

September 25, 2020

Pamela Brown  
Interim Provost and VP for  
Academic Affairs  
300 Jay St., Room N-320  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Re: **PETITION TO CHANGE DIPLOMA NAME**

Dear Provost Brown,

The Law and Paralegal Studies (LPS) students are requesting a change of the Bachelor of Science and Associate in Applied Science degree, currently “Legal Assistant Studies” to “Law and Paralegal Studies.” We believe our diploma should adequately reflect the paralegal training we received throughout our academic career at City Tech. The graduating classes of January and June 2021 request their degree to reflect the change to paralegals.

Legal Assistants can not work with attorneys to compile evidence, draft legal documents, conduct legal research, and bill clients for their work.<sup>1</sup> The diploma name does not adequately convey to potential employers the qualifications and skills we have acquired, nor does it reflect the rigorous profession and its specific courses that make up the LPS curriculum. The students have dedicated long, demanding hours of study to be recognized as paralegals and not legal assistants.

Furthermore, although the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and paralegal associations (NALA and NFPA) interchange paralegal and legal assistant terms, the American Bar Association (ABA) made a substantive change. The official definition removes the term legal assistant from

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<sup>1</sup> Heinrich, Anna. “Paralegal vs. Legal Assistant: Examining These Two Law Careers.” *Paralegal vs. Legal Assistant: Examining These Two Law Careers* | Rasmussen College, 10 Oct. 2017, [www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/justice-studies/blog/paralegal-versus-legal-assistant/](http://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/justice-studies/blog/paralegal-versus-legal-assistant/)

paralegal to reflect the nature of the work performed.<sup>2</sup> The definition now reads: “*A paralegal is a person, qualified by education, training or work experience who is employed or retained by a lawyer, law office, corporation, governmental agency or other entity and who performs specifically delegated substantive legal work for which a lawyer is responsible.*”<sup>3</sup>

The LPS department is an ABA-approved program; it logically follows that the department and college adopt the current definition for paralegal and apply it to its diplomas.

Sincerely,



Susannah Oliveira,  
Class of January 2021  
Law and Paralegal Studies  
Department.  
300 Jay St. Room. N-622,  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Student ID: 23448275



May Saleh, President  
Class of January 2021  
Law and Paralegal Studies  
Department.  
300 Jay St. Room. N-622,  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Student ID: 23519936

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<sup>2</sup> American Bar Association (2020), Current ABA Definition of Paralegal, ABA  
[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals/profession-information/current\\_aba\\_definition\\_of\\_legal\\_assistant\\_p/ralegal/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/paralegals/profession-information/current_aba_definition_of_legal_assistant_p/ralegal/)

<sup>3</sup> Id.