



## **Court Reporting Advisory Committee Meeting**

### **MINUTES**

**Tuesday, October 6, 2020**

**4 – 5:30 p.m.**

**Present:**

Alina Varona, College of Marin (COM), Dean, Career Education and Workforce Development

Katheryn Horton, COM, Director, Workforce Project

Stephanie Stubbs, COM, Court Reporting, Instructor

Meg Pasqual, COM, Academic Senate

Ronald Palmer, COM, Career Education Chair

Byron Ramey, COM, Career Education Counselor

Heather Rahman, COM, Career Education Workforce and Partnership Specialist

Eric Van Dorn, COM, Court Reporting Instructor

Brian O’Conner, COM, Court Reporting Instructor

Gregory Stubbs, Law Offices of Gregory Stubbs

Vykki Morgan, Retired Court Reporter, Consultant

Alexander Jones, COM Internship Coordinator

Claudia Barr-Vickers, Reader, Retired Reporting Instructor

Janis Olson, COM, Court Reporting

Yvonne Fenner, Certified Shorthand Reporters Board

Jesse Madsen, Marin County Office of Education

Mike Hensley, California Court Reporters Association

Araceli Nunez, Marin County Office of Education

Diane Freeman, CA Deposition Reporters' Assn

Cara Foster, California Court Reporters Association

Paul Lee, Mezmo Corporation dba InnoCaption

Patricia Dowling, CSR, Official for the SF Superior Court

Marina Pitts, Law Offices of Leone & Alberts

Chris Dunsmore, Former COM Court Reporting Student

Jenny Franklin, College of Marin - student

Jessica Savnik, College of Marin - student

Kathleen LaGrave, College of Marin - student

Lindsley Kinser, College of Marin - student

Marion McDonald, College of Marin - student

Noelle Bentley, College of Marin - student

Phi Nguyen, College of Marin - student

Cameron McKesson, Office of Chief Counsel, Internal Revenue Service, Large Business & International

Roni Olaizola, College of Marin - student

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### **Welcome and Introductions –**

Katheryn Horton, Stephanie Stubbs and Heather Rahman welcomed and thanked our Advisory Board for attending the meeting.

Katheryn acknowledged everyone in attendance and asked them to briefly introduce themselves by giving a sentence about their affiliation with Court Reporting.

### **Court Reporting Analysis Report –**

Katheryn asked Vykki Morgan to elaborate on the highlights of her revitalization report.

Vykki spoke of the important recommendations contained in her report. One of her strongest recommendations was that College of Marin (COM) support the Court Reporting sector with more marketing and outreach efforts. She also stressed a need for a full-time instructor since the program is currently working with part-time faculty and staff who try to meet all of the requirements and needs of COM, the students and Court Reporters Board (CRB). Meg Pasqual, as a member of the Academic Senate which is currently guiding the program through the revitalization process, added that Stephanie Stubbs is paid three units to assist with some of the full-time duties. Vykki answered that the three units did not offset a full-time faculty's responsibilities and that Stephanie devoted much more time to fulfilling these requirements.

Vykki suggested the program offers speed building classes to accommodate students who have taken theory class and are ready to begin speed building but cannot yet take dictation at 120 words per minute. She further stated that Court Reporting was unique in many ways and that it was imperative that classes be available to students at various speeds. She also recommended distance learning, which has been in place at COM since COVID 19.

She suggested changing, realigning and updating the curriculum to accommodate stacking certificates as a way to allow students to receive lower certifications than the California Certified Shorthand designation. Certificates could be offered in proof-reading, CART, scoping, etc. Vykki stated that the students gave great suggestions on how to build the program. She also stated that the students had three components to their speed-building needs:

1. "Goal" words per minute speed students need to acquire
2. "Push" speed students need to achieve their "goal"
3. "Trail" speed students need to acquire accuracy

She suggests non-credit classes could help with the speed-building inequity of students taking classes multiple times. The speed-building advancement of the student varies widely. It can take students from two to up to four-plus years to acquire the speed and accuracy necessary to pass the CSR exam. She said that Court Reporting curriculum does not fit neatly into the Community College system – it is like putting a round peg in a square hole.

Her other suggestions included checking out the program at West Valley to see how it is operating as a non-credit department as well as looking for grant opportunities. She also mentioned the Ducker report, which stated what the future of Court Reporting looked like. It reported that between the years 2013 and 2018, seventy percent of the then current Court Reporting workforce would be retiring and that these openings would need to be filled.

