



Florida Alliance of Paralegal Associations, Inc.
P.O. Box 31-0745 Miami, Florida 33231-0745
www.FAPAinc.org

November 1, 2010

Dear Florida Paralegal:

The Florida Alliance of Paralegal Associations conducted FRP Satisfaction Survey to validate feedback received about the FRP Program, and are pleased to provide preliminary results which we believe are compelling. You may view the survey in final form on our website at: www.FAPAinc.org.

A total of 1,106 respondents participated, of which 852 provided complete responses. Thank you to all who participated in the FRP Satisfaction Survey.

Sincerely,

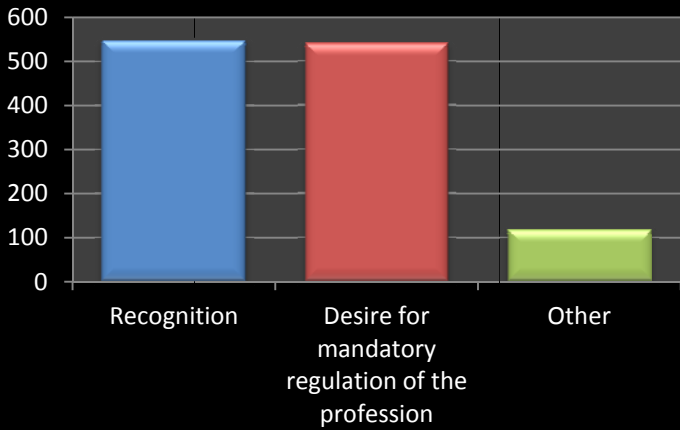
The Florida Alliance of Paralegal Associations, Inc.
www.FAPAinc.org



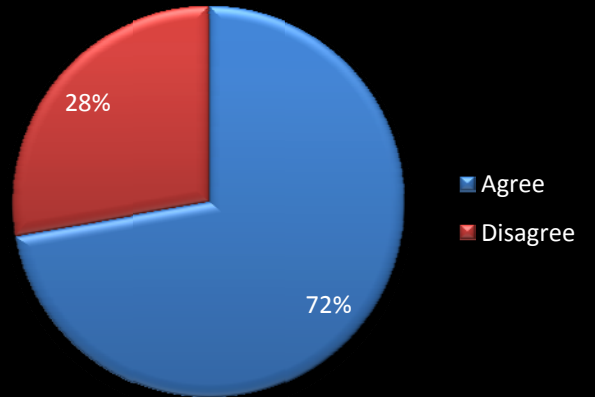
“The Voice of The Florida Paralegal”

Florida Alliance of Paralegal Associations, Inc. – FRP Satisfaction Survey

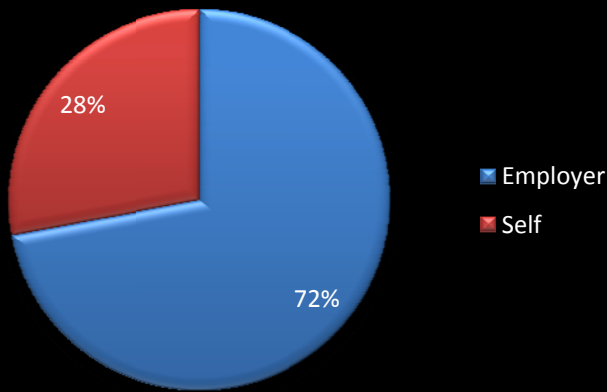
Why Become An FRP?



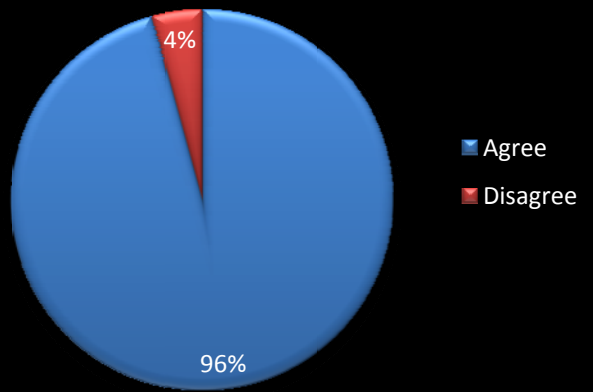
FRP Advances My Professional Goals



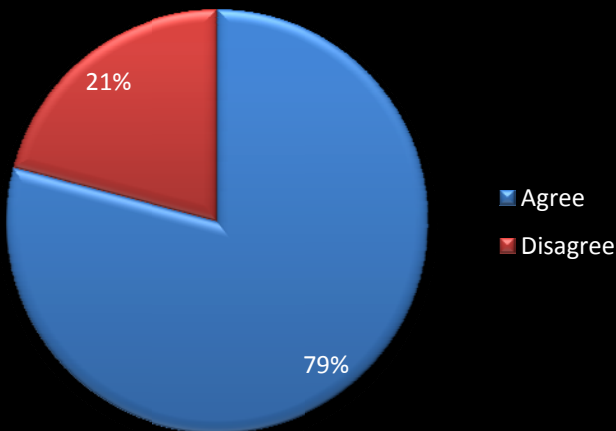
Who Pays for Participation?



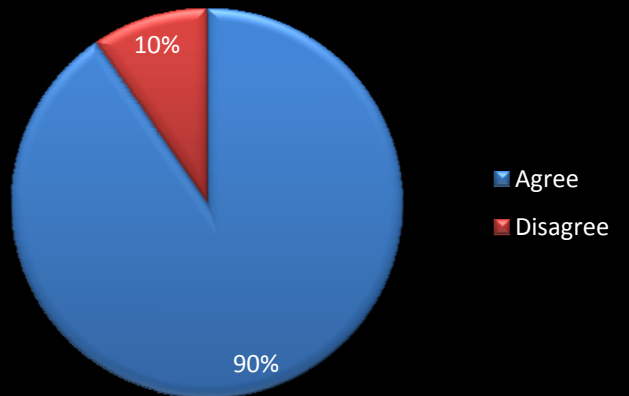
FRP Dues to Paralegal Related Causes



Mandatory Paralegal Regulation

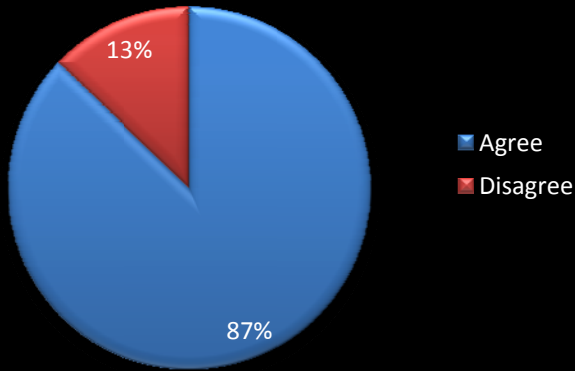


FRP Committee Paralegals Elected by FRPs

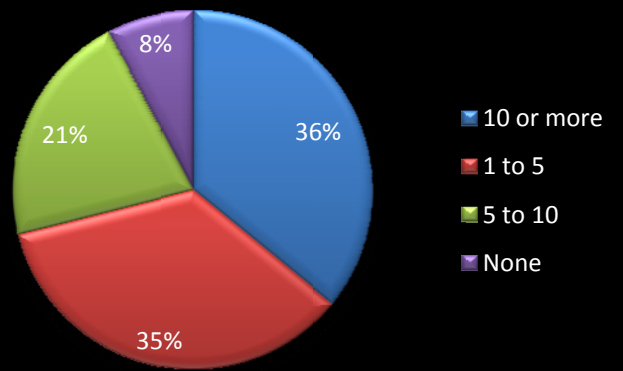


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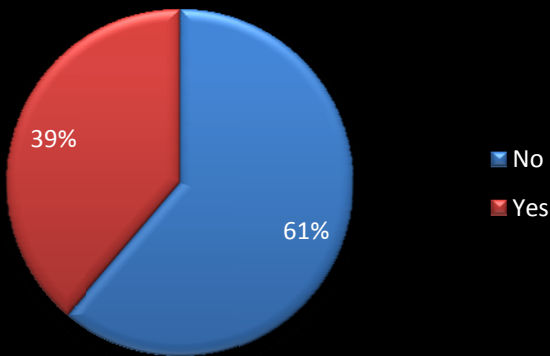
FL Paralegals Decide Direction of Profession



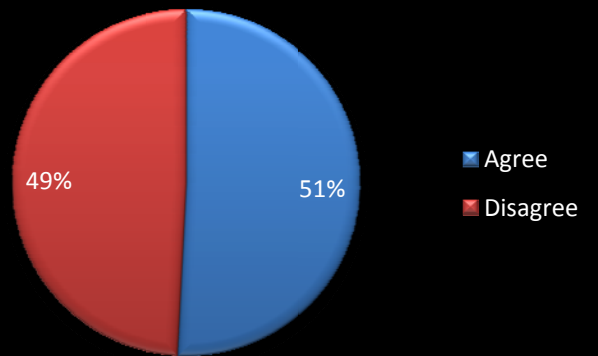
How Many Non-FRPs Known



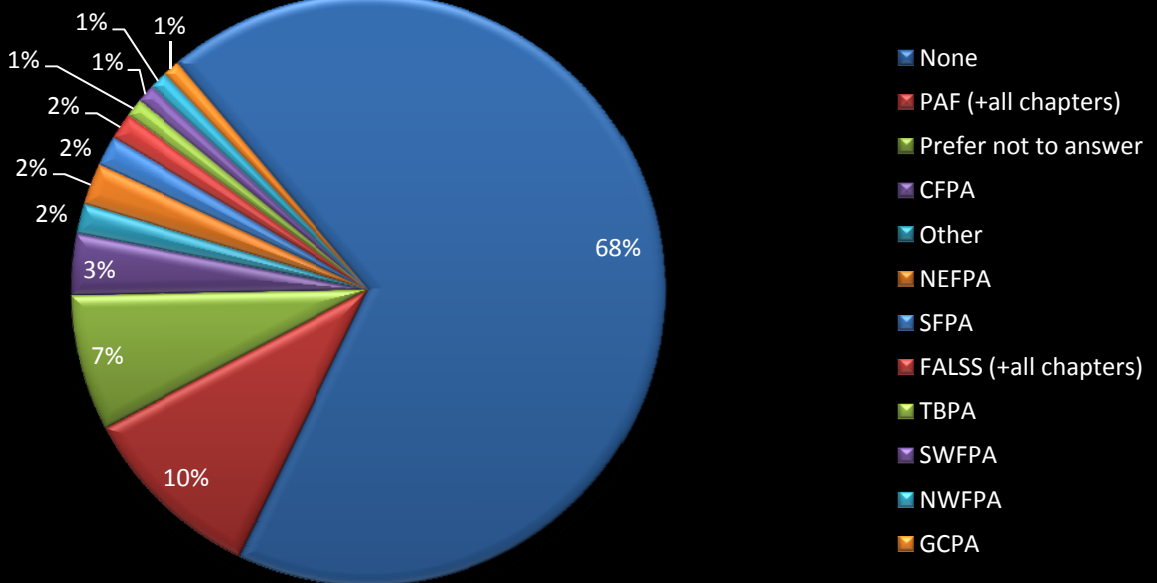
Local Paralegal Association Member



FRP Program Should be Mandatory



Which Association?



Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments for question 1: What was your primary purpose for registering under the FRP Program?

Recognition

Desire for mandatory regulation of the profession

firm requirement

required by employer

Salary potential

..and advancement. The seminars help to enhance the knowledge already attained.

a formatted continued education and procedure program, and hopeful of uniformity of the firm paralegal training and utilization

A more comprehensive understanding by attorneys on the difference in a Legal Secretary, Legal Assistant and Paralegal.

access to continuing education

Additional source of Information

Advance myself in my career with the opportunity provided.

Advancement for job.

Alot of law firms demand it to be hired.

Also my Firm wanted Paralegals to apply

and a chance to take classes, webinars and cle courses provided by the Florida Bar

And to learn about collection efforts in our firm.

and, employer required.

At the time, I thought it would look good on a resume if I were pursuing other employment.

basis for continuing legal education at a higher level than previously offered.

Because I felt that I earned it through my years of experience.

Being a part of the Bar helps in our career

Beneficial to future employment.

Billing purposes

both

Both professional recognition and regulation of paralegals with the hope of educating attorneys

Both!

Continued education

Desire to delineate professional paralegals from those who simply call themselves paralegals.

Desired by the firm

didn't want to wait until you HAD to do it. just thought i'd get it over with now.

Easier to convince employer of necessity for attendance at CLE

Employer insisted on it

Employer request

Employer requested that I register.

Employer requirement

employer's request

Enhance my resume

Every step one can take to reach a higher level of professionalism is worth taking

Evidence of certification/registration since I am not a CLA

Expand my general knowledge in various law specialties.

Improve my legal and problem-solving skills.

Be appreciated and acknowledged for my dedication to this profession that is taken for granted more than it is rewarded.

Experience; value of oneself; recognition of the amount of experience without having to take a couple hundred dollar test where you could not see what your test results were and having to pass so many parts in order to be certified paralegal.

Feel that the Florida Bar will soon mandate paralegals to be FRP's in order to be able to bill clients

Firm likes the marketing of having all registered paralegals

Firm offered

Firm requirement for regulation of the profession and recognition.

Firm was willing to pay for it

for a future job it is better to be a FRP than just a legal assistant

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Further education for a better working relationship with attorney.

Further recognition in my workplace and professional arena

Had to because of the mandatory regulation

Have NALA certification, however I wanted something on a local/state level to show that I meet The Florida Bar definition of a paralegal due to my education, experience, etc.

having the "Paralegal" title

Hoped it would be helpful in career advancement

I also wanted to be more marketable if I needed to change job locations.

I believe being registered with the Florida Bar will help in finding employment in the future.

I believe it will further firm-client relations.

I believe that all "paralegals" whether they have been grandfathered, gone to school and become certified, whatever, should be held responsible accountable as an attorney would be.

I believe that there is a difference between a Paralegal who earns the recognition as registered by the Florida Bar.

I elected not to be a registered paralegal.

I feel that to protect the public that paralegals be regulated. There should be consequences for those who hold themselves out to be "paralegals" without the necessary education, training and recurrent training

I feel the experience I have gained over the past 18 years in the legal field has provided the necessary background to allow for this type of recognition.

i felt i had no choice in the matter; these regulating authorities sometimes overtake the industry and if you don't become registered (as in the interior design industry) then you lose out on future employment.

I had obtained a bachelors in paralegal studies and have been working in the field for 10 years + and wanted to excel further

I have not been able to finish the necessary classes to obtain my paralegal certificate, so I felt this was another way to obtain an "elevated status" in my profession.

I have performed paralegal work for 15 years, but do not have the time nor money to obtain certification through education. This gave me an opportunity to have a form of acknowledgement that I have the skills required for a higher level of opportunity.

I think the FRP sets a standard for professionalism in our paralegal community. Those outside of the community will better recognize a skill set monitored by the Florida Bar. It is an important step for paralegals to be recognized as a true professional.

I thought the profession needed standards set to maintain the integrity of the paralegal designation, so that it wasn't just a title given to appease employees who were not qualified. Standards were also necessary in order to maintain adequate salary standards.

I wanted to be recognized as the professional I've become due to my educational and professional pursuits throughout the years in this profession.

I was asked to become registered by my employer

I was concerned about not being able to get in after the grandfathering time period had expired, as I do not have a college degree. Although it's not required by my employer you never know what might happen down the road.

I was hoping that the firm I work for would start treating us like the professionals that we are.

I was not a certified paralegal but did have 30 years of experience. I did want to be recognized as a paralegal but also feel the profession should be regulated.

I work for the bar, so I felt I should participate.

I've been a legal secretary, judicial assistant, and paralegal since 1968, thought it might be good to have some recognition.

I've been with the same attorney for the past 30 years and believe I am more educated through hands-on and work experience than someone fresh out of paralegal school, especially re: trial preparation.

I've been working in the field for 20 years and had taken the 2 year degree at a college and wanted to be certified.

Improve salary and benefits.

Improved marketability for future employment

In order for compensation to correlate with the profession.

In order to bill my time to the client, it was asked that I register. I have been a degreed professional for years doing a paralegal job, but never took the CLA test. This was a wonderful way to cut through red tape.

indicate to prospective employers that I was serious about my career choice and that I was qualified

It is a requirement to become a paralegal III at the company where I work.

It seemed to me that mandatory regulation was imminent and we would eventually have no choice but to register under the FRP

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments for question 1: What was your primary purpose for registering under the FRP Program?

program.

it's a great idea

Keep my knowledge of legal matters up to date, and expand my knowledge of legal matters by means of CLE.

Law firm required that all paralegals be registered.

Learn more about my field, particularly current information.

Lends increased credibility and substantialness to the profession and the individual.

Mandated by employer

Marketability

Marketing

More and better employment opportunities.

More opportunity

More reason to attend CLE (and have work reimburse) since it is required by Bar if you are a FRP

My attorney wished me to be registered for billing purposes. In addition, I wished the accreditation in the event I ever looked for other employment.

my boss required it

My bosses (Attorneys) wanted us to register.

My employer requested the registration.

My firm desired that their paralegals become Florida Registered Paralegals

My firm felt it was important to bill for my hours.

My firm recommended I do so.

My firm requested that we be registered.

My firm required it.

Neither of the above.

Opportunities for continued legal education seminars

Per employer request

personal satisfaction and professionalism

Professional credentials and commitment to the paralegal profession

Professional Designation

Professionalism--and a hope that eventually Paralegals will be able to be a part of the law firm just as a Paramedic/physician's assistant is allowed to be in partnership with physicians.

recognition, better pay, more opportunities.

Registered as voluntary so that I could be registered under the grandfather provision. I was afraid the grandfather provision might not be allowed if the program became mandatory

Registration is required by my employer.

Requested by President of Firm.

Required by the firm I presently am employed by. Must have the FRP or CP designation.

Respect for the profession.

s

Seemed like the thing to do in a down economy to maintain a competitive edge.

Seemed to be the way the profession was headed. Since I have a graduate degree did not want to go back and take paralegal courses later. Since my daily focus is so one topic oriented, a broad educational requirement would not have been helpful to my daily job performance.

Self satisfaction

Set myself apart from secretaries who are commonly referred to as paralegals and to be treated as a professional within the industry.

setting minimum standards for use of the term paralegal, which in the past has been co-opted by less qualified persons

Showing a possible employer that one is an FRP shows that employer that the paralegal is not simply calling herself a paralegal; she has met the FL Bar criteria to do so.

Since the program was started and most paralegals I know were participating, I felt I didn't really have a choice not to. If I didn't become registered, even though I was qualified, I felt it would be held against me in any future job searches I may undertake.

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so attorney's can bill for our time

so i can be informed of any changes to laws, etc.

Supervisory attorney requested

The ability to be a more valuable assistant to my attorney.

The ability to maintain contact with other members and to further my education.

The attorney I work for made it a requirement of my employment.

The law firm wanted to recognize their paralegals, so they enrolled those who qualified.

The main reason I wanted the FRP license was to be sure that my billable hours would remain taxable in litigation matters. I am concerned that in the future, judges may rule that only billed time by FRP paralegals will be considered when awarding attorneys fees to prevailing parties.

Thought it was required to work as a paralegal

thought it would be advantageous for the law firm I work for to have a registered paralegal working for them.

to be able to belong to the professional organization which over sees and is responsible for the quality of the paralegal work performed by paralegals. To work toward having a minimum level of competence and expectations in my profession.

To be among my peers and mentors within the industry and to be able to utilize resources that allow me to excel in my career with the confidence and that prove to me that I can either rise to become a licensed attorney or rise to become an exceptional paralegal and feel proud of my accomplishment.

To be more useful to my firm & be able to get more education

To be registered and a part of the Florida Bar and to receive CLE credits

To become a registered Florida Paralegal

To become part of an association in my field; to assist to offered seminars.

To connect with other FRPs.

To differentiate between individuals who have actually gone to school and obtained a degree in this area versus individuals who sit down at a desk and use the title with no education whatsoever.

To distinguish my position from secretarial/administrative assistant positions using the title "Legal Assistant."

to further educate myself

to further my career and maintain knowledge of the career

To further my career as a Paralegal.

To further myself professionally and the ability to utilize all the benefits and knowledge associated with the FB.

To help distinguish Paralegals from legal assistants and legal secretaries.

To not only regulate the paralegal profession, but also create the framework to regulate legal technicians throughout the state that commit UPL.

To provide a degree of professionalism to the career.

To upgrade my status from legal secretary to paralegal

To use for a possible career advancement and recognition for long standing work in the legal field

Valued the distinction of having been approved under the FRP program. Important for job reviews and potential employment opportunities.

We need to establish a distinction between the career paralegal and the paralegals from the ITT Technical schools advertised with medical billing clerks and what not. There is a difference between what that is and a professional paralegal. The FRP program recognizes that.

we were told to do so.

With the way the economy is and people being laid off I thought is I were to ever loose my job and look for another one the open workforce might me a little harder for a middle aged person. I decided that having my certificate may have some pull

Work related and desire for mandatory regulation of the profession

Work related requirement

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments to question 2: The FRP program has provided me with ways to develop or advance my professional goals.

I have found no advantage of obtaining the FRP designation other than having the designation itself
Without the mandatory component, my employer still doesn't support the program.

I don't see any change in what is being offered. We still can take the bar CLE courses. I think they need better communication as to what headway they are making if any towards mandatory regulation. I would like to think that attorney/employers look at the paralegal with the FRP designation as a step above those "paralegals" without the designation, but I don't feel that is the case.

We are in need of more seminars specific to our profession.

Would have appreciated more CLEs tailored to the paralegal profession.

The FRP Program hasn't YET provided me with ways to develop or advance my professional goals, but I still hold on to the hope that it will at some point.

We are required to fulfill CLE hours; however, most of the programs I've seen offered are not related to our firm's areas of practice. These hours are hard enough to acquire without spending hours attending courses we will never use?

I think the FRP program could put out more info on CLE sponsored events specifically geared toward paralegals.

I agree somewhat because I think having credentials after your name shows you are interested in advancing your career but I don't know that the FRP program has provided any concrete ways to develop/advance my professional goals.

Most CLE seminars are formatted for the civil practice field of law such as real estate, personal injury, corporate, etc. My field of expertise is federal criminal law.

With the economy the way it is I do not understand how a Registered Paralegal is able to pay for the classes they need in order to continue to be registered. Some work in sole practitioner offices who cannot afford the cost of some of the seminars to receive the credit. They also have to pay \$150 to stay registered each year and the Certified Paralegals do not.

Aside from heading up the registration process for the qualified paralegals in my firm, I have not seen any benefit from the program. My employers seem to be ambivalent at best.

The attorney I work directly under agrees that I am more marketable and that they can better justify my hourly billing rate because of my FRP status.

I am trying to continue my education and by being a part of the FRP program, it has enabled me to work towards achieving that goal.

I don't feel that the FRP Program has provided anything additional professionally for me as I take regular CLE to keep my certification active.

I am grateful that they recognize my thirty years of experience and allowed me to be grandfathered in.

The FRP program does not offer continuing education programs, nor do they review and provide CLE credit approval for courses. CLE credit approval is done by other agencies such as NALA.

To some extent.

but not too much

Too short a period of time to know yet.

While continuing legal education is required, it appears difficult to find qualified programs/seminars in my area. CLE seems to be the source to go to and not the FRP program.

Not sure yet

However, I would welcome the regulation of paralegals by license.

This is only the first step, we need to continue to prove that we are an asset to the legal profession.

Would like to see more seminars for varying topics to obtain FRP credits

Credentials are the pathway for recognition of the professionalism of paralegals

I wish I could take advantage of participating in more seminars

I feel that the program has merely confirmed my status but hasn't really provide with any way to advance.

As a member of certain Florida Bar Sections, I am eligible to attend seminars at a discounted rate.

I just became Registered and don't know very much yet about the FRP program.

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Agree slightly. I hoped that once this became a mandatory program for all FL paralegals, we would see a change in the wage and hour exemption rulings with paralegal professionals being recognized as falling under the professional exemption. However, I haven't seen anything to date and my husband is a labor and employment lawyer on the look out as well!

There have been no courses offered during the week. Only the weekends. This makes it hard for me to attend any.

The Florida Bar does not offer CLE courses. The CLE's are a requirement and I will have to join NALA and pay additional money to belong to a group to get CLE course information

It hasn't advanced my goals, but it has provided much needed validation.

No it really has not. The Orlando organization is not a very friendly or helpful group

It gives me the opportunity to be recognized in specialized areas while making a name for myself working closely with the attorney.

INSUFFICIENT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CLE'S

FRP's are treated like the ugly step-child of the bar.

I have received more information regarding seminars. Firm is more willing to pick up tab since I am Registered.

But my employer has not really embraced the purpose of the FRP program or the qualifications required to be a part of it.

It has also made my employer happy.

has helped some. used as a stepping stone but still have a way to go in advancing professional goals.

Other than the title, FRP, the FRP program hasn't done anything to develop or advance my professional goals.

However, the cost of continuing education is cost prohibitive, especially when you work for a small firm that does not help defray the cost.

I am not exactly sure what it does other than require me to pay dues and take very costly CLEs.

Because of becoming an FRP, my employer allows me to attend more seminars, webinars, teleconferences, etc., thus furthering my education.

I did not renew after 1 year - I was disillusioned when I recognized one too many names of women who are not qualified paralegals (e.g., workers' comp. secretaries) who nevertheless obtained certification. The process is far too subjective in my opinion.

would like more FREE educational seminars or online webinars

I haven't been a member very long (just since Feb 2010), so haven't seen much development, yet.

have not been a member long enough to properly gauge this answer, due to work environment am unable to leave office to attend luncheon meetings, etc.

Attorney resistance

I would like to see more seminars in the field I am primary associated with - probate in the St. Pete/Clearwater area.

No discernable benefit. Define "professional goals."

I expect if I changed jobs it might help.

Not necessarily to advance, but to keep current

It still has not gone far enough! I do not think that someone without a proper education should be allowed to call themselves a paralegal (registered or not.)

I agree in part and disagree in part. While the seminars may help some, I don't feel the seminars that have been offered to date have provided much in the way of advancement for me.

Somewhat

Not necessarily my personal goals, but it has been good for the firm at which I work.

not applicable

This program has provided no information with regard to the mandatory requirements of the CLE credits.

Through local organizations such as the Orange County Bar Association Paralegal Section, FRPs have united to work together to further professionalism in the legal community and advance career wise through educational endeavors, etc.

I would like there to be more chances of CLE classes for FRPs that are not involved in family law or workers' compensation.

CLE's are way too expensive.

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If the lawyers/firms would take us seriously and appreciate that we are professionals, then perhaps this would be true. But by and large, the lawyers see us as threats rather than team players.

Would like more CLE opportunities geared to FRPs.

Primarily through the continuing education credits requirement.

Majority of CLE offered is geared mainly to lawyers, not FRPs. Also, types of CLE available/offered are limited. Need more for litigation. Acceptable payment methods are too limited for seminars/webinars.

I don't feel the legal community takes this program serious and does not give any merit to its holders.

Paralegal CE Classes

Have not been registered long enough to answer but do believe that FRP program will assist in developing and/or advancing my professional goals.

I think that the required CLE Credit requirements are too high. I do not earn enough money to participant in the CLE Seminars and my attorney does not have the funds to pay for me to go to them either.

Program still in beginning stages. Have paid over \$300 in dues and not received anything from it except requirements

My firm has been more proactive in continuing education

I think that 30 hours including 10 ethics hours is too much in three years. I would like to see it reduced to 20 hours including 5 ethics. Most paralegals are very specialized and there aren't enough local programs in specific areas such as probate, corporations and estate planning (my specialty)!

Disagree, in part. I do think that CLE is important, but do not feel that paralegals should be required to obtain the same amount of CLE hours as an attorney.

At this point it really hasn't given me anything other than an official classification/title.

The program mirrors the requirements of NALA which are already being met by me; however, price breaks to join work-related sections would be helpful, as Family Law Section has already done.

Would like more availability of education at a reduced rate to paralegals working in elder law under the administrative law area I initially applied for the FRP designation, but have since requested revocation of my membership due to the stance taken by the Florida Bar on an issue that I felt should not be addressed by the Bar pursuant to their own standards. An opinion of support was given for gay people being allowed to adopt children and placed in gay homes. This is contrary to my convictions and led me to withdraw any type of support (monetary and participatory) to the Florida Bar through the registered paralegal program.

And meet great new people

The FRP designation has not afforded me any benefits in terms of being able to check out CLE tapes from our local legal library, etc.

At this time there are very very few CLE seminars for civil litigation discovery. It would be nice if there were more education available in this area.

The variety of resources to earn credits has been helpful. I have to choose reasonably prices courses so I can afford them though.

Would like medium to advanced CLE seminars geared towards paralegals

It is a great tool for gaining CLE and networking.

I'm really not sure yet.

Work for the state; only one paralegal in legal dept. (foreign attorney who did not take the Bar Exam); rest of us are AAs.

In addition to my 410-Title Agent license CE requirements, this gives me a "mandatory" way to keep up to date on the issues that my career depends upon and offers many more CE classes as well.

The credentials are there but no information is provided throu the FL Bar newsletter that addresses these issues.

Provides the opportunity for continuing education because of the requirements than prior to the program.

Due to the economy, the attorneys I report to do not hold us in the esteem we once were held - then cut out pay 25%.

I don't see any changes - just more initials and more dues to pay - but if ever needed it is a nice group for a unified voice i'd like to see more CLE in the area of Corporate law.

Don't really know how to answer that one. If the seminars are the way to development or advancement, it is a learning opportunity. I have not done a seminar yet.

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Because it is a 'status', considered 'professional; employers more likely to work with us re: reimbursement, time expended towards, etc.

There has been no seminars or informational programs that focus on the area of law in which I work, which is criminal.

It provides much needed recognition from Bar Members and affords additional CLE opportunities.

At first, I really dreaded the mandatory CLEs that I had to maintain per cycle. But that forced me to listen to several of the CD CLE sets that my firm purchases and I've learned quite a bit from that experience.

not just yet. I have a desire to seek employment elsewhere and at this time due to the economy I have been unable to do so.

If I was just starting in my paralegal career then I would agree, but at this stage in my life, I'm ready to wind down my career and have other goals outside of the profession.

It does not seem to make a difference in acceptance.

Not yet. I have advanced my professional goals for many years well before this program existed.

I would like to see the FRP to offer CLE programs.

I agree it will help in the future but have only been registered with the program for a short time.

I wish the format for uploading credits included being able to add seminar CLE credits obtained at the American Association for Justice conventions (which will be 2 for me that I can't see to get credit for but the attorneys from our firm attending can!)

I look forward to mandatory regulation because there are too many non-paralegals working in the legal industry, who do not value the necessary commitment and dedication required to be an honest and hard-working paralegal, and who truly cares about the industry. Moreover, you have several so-called ABA approved paralegal programs which allows "anybody" to participate. People who are not truly qualified are being allowed into these programs. Better monitoring should be required. It should not be solely about how many people have enrolled but the focus should also be on the types of people that are enrolling in the programs. Too many people have the wrong agenda. As a result, the paralegal profession is getting a bad reputation due to these types of people damaging our credibility.

I was a CP, certified nationally before the FRP by NALA. I was also FCP and certified in Fla. law by PAF. I don't think the FRP has done a lot for me personally but I do see a big increase in attendance at the PAF luncheons as FRPs need the CLE units. I still want to see a statewide test like the Bar exam for paralegals. THAT will elevate our profession and increase our income and benefits.

Too early to fully evaluate this statement.

Not enough attorneys understand it so don't think any progress has been made in the past year. Hopefully thing will continue to improve.

I have just recently become a paralega, so I can not honestly answer this question at this time, but since I am forced to answer the question I am hoping that the program will provide me with ways to develop and advance seminars attended and audio tapes reviewed thus far provided very little in the way of useable information.

I have seen NO benefit in the past year. Not sure I will renew.

My firm does not care whether we have the certification or not and because of this, does not pay for anything other than the dues. If the profession is never going to make it mandatory for paralegals to be certified, then I will no longer participate as it is just another way to make money.

FRP program should have sub-sepcialty categories, such as FRP- Commercial Real Estate Leasing, FRP-Contract Administration....

Continuing Education requirements are too restrictive. I cannot find seminars suited to my needs, level of experience and specialties. As a result, if I am going to comply with the CLE requirements and continue as a Florida Registered Paralegal, I will have to spend a LOT of money on seminars that are either well below my level of expertise or that will not enhance my expertise. The CLE seminars offered are flooded with bankruptcy and mortgage foreclosure related topics, and it seems, nothing else that would assist me in my current circumstances.

Although the program may provide ways to develop or advance professional goals for some, this is not true for me. I have done this on my own for over twenty years, but it is good to have the program for structuring the continuing education credits.

Would love for the program to offer webinars, seminars, etc., not only on topics relating to the responsibility of the job, but also as to the basics of Summation, Case Map, etc.

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Additional comments to question 2: The FRP program has provided me with ways to develop or advance my professional goals.

Nothing has changed for me in my current position. CLE is still geared primarily toward attorneys. For the most part, I do not see that we can be Bar Section members and the biggest focus seems to be on making sure we don't engage in UPL.

I haven't received any information beyond a certificate, the rules regulating FRPs and notification to begin submitting CLE attendance. I don't believe I have been provided anything else.

Liked the ethics seminar. Very informative and also helpful in achieving our CLE goal.

The only difference between now and before is that I am required to take and record CLE credits.

I have the same job with the same employer and have not had opportunities to participate in any meaningful CLE programs since I have become an FRP. There is virtually nothing of interest offered in the Pensacola area.

i have been a paralegal for 20 years and they have, in no way, changed my status. only to charge me a fee, which is pretty outrageous, and my firm has to pay. also, the junk mail is annoying.

I somewhat agree in that it is certainly a plus on a resume, business card or signature block, giving the profession more of a standard than before there was FRP.

Only that clients have asked what it means, and I believe it means more to the clients that the paralegal is registered or certified and have a professional venue for our services

I would like to have additional opportunities for classes.

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Discounts to the bar seminars would be appreciated.

Also on continuing education

Yes, but not solely for paralegal related causes.

The annual dues should be spent to provide continuing legal education.

I think the fees should be every three or five years. Every year \$150 is not fair. I wonder how many Registered Paralegals will drop out this year?

I agree but it would be nice under the current economy if the costs were not as expensive

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I really wish the Florida Bar would offer more affordable CLE programs for paralegals.

Strongly agree

I believe the dues should be used to provide affordable continuing education to paralegals, who do not earn the same type of salary that attorneys do.

and to include affiliation in the various Florida Bar divisions

The annual dues should just be reduced to a more reasonable rate.

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Although the annual dues are expensive.

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It would help if we could apply the fee toward CLE credits.

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I cannot afford to pay for myself. My employer does not recognize any benefit of having a paralegal that is registered with the bar, and does not support the endeavor. THIS would be the issue I would want changed.

There is not enough support from the Bar to provide paralegals with reasonably priced CLE. Paralegals cannot afford the high rates charged for CLE courses. Paralegals should be offered more reasonable rates since are income is not at the level of attorneys.

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This money should go to paralegal programs, conferences etc. and not for general bar use.

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Should be spent on more classes or meeting to help us expand and help grow.

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Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments to question 5: I believe that Florida paralegals should be regulated on a mandatory basis.

A Paralegal is a profession and too many use the term loosely. A paralegal should be an educated, regulated individual who provides specific legal assistance to an attorney under supervision of an attorney. A paralegal does much more than clerical tasks.

I agree mostly because I think they are professionals who, under their attorney, must abide by the laws, rules and regulations just like the attorneys do. But, the draw back to that is the cost (I'm a single mom) and of course the possibility of disciplinary actions that can be brought against me. Which is a scary thought.

I do not know how you define "mandatory". I think that voluntary membership in the Florida Bar requires mandatory continuing education to remain a participant in the program. it shouldn't be more "mandatory" than that.

Until the American Bar Association licenses paralegals, I believe that state regulation should be voluntary, not mandatory.

I believe all paralegals should go through NALA and then have the opportunity to become FRP.

Only if there were more available programs for paralegals to attend, including web seminars or online courses, at reasonable costs.

Those already registered should be grandfathered.

I don't see a need for paralegal's to be regulated. This seems to be a prestige thing. Not all career positions need to be regulated (computer programers are not regulated, cashiers are not regulated, why should we be regulated). If the idea is to hold free-lance or contract paralegals accountable for their action for some public misdeeds, then regulating them would be a better option. I certainly have more to say, but I am sure my space is limited (and my time right now is also).

Regulation can be expensive and may add burdens to the profession; however, I do not believe that it is desirable to have others claim to have the same credentials as a paralegal because they work in the legal environment.

I'm not sure what you mean by "regulated." I do not agree that a secretary can become identified as a paralegal under the FRP simply because her boss signs an affidavit that states she has performed XX hours of paralegal work. This is happened. Thus, I do not agree that a person should be allowed to become a FRP without some type of approved coursework or testing.

There are far too many people who are supremely qualified but are either not proactive for themselves or their employer is unwilling to pay the costs, and the individual is unable to sustain the expense.

If paralegals are regulated it very well wean out those who purport to be "paralegals" who merely fill out forms. If anything, we need to tighten the criteria for becoming a FRP

Perhaps this would weed out those calling themselves legal assistants and paralegals without any training, schooling or CLE requirements. Perhaps this would also remedy the age old issue of allowing paralegals to fall under the professional exemption for an exempt status.

i ALSO BELIEVE THEY SHOULD BE QUALIFIED THROUGH EDUCATION AND OBTAIN A DEGREE NOT A CERTIFICATE

Two tier program - Registered and non-registered

This should be Nation wide, not just for Florida. There may be people that never read a book or attend continuing education classes and therefore do not maintain the necessary skills law firms require of their legal staff/paralegals. FRP's who do not continue education should not be allowed to maintain their FRP status.

I believe it should be optional only for a paralegal to participate in the program, in part because not everybody's education is the same.

I worked too hard for this to be optional. I don't think it works to have less than 100% of a given profession operating under the same regulations.

There are many groups such as Independent Paralegals or Paralegals moving to Florida from other state's who are currently not included in the FRP program.

Not all paralegals can afford to personally pay for the mandatory CLE.

I know many real estate paralegals who are very proficient at their job, and I am not sure they need to be certified. I am sure the same thing applies in other areas.

I don't really see what good it would do except make it more expensive to be a paralegal. How do i stand out with my voluntary certification if everyone else is required?

If more substance was built into the qualifying process I would agree.

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments to question 5: I believe that Florida paralegals should be regulated on a mandatory basis.

There are many logistical issues w/mandatory regulations, specifically pertaining to the ability to perform requirements; manpower (sole practioner offices) and location (ability to attend due to distance/timing).

I think this is an evolution in the process. We need to have a starting place with an eventual goal in place. I view the legal community in the same manner as the medical community and feel that paralegals the same as nurses and ARNP etc. who actually provided services to a client/patient should be regulated. We need to start and this will evolve.

I and others like myself have been working, directly or indirectly, toward that goal for many years

See answer to question number 1. I do not agree that an individual should carry the title unless they have received a paralegal education. You are misleading the public.

I haven't actually decided whether I think it should be mandatory or not, but I am leaning toward yes.

What is meant by "regulated?"

I would like to see it managed like nurses where there are different levels depending upon your education (and maybe experience in the beginning).

One more regulation to control hard working people

I agree to an extent in order to preserve and maintain integrity with respect to level of professionalism and knowledge. However, I would not like the regulation to become so burdensome that it becomes too cumbersome to maintain. Afterall, we (FRP's) do not have law degrees and we are always working under the guidance and supervision of a Florida Bar attorney.

Attorneys should be regulated and the attorneys will regulate their respective paralegals.

I definitely believe that paralegals should be regulated and that law firms (and possibly the state) should keep a very watchful eye on them - however the word "mandatory" suggests controls that take away freedom.

Raising the standards for "paralegals" is good for all of us.

I think the FRP program should remain a voluntary organization to recognize those paralegals who wish to further themselves professionally through education and the support of their peers. I do not think that every paralegal should be required to be a part of the program.

I feel the program should be upheld with the same rules as other members of the Florida Bar.

You need to define your term "mandatory" This question is ambiguous.

I believe that Florida paralegals should be regulated. I would like to see some areas become mandatory, but I wouldn't want one certain protocal to be entirely mandatory. In other words, I believe some aspects of the profession should be flexible.

Perhaps with mandatory regulation, we could weed out those people who claim to be paralegals, but who do not have the necessary credentials or work experience to back up that claim. They give the rest of us a black eye.

My answer to this question would be more appropriately that I am not sure. If it were to be made mandatory, the program should be enhanced to provide more benefits for those registered. As it stands now, I don't really think it has been utilized to its fullest potential. For instance, I am not aware of any way that it influences the pay offered to paralegals, which I think it should address if it were made mandatory.

Lawyers already are required to regulate their non-lawyer employees and the type of people our unlicensed practice of law department usually prosecute are "free lance" people who work without any supervision. It is illegal to engage in the unlicensed practice of law and these people are prosecuted, both by the state and by the bar. I don't believe that additional regulations would bring any real benefit. Consumer education would go further in curbing the problem with people engaging in the unlicensed practice of law.

However, there are those who do not get funding from employer. There should be some assistance for them.

I am not sure how to answer this question as it is a fine balance. Regulation is a benefit in terms of it being recognized within the operations of any law firm-whether the attorney or the paralegal. Furthermore, regulation tends to protect the employer, employee and the client one way or another. Also, it tends to give rise to a person's goal in becoming something more-something to reach for. I tend to parallel this thinking with the old days when retail stock brokers required that all sales assistants be registered. If you weren't registered then you wouldn't be a sales assistant. Again, something to reach for...

I really think it depends on prior work experience.

I would need more information and background on this question before answering to agree.

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments to question 5: I believe that Florida paralegals should be regulated on a mandatory basis.

There is no need to regulate Paralegals because we must be supervised by the attorneys we work for - it does not matter how independent ly we perform our jobs. Under the US Department of Labor FLSA, Paralegals do not qualify for the "Professional" exemption - we are strictly Administrative in their eyes, so no reason to regulate us.

Isn't the FRP the regulation of Florida paralegals. No one is going to be able to "police" all offices and impose an office or individual to register their employee deemed a paralegal an FRP. IMO However, I do believe that paralegals should be regulated otherwise I would not be an FRP and member of various associations and committees in support of said regulation.

Do not believe that mandatory regulation will pass the Florida legislature at this time. FRP program could be expanded and enhanced.

Agree in part. I think the CLE requirements should be less and the annual dues should be reduced.

Otherwise if not mandatory, it lowers the bar for the profession in general

However, paralegals that have been working, billing and taking CLE courses for 15 to 20 years should be grandfathered into any mandatory regulation. After all, we are the ones who developed the profession and have trained all of the present paralegals and new attorneys.

I believe standards should be in place, however, if the regulation is through the Florida Bar and becomes mandatory, I have a problem with that as I do not believe in the position the Florida Bar takes on certain issues.

The mandatory regulations currently in place are fair and benefit Florida paralegals. For example, the regulation requiring registered paralegals to obtain continuing education credits benefits not only the paralegal, but also the community in which she/he works.

Since we work directly for the attorney under his instruction, aren't we already regulated? We should be held to a professional standard.

Paralegals who qualify based on The Florida Bar guidelines should be given the title of FRP. Those who are not qualified should not. Not sure how you would regulated paralegals specialized in one or more specific fields. I have been a paralegal for many, many years; however, I don't do and have never done criminal work - so mandatory testing in criminal areas that I don't use and won't ever use again doesn't make sense in my situation. I met the qualifications as a FRP based on education (bachelor's degree in legal studies) and experience (over 20 years in civil litigation).

Believe this would add more credibility to the profession.

I would need regulated to be defined. I believe it would benefit clients knowing that their paralegals have been certified using definable standards. It would also bring consistency to the profession as anyone can use the title paralegal without any formal background whether it is training or education.

just like attorneys - paralegals should have to be regulated for UPL

umsure what above statement means. It's already mandatory re CLE hours. What other mandatory regulation should there be?

But only by the Supreme Court. The legislature cannot constituionally regulate the pratice of law as performed by paralegals under the supervision of attorneys.

If you are a registered paralegal, yes.

Paralegals are an integral part of the legal landscape and should be regulated by the Bar in the same manner as attorneys.

I am not sure anymore about the criteria for becoming registered with the Florida Bar, but I don't think that just because someone has passed the NALA exam but has only worked in the legal field for 2 years should be allowed to be registered. Just as they don't "teach" you how to be a lawyer in law school, NALA doesn't "teach" you how to work as a paralegal. I think a minimum of at least 8 years working as an independent paralegal in a Florida law office should be mandatory.

I am no longer FRP I can not afford the dues with everything going on right now. My family and food came 1st. We do not get paid enough to keep dues high and also the credit classes or lunches. Too pricey which was a shame... I felt like it was finishing touches to me graduating from Paralegal school.

Strongly agree. There are too many unprepared, uneducated persons working in the field with no clue of what being a paralegal really entails. More needs to be done to educate employers as to the skills required of their billing professionals.

I'm not 100% sure about the mandatory regulation yet since we don't have a state exam that other states have for their mandatory regulation of paralegals.

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments to question 5: I believe that Florida paralegals should be regulated on a mandatory basis.

This sets a high professionalism for paralegals.

100% for regulation. Especially, in Florida. It is out of control with the non-paralegals working as secretaries and billing on files. There are also some who have passed the certificate programs but still don't understand what to do. The work product is horrible but yet they want to be recognized as a paralegal. Instead of correcting the problems, they continue to disgrace the profession. This continues to be the main topic of conversation amongst my peers at networking functions. Regulation is mandatory because it will weed out the bad seeds. Those of us who have worked long and hard in this industry want to protect our reputation. We want to be respected and to always be seen in a positive light. I believe that mandatory regulation will force those who do not have their act together to either get it right or get out of the legal profession.

To a certain extent of course

Becoming a professional paralegal requires hard work, education and experience. Only regulation assures the minimum requirements to be called a paralegal, and, hopefully, decreases the number of unprofessional people claiming the title.

Not mandatory, just yet.

As long as those of us who have been paralegals for a significant period of time are grandfathered in and there are no mandatory periodic tests as there are with the real estate industry, etc.

I am sick and tired of hearing (mostly young) women who have little or no experience referring to themselves as paralegals.

I have come across way too many people who call themselves paralegals who have little or no training and/or education. And, because of this, the spectrum of their responsibilities is far different from someone who has a solid foundation in the area. This also causes a wide spectrum in salary ranges, oftentimes making it difficult for a trained paralegal to receive reasonable compensation compensable to his/her responsibilities.

I don't believe someone should be able to graduate from high school having taken business type courses and decide to call themselves a paralegal and that be acceptable. While OJT is extremely important, so is a well-rounded education.

I don't like that anyone off the street can use the term "paralegal" and consider themselves in the same boat as a paralegal with a CLA and FRP designation. You should be called a "para-professional" or something if you don't have the certifications, and "paralegal" should be a term only for certified/registered paralegals.

I hate regulations! Regulation just means more bureaucratic control with a cost. Enforce the existing guidelines for attorneys, the ethics decisions and most issues will be resolved. I still see secretaries billing clients at paralegal rates for "substantive" work. Paralegals are billing clients for "administrative" tasks.

We are regulated by our supervising attorneys. Enough already.

If they have more responsibility, they should be compensated accordingly.

I am so against these kind of regulatory committees. They do nothing, they only provide a place for someone to spend money needlessly. Associations are a better way to deal with "causes" and issues. The legislature can pass laws, the bar can oversee, but regulating with a registration, especially one that is open to everyone, is a waste of money and time.

I am a little ambivalent about this because there are people who have a great deal of work experience as paralegals and have acquired significant knowledge, but who have not obtained the FRP designation. I respect those who have more experience and knowledge than I.

I really don't agree or disagree. I honestly have not seen much as far as advancement in the county in which I live. I am not really sure it makes a difference.

I believe the requirement of 30 hours CLE and the supervision of attorneys, following the Chapter 20 and ethics guidelines is sufficient. We must also educate the attorneys the ethical requirements of a paralegal so they understand the scope of duties they can use a paralegal for.

Totally!!

I agree, if it will be beneficial to paralegals, as well as the lawyers and clients they serve.

However, for those of us who have to pay our own annual dues and the costs of attending continuing education, I can see how some paralegals will be unable to afford to be registered simply due to the costs involved.

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments to question 6: The paralegal representatives on the FRP Committee should be elected by those paralegals who hold the FRP designation.

Yes, I believe such representatives would have more of a working understanding and knowledge of the FRP requirements and trying to fulfill those requirements.

In addition there should be Bar members and educators on the FRP committee.

Since this is not an officer or elected position, I feel that The Florida Bar should appoint committee members.

I think that the paralegal representatives should be a combination of attorneys, certified paralegals and paralegals who have a long history of paralegal work and work ethics!

I think the paralegal representative on the FRP Committee should be selected at random from registered paralegals and asked to serve.

I think that a CP should also be able to participate.

Tell me why. If you are wanting a slanted view; sure this is the way to go.

Or at least chosen by the FRP Committee from a slate of nominees elected by the FRPs.

If we are going to be regulated by the Bar; members of FRP Committee should be elected by its members as well.

I believe that Attorneys should elect the FRP Committee.

The entire program is full of people who never received valid training but were grandfathered in!! What a joke!

Open it up to more than at least one paralegal from a city or county. More voices to promote the cause. I would like to be a representative.

Seems to make sense to me.

At no time in any professional committee of the bar or other organizations are the members elected. They are chosen by the Bar and the members. The Civil Trial section of the Bar has a committee and the members are asked to serve and appointed by the Bar. This should not be treated any differently. In having elections you become political. Having appointments to a committee should be thought of as an honor and something that we strive to attain.

It sounds good, but I really don't have enough information to give a solid answer. For instance, how are the members of other Bar committees selected?

The should be appointed based on qualifications. Keep the politics out of it.

In the future I believe it might be possible to elect the FRP Committee paralegals but for the initial term it was very important to have paralegals on this committee that were totally familiar with the FRP program and the desires of Florida paralegals. Anyone that would be elected would also need to be very experienced both as a paralegal and have been associated with the paralegal organizations in the State for many years.

I prefer an open election.

I do not have time to study-up on candidates. My vote would just be a guess.

Who else would want the job?

Paralegals at large would probably not know enough of the candidates to actually make an informed vote.

I don't think it should matter.

However, I can see how exceptions should be made when it is a benefit to the profession.

I do not think it is necessary for an election. As long as those serving hold the FRP designation and are in good standing with The Florida Bar, I have no issue with them representing us.

Committee members should be elected by members of (a) the organization as Board members should be elected by shareholders of a (the) company. Furthermore, if the subject is that of paralegal members then it would seem that such should be representative of paralegals whether the use of paralegals or the actual function of paralegals within the industry and/or the benefits for paralegals within the supporting organization.

Also attorneys with whom they have had a close working relationship and know what they are capable of

registered paralegals must work under the supervision of attorneys and I believe an attorney should represent on the FRP Committee

Again, to an extent. An elected FRP per section of Florida should sit on their local FRP committee and represent its area at the table for general meetings of the FRP Committee of the Fla. Bar. NOT ONE INDIVIDUAL FOR ALL FRPs in Florida - regional reps.

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments to question 6: The paralegal representatives on the FRP Committee should be elected by those paralegals who hold the FRP designation.

I'm not sure about this one. I can see the arguments for either way.

The Committee should be 50/50 - Attorneys should not be majority, as there could be a grievance bias to protect the attorney's bar license at the detriment to the paralegal.

I believe that input by attorneys of the Florida Bar may have insight into the strengths of those being elected to the FRP Committee.

Is should be primarily represented by paralegals with the FRP designation but an indendent professional consultant would be wise to include.

I believe we should be represented and elected by one of our own.

Whoever is best qualified should hold that position.

All paralegals should be allowed to determine who represent them with The Florida Bar.

not just FRP designated, but all paralegals.

I dont really care one way or the other.

I don't care how they are elected so long as they have proper credentials and a willingness to serve. If presented with a slate of candidates, I would not know any of them anyway.

It should be open but also The Florida Board should also vote

Paralegals should have some input in their representation on the FRP Committee.

However, I also have mixed feelings about this.

Lawyers know nothing about being paralegals or teaching paralegalism. Law school doesn't teach one how to be a paralegal and some law schools don't do a good job teaching lawyers how to be lawyers either. Law school only teaches how to read the law. I know. I went to Stetson.

I think the committee's election should consist of paralegals as well as attorneys, for better balance of the legal community.

To be sure the best interest of the FRPs are represented equally

Also, those who are NALA certified. I understand that there are a number of NALA certified paralegals and/or certified legal assistants, who are not registered FRPs. Personal choice...I am not sure why. If we want to enforce mandatory regulation, we need to decide if NALA CPs and CLAs should be required to become a FRP, too. Otherwise, we will only have FRPs involved with committee decisions. This may increase or decrease voting participation. I'm not quite sure.

Would like additional information regarding current mechanism for selection of paralegal reps on the FRP committee.

Electing representatives would make the positions more political than truly furthering the profession. The representatives who have been working with the Florida Bar for the past 25 years to bring about registration and oversight to the profession have done so from a sense of professionalism and selflessness rather than a popularity contest based on votes. It should be kept that way.

Should definitely hold the FRP designation, but be elected a few years down the road.

If not elected by their peers than the committee positions and appointment criteria need to be open to all FRPs for a chance at appointment and the positions need to be well-advertised in advance by the Bar. Also, the CLA and CFLP designations should not be a requirement. There are many seasoned and qualified paralegals among us who are not CLAs/CFLPs.

As long as we are provided with enough information "resume" from that representative looking to be elected so we can make an education vote.

Who else should elect them?

I have tried without success to obtain more information about the candidacy process of the FRP Committee. I would like to see a publicized, and more standardized selection process for the Committee.

unless the name and qualifications are widely know there is no guarantee that this representative would be appropriate person.

They should be elected in the same manner as representatives on any other committee are elected.

I am a little ambivalent about this because there are people who have a great deal of work experience as paralegals and have acquired significant knowledge, but who have not obtained the FRP designation.

The committee should be elected by a combination of attorneys, judges, nonparalegals, etc.

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments to question 7: All Florida paralegals should have a voice in deciding the direction of their profession.

Only FRP's should have a voice

Yes, and or elected representatives.

I think it is a collective effort with attorneys and other legal professionals

Only if they are FRP - there needs to be some regulation as anyone and everyone is calling themselves "paralegals"

Would be registered, not just those that have the title.

Some people call themselves paralegals with little or no paralegal training.

I think FRPs should have input; however they are and should be given direction by the Bar Association which regulates the legal profession and is in the best position to determine attorney needs and how paralegals can mbe the most benefit to the attorney, client and the law to advance equal access and opportunity to the judicial system.

All college graduate paralegals should.

All registered paralegals yes.

All certified paralegals.

There are many out there who call themselves "paralegals" but do not fit the statutory criteria to do so. Only those paralegals who meet the statutory criteria should have a voice in deciding the direction of the profession.

What are these questions about? They are really too generic.

I believe the direction for their (my) profession should also include information and advice from attorneys and the courts, as well as the employment market.

Only Florida Registered Paralegals, CPs, CLAs, or RPs should have a voice in any decisions affecting the profession. They are the only real paralegals.

I agree to extent that this program replicates those parameters set by the Florida Bar for attorneys. We should have a similar voice about the direction of our profession. NALA should also be solicited for thier opinions.

I believe only those who have qualified as professionals should have this opportunity.

This statement is true, but it is not limited to the florida paralegals. Everyone working in a field of study has and should have the ability to affect the field as a whole. As the Legal field evolves generally, so shall the paralegal profession.

pARALEGALS IN FL SHOULD BE QUALIFIED TO BE PARALEGALS THROUGH EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE NOT JUST CALLED A PARALEGAL SO THAT THEY CAN BILL. QUALIFIED PARALEGALS SHOULD HAVE THE ABOVE VOICE.

Only certified paralegals should have a say. There are so many that walk into an office and are there a day and are called paralegal.

Yes, and further it is important that attorneys recognise that we are not "one size fits all" as far as practice is concerned. In other words not be expected to do real estate, probate and litigation all at the same time.

I don't like that anyone can call themselves a paralegal. They should be a FRP, CLA or CP.

if they wanted to have a voice they would make the committment to become an FRP or at the least a NALA certified paralegal.

Only if they are in fact true trained and educated paralegals, not secretaries who claim to be paralegals.

This idea would be nice in theory, but I am not sure if it is feasible.

Only if regulation is madatory.

To the extent that we remain under the arm of the Florida Bar.

Only registered or certified paralegals should have a voice in the direction of the profession.

Again, with the caveat - how are you defining a Florida paralegal? FRP's only? Would you also include CP's who are not also FRP's? Or are you including everyone who calls him or herself a paralegal regardless of qualifications?

Only those that have the designation FRP

Ideally yes, but I have been doing this too long to believe that as a group paralegals/legal assistants have enough respect in the legal community to truly make a difference in this area.

This statement is so vague as to be meaningless.

Only Florida Registered Paralegals should have a voice in deciding the direction of their profession.

only those with an FRP or CLA/CP designation.

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments to question 7: All Florida paralegals should have a voice in deciding the direction of their profession.

But probably will not happen

Many persons working a paralegals are not certified or registered and I do not believe they should have a voice in the direction of the profession, if they show no interest in being a registered part of the profession.

ALL paralegals, not just the FRP.

I think those paralegals who want to be more involved need to be a part of key organizations where they can have that voice and take certain measures to show that they are committed to professionalism by obtaining FRP status or other additional certifications. I think that only those paralegals who become integrally involved in the paralegal/legal community (through key organizations, etc.) possess the necessary experience and background to make informed decision which will influence all the paralegals.

Some firms won't pay for their staff to enter the program and the staff can't afford it on their own. They should have a voice in all matters pertaining to our profession, just as FRPs do.

Only those with FRP designations should. I see too many paralegals (ungoverned) who step over the bounds of the profession. It's very frustrating.

I think this is an area in which the FRP program could be enhanced, by allowing those registered to have the voice for the profession.

It is not a profession that has a unfied job description. I know some people who are called paralegals who really are doing secretarial work. Of course, people who are practising law without a license should not be given a voice in deciding the direction of this profession.

Legal work is collaborative and such should be reflected in the industry itself.

I really don't feel like I have "a voice in deciding the direction of my profession." what i do have is an expensive frp designation and cumbersome continuing education requirements. I don't see any benefit to being a FRP.

All Florida REGISTERED paralegals should have a voice in deciding the direction of their profession.

All Florida REGISTERED paralegals should have a voice in deciding the direction of their profession.

Florida REGISTERED paