying reality of what could – and did – go wrong during the Salem Witch Trials of 1692.

Cape Fear
In this psychological thriller by Martin Scorsese, a defense attorney (Nick Nolte) purposefully withholds evidence that could acquit his client, a violent sex offender (Robert De Niro). After spending 14 years in prison planning his revenge, the perpetrator is free to prey upon his former attorney's family, in a terrorizing game of cat-and-*mice*.

TAKE 5 with Professor Wickline

Introducing Professor Cassi Wickline, NVCC's newest adjunct faculty member for Paralegal Studies! After graduating from the Paralegal Studies program herself in 2013, Professor Wickline obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Business with a Concentration in Law. As a "big fan" of the Paralegal Studies program, Professor Wickline was thrilled to join NVCC's Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee a few years ago, on which she still currently serves. While she has enjoyed working as a professional paralegal in family and criminal law for the past 7 years, Professor Wickline is excited to expand her legal horizons and share her expertise with NVCC students.

1. What was your biggest surprise entering the workforce as a paralegal?
I remember when I first began working as a paralegal, my boss was pleasantly surprised I knew legal principles and basic procedures for preparing various pleadings and motions. While he had to train me on local rules, he did not have to explain to me the entire process – Obviously, it was my education at NOVA that prepared me for that. After entering the workforce, I quickly realized the paralegal role was a much broader role than I anticipated, which included drafting legal documents, research, file organization, client control, billing, answering phones, intakes, and scheduling appointments. I had an unrealistic thought that I would jump right into drafting detailed legal documents and preparing for court. Unfortunately, it did not cross my mind that I would be asked to start from the bottom and work my way up. Furthermore, I did not ever consider the idea of playing an administrative role. It is important for upcoming paralegals to keep an open mind and be flexible to support the attorney and law firm in any task needed. All attorneys appreciate a flexible paralegal and one that can multi-task, even if the paralegal is new to the field.

2. What is one piece of advice you would like to share with Paralegal Studies students graduating this December?
While there is no attorney that will expect a new paralegal to know the answer to every question, they will want you to know where to find the answer.

3. As a professional paralegal, what have you found your best resource to be when you cannot find an answer?
It is important to build lasting relationships with other paralegals, legal assistants, and lawyers. After searching for an answer and being unable to find it, I tend to lean on one of my mentors or professional contacts in the legal field.

4. What is your favorite legal movie, television show, documentary, book, author, podcast, or case to watch, read, or listen to?
"Born Behind Bars" on the A&E network.

5. What can students find you doing in your spare time?
When I am not teaching or working as a paralegal, I enjoy spending time with my children, watching them participate in their soccer and dance. I also enjoy reading, shopping, traveling, and exercising.

Introduce yourself to Professor Wickline, any Monday before her Family Law class starts at 7:00pm in Room AA-475!

Amie's Eight (cont.)

The Silence of the Lambs
A young FBI agent (Jodie Foster) is tasked with investigating the kidnapping of a politician's daughter, whom police fear is in the hands of a serial killer. To try and get inside the mind of a murderer, the agent interrogates – and befriends – a cannibal (Anthony Hopkins) serving life behind bars. Will he help or hinder her investigation?

Vertigo
A list of thriller movies wouldn't be complete without a nod to the late, great Alfred Hitchcock! In *Vertigo*, an ex-cop (Jimmy Stuart) is hired to protect a woman (Kim Novak) who has been acting strangely. Between the woman's fractured memories and the cop's paralyzing fears, it's hard to decipher reality from fiction in what is considerably Hitchcock's masterpiece.

Se7en
When a retiring detective (Morgan Freeman) agrees to take on one last homicide case with his replacement (Brad Pitt), they soon discover the victim will be the first of many, as the killer is targeting people according to the Seven Deadly Sins. Will the detectives be able to stop working on the case before they succumb to one of the deadly sins themselves?

The Purge
Ever wonder what would happen if the United States legalized all crimes for one night a year? Wonder no more as this film, starring Ethan Hawke, does an excellent job of playing out that terrifying scenario. (And if you like this one, check out the sequels!)

About the PSA

The Paralegal Student Association, commonly referred to as "PSA," is a student interest group open to current and former Paralegal Studies students at Northern Virginia Community College. Since 2014, the PSA has provided a forum for students to connect with classmates and alumni, meet prospective employers and colleagues, discuss current events, and serve the surrounding community. Monthly meetings and events are always open to any paralegal students looking to engage with each other, their colleagues, and their curriculum. Between field trips, guest speakers, volunteer opportunities, job placement events, mock interviews, and more – there's sure to be something to peak every Paralegal Studies student's interests.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

I missed the first meeting. Is it too late to join?
It's never too late to join! Students are welcome to attend PSA meetings and events whenever they are interested or available.

I'm broke. Do I have to pay "dues" to be a member?
Nope! As a student interest group, we cannot and will not require anyone to pay "dues" in order to be an "active" member in the PSA. Sometimes we ask for volunteers to bring in refreshments, but volunteering is optional.

What about money for field trips?
The occasional PSA field trip may cost money depending on entrance or ticket fees, transportation needs, and meals. However, we try to keep a college student's budget in mind when planning these trips, and participation is entirely optional.

Can I still be in the PSA if I only make it to one meeting a semester?
Absolutely! Since we are a student interest group, we cannot and will not require members to attend a certain number of meetings or events in order to stay "active." Your activity level is what you make it!

I'm not getting any PSA-related emails. What's the deal?
We don't have your email address! Please email psa.nvcc@gmail.com to be added to the PSA email distribution list. You can unsubscribe at any time.

Interested in contributing to the PSA Newsletter?

We're looking for writers, reporters, photographers, cartoonists, and more!

Email psa.nvcc@gmail.com if interested.

Have an idea for the newsletter but that's as far as it goes?

Email psa.nvcc@gmail.com your idea!

References for "Fall Into Studying"

[1] www.heart.org/en/news/2018/10/25/pumpkin-seeds-pack-a-healthy-punch
[2] www.thebestcolleges.org/17-scientifically-proven-ways-to-study-better-this-year
[3] www.webmd.com/add-adhd/ss/slideshow-brain-foods-that-help-you-concentrate

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