Vykki further emphasized the importance of marketing the Court Reporting program and offered suggestions about creating brochures, working with other departments (such as the Drama Department), to create vehicles to spread the word. She suggested exploring the resources of CTD for their support in including Court Reporting in all advertisements, mailings and promotions. Another recommendation was to have the Court Reporting website be more available and easier to find.

Vykki spoke briefly about the difficulty in collecting accurate employment data on Court Reporting because of the fact that many Court Reporters are either self-employed and/or work in other related industries. She strongly affirmed the need for Court Reporters and the shortage of Court Reporters in the workplace. She acknowledged that bonuses were being offered above the regular pay because firms are in such desperate need for Court Reporters.

COM's Court Reporting Department must meet the requirements of the Court Reporters Board. The Court Reporting department supports the students' goals to acquire the skills necessary to pass the Certified Shorthand Reporter (CSR) exam. Vykki stressed the need for a bridging class after the theory class.

Eric Van Dorn commented that he received Vykki's report two weeks ago and had not yet had time to fully read the report.

Claudia Barr-Vickers congratulated Vykki on its thoroughness of her report. Claudia further commented that in past years, the Court Reporting Department participated in job fairs and that there has been talk for a long time about court reporting having its own website.

Vykki, continuing to encourage marketing efforts, commented that Cypress College revamped and advertised their Court Reporting program and now had 40 students in their theory class. The year before they had 20, and the year before that they had 5.

Mike Hensley, Vice President of CCRA, stated that CCRA (California Court Reporters Association) and NCRA (National Court Reports Association) is offering free introductory courses to perspective students in court reporting. These courses can serve as a pathway to schools. The courses allow an individual to vet court reporting and determine whether this profession is a good fit.

**Labor Market Information (LMI) –**

Heather Rahman reviewed highlights of a Centers of Excellence (COE) report prepared for the Sacramento region. The data in the report reflects similarly for the Bay Area region. COE data is based from the Employment Development Department (EDD) labor market findings and on job posting analysis reports compiled by Burning Glass Technologies. She stipulated industry leaders find the wages and number of job openings on the labor market reports low, particularly where many in the workforce are independent contractors. Discrepancies may exist within the Court Reporting labor market information due to the following reasons:

- Job postings are housed in special registries and not detected by traditional job posting sites.
- Candidates are sourced through word-of-mouth.
- Many court reporters are self-employed.

Heather invited the professional members of the Advisory Board to contact her directly if they have an interest in speaking to students or if they want to establish intern positions for COM students.

Heather announced she will be sending a new survey out to our industry partners within the next week or two. The purpose of this survey is to help COM meet industry needs and ensure students' success in the workforce.

Heather demonstrated how to access the [Court Reporting webpage](#) via the COM website. She explained that it takes a few clicks to navigate to the page, but the site is slated for an overhaul in the near future.

Paul Lee from InnoCaptions spoke about their mission to serve deaf and hard-of-hearing users. They have patented caption delivery technology that assists hard-of-hearing individuals in communicating via telephone. Paul stated the company is in desperate need of court reporters to employ. Their company had 100% growth in the past year.

Alina confirmed and clarified the qualifications for employment with Paul. The requirement for hiring is that the individual be tested and is able to accurately take dictation at 200+ wpm. If the individual has passed the CSR exam, there is no need for testing as they have surpassed the requirements. The pay is \$30 to \$45 per hour, and the job hours are flexible. The individual can spend as little or as much time as they wish working. It is a great opportunity for a new graduate to get experience or for a graduate to augment their income. They are able to work from home but must have a strong internet connection. Obviously, the need to be confidential is essential. InnoCaptions source by reaching out to community colleges directly, by word of mouth and through social media.

Many of our Professional Committee Members addressed how attractive Court Reporting is to women, especially single moms. The schedule flexibility is very appealing as well as the fact that the profession is financially lucrative and that there are always jobs needing to be filled.

Katheryn Horton invited students to speak about their experience in finding employment upon completing COM's Court Reporting program.

Chris Dunsmore conveyed that upon graduating from COM Court Reporting program and passing the CSR exam, that he had unlimited work available to him in the Santa Barbara area, that he could be working every day that he wanted to work. He further stated that there was never a

shortage of job openings. He did state that when the pandemic first hit, his jobs slowed to one a week, but they are now back to as many jobs as he wants. And, the good news is that he has been able to do all of these jobs from home during COVID-19. He also commented that the firms were so pleased to have him as a court reporter that they were all very supportive.

Mike Hensley reported how pleased he was with Court Reporting as a profession. He stated that he could not think of another profession that would have afforded him the opportunities that he had in these past five years with Court Reporting. He owns his own company; his salary is only limited by his own goals. He loves what he is doing and feels as though he can be as successful as he desires.

Jenny Franklin, a COM student and videographer, said that the firms where she works are encouraging her to graduate so that they can hire her as a court reporter. She confirmed that many were offering bonuses.

Patricia Dowling also spoke about a current minimum of 12 openings in San Francisco with bonuses, benefits and a starting salary of \$112,000 a year plus a \$4,000 signing bonus and the opportunity to earn more by augmenting this income. She further stated that Court Reporting was even popular on TikTok. [Per Stephanie Stubbs in clarifying, "Re: the salary of reporters at SF superior, it should be added a \$4,000 hiring bonus, extra 5% salary bump for real-time reporters, benefits, plus an additional \$75,000-plus with transcript orders from attorneys."] [Patricia Dowling, 4/07/2021 in correction, you can earn up to maybe \$30,000 to \$40,000 extra in transcripts.]

Jesse Madsen addressed high school students and court reporting. He stated that most high school students do not know about court reporting as an option. He felt that going forward, he can communicate more often at the K-12 level about the advantages and lucrativeness of court reporting as a profession. He also mentioned utilizing COM's summer academy could be beneficial. He pointed out that most high school students are accustomed to typing on laptops and that learning court reporting would be a natural transition.

### **Counseling Impact –**

Byron Ramey spoke about working with students who express an interest in having a court reporting education. He speaks with the student about their commitment and the academics necessary to complete the court reporting program. He feels that the catalogue could be cleaned up to accurately reflect the courses being offered and the requirements for the program.

Cara Foster reiterated the huge need for hiring court reporters.

Eric Van Dorn confirmed new seating requirements for the readerboards.

### **Program Revitalization, Updates, Upgrades –**

Meg expressed surprise that Vykki's report had not been disseminated earlier. She stated that they were to utilize Vykki's report to revitalize the department. Meg had not obtained a copy of it.

Greg Stubbs initiated a report regarding the CRB regulations and student hours in the revitalization context. He mentioned the lack of recruitment and the fact that COM did not have a theory class for two-plus years. He stated that he felt that court reporting was uniquely misunderstood and that the CSR Board requirements dictate the curriculum for the school. He further stated that the CSR requires that the student have 2300 hours of face-to-face machine training with an instructor; this equated to 140 semester hours by demand of time fitting into a college semester system. The units we currently offer barely meet the CSR requirements.

Greg also brought up the topic of repeatability and the challenge for students to acquire the 2300 hours when the class speeds are set at 120, 140, 160, 180 and 200. He also acknowledged that having 40 students per class would help. Unfortunately, because of time constraints, he was unable to finish his report.

Katheryn and Alina suggested, in essence of time for others, these topics can be addressed fully and internally at COM.

They also asked the Advisory Committee to give some thought into how often they would like to meet. Alina reported that the department was having monthly meetings and that this would continue. They would like to hear the Advisory Board's needs and thoughts for frequency of future meetings and whether there should be smaller committees to discuss other matters.

Katheryn asked if the students had any comments.

Kathleen LaGrave asked if the recent pattern of eliminating some speed classes was going to be a trend. Alina said that the process of revitalization was still in the early stages and that this had not yet been decided.

Jenny Franklin recommended having an elective class where students can ask for help. Alina suggested that the students have a club to support each other.

Jessica Savnik reported that COM was the third school she had attended. She further stated that the schools vary greatly, and she was very pleased with COM's court reporting department and especially appreciated how devoted the faculty is to their students.

## **Conclusions –**

Mike Hensley reiterated that the CCRA was available and eager to assist in any way possible.

Alina, Katheryn, Stephanie and Heather, thanked everyone for attending and for their input. They also especially thanked the students for their commitment and participation.

The meeting ended at 5:35 PST.