Proposal Date: 2/25/2013

**University College**

**Department of Professional Studies**

**Proposal to Create a New Course**

**(Action Item)**

Contact Person: Julie Shadoan, South Campus, C179, [julie.shadoan@wku.edu](mailto:julie.shadoan@wku.edu), 780-2539

**1. Identification of proposed course:**

* 1. Course prefix (subject area) and number: PLS 194C
  2. Course title: Legal Technology
  3. Abbreviated course title: Legal Technology
  4. Credit hours and contact hours: 3
  5. Type of course: Lecture
  6. Pre-requisites/co-requisites: N/A
  7. Course catalog listing: Survey of computer software

programs, hardware and other

technology relevant to the

modern law practice.

**2. Rationale:**

* 1. Reason for developing the proposed course: The reasons for proposing this course are enumerated as follows:

▪The course fulfills WKU’s mission to provide students with technology skills relevant and necessary in a diverse and competitive job market.

▪This course also fulfills WKU’s mission to prepare students to think critically and develop problem solving skills when faced with technology issues in the workplace.

▪The addition of this course to the existing paralegal studies curriculum was requested by employers based on community needs pursuant to a bi-annual survey of paralegal employers.

▪The addition of this course to the existing paralegal studies curriculum is necessary to maintain a competitive edge in state and regional academic markets.

* 1. Projected enrollment in the proposed course: 20 students per offering, including PLS majors and those in the 2+2 program (per PLS/PS Articulation Agreement) based on current program enrollment.
  2. Relationship of the proposed course to courses now offered by the department:

Various technology utilized by legal practitioners is addressed in limited fashion by existing courses, including PLS 195C, Introduction to the Legal Research/Writing; and PLS 298C, Advanced Legal Research/Writing. The proposed course will greatly expand the focus on technology from basic research and writing tools to networking systems, cloud technology, tablet technology, case management software, calendaring software, time and billing software, trial graphic software and other trends in the legal market.

* 1. Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other departments:

Many courses that address technology in various professional contexts exist across campus. A representative but not exhaustive list includes: AMS 151, Architectural Graphics; AMS 205, CADD for Manufacturing; CIS 141, Basic Computer Literacy; CIS 320, Personal Information Technologies; FACS 252, Hospitality Information Technology; GEOG 316, Fundamentals of Geographic Information Systems; HCA 447, Information Systems Lab; HIM 230, Computer Systems and Applications in Health Information Management; OST 220, Word Processing; OST 221, Desktop Publishing; and OST 225, Records and Information Management. However, none of these courses provide in-depth study and critical analysis of technology for legal practitioners. This is a discipline-specific course.

* 1. Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other institutions:

Many American Bar Association-approved institutions offering certificates and degrees in paralegal studies offer similar courses. A representative but not exhaustive list includes: LAS 385, Legal Administration and Computer Applications (Eastern Kentucky University, Kentucky); PLS 284, Computer in the Law Office (Sullivan University, Kentucky); PARA 180, Law Office Management (Vincennes University, Indiana); and, LAW 135, Law Office Technology (Volunteer State, Tennessee).

**3. Discussion of proposed course:**

* 1. Course objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

▪Identify various technology utilized in modern law practice including but not limited to: networking systems, cloud technology, tablet technology, case management software, calendaring software, time and billing software, trial graphic software;

▪Determine viability of technology options based on factors including utility and cost;

▪Utilize technology to create legal documents; manage information; file pleadings; document time expended and costs incurred; generate billing; communicate with co-workers clients and other legal professionals; create documentary evidence; and otherwise provide litigation support; and,

▪Develop and implement technology practices and protocol to ensure compliance with ethical rules.

* 1. Content outline: Topics to be covered in this course are:

▪Technology and Legal Ethics

▫Confidentiality

▫Work Product

▫Conflicts of Interest

▫Competence and Diligence

▫Candor

▫UPL

▪Technology and Rules of Procedure/Local Rules of Court

▪Technology Support

▪Licensing

▪Legal Technology Hardware

▪Networks

▪Communication

▫Email

▫Text Messaging

▫Voice Mail

▪Word Processing Software

▪Electronic Research Databases

▪Law Office Management Software

▪Case Management Software

▪Electronic Discovery

▪Litigation Support Software

▪Presentation and Trial Graphic Software

▪The Electronic Office

▪The Electronic Courthouse

* 1. Student expectations and requirements: Student performance will be evaluated by various measures, including but not limited to: presentations, quizzes and exams, application exercises (in-class and out of class), group projects, and papers.
  2. Tentative texts and course materials:

Thomas F. Goldman, *Technology in the Law Office* (Pearson 2ed. 2010); as well as various online databases including but not limited to Westlaw®, Loislaw®, and LexisNexis®.

**4. Resources:**

* 1. Library resources:

The WKU Law Library, Westlaw (online legal database) subscription access provided by the paralegal program, and free online repositories of law and rules are sufficient library resources for this course. The WKU Law Library resources for this course and the paralegal program generally have been approved by the American Bar Association as part of the program accreditation process.

* 1. Computer resources:

South Campus has three classroom computer labs and one open lab which will provide sufficient tech support for this course.

**5. Budget implications:**

* 1. Proposed method of staffing: New full-time pedagogical faculty hired in July, 2012, will staff this course.
  2. Special equipment needed: N/A.
  3. Expendable materials needed: N/A.
  4. Laboratory materials needed: N/A.

**6. Proposed term for implementation:** Fall 2013

**7. Dates of prior committee approvals:**

Professional Studies Department: February 27, 2013

UC Undergraduate Curriculum Committee March 7, 2013

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

University Senate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment: Bibliography, Library Resources Form**, **Course Inventory Form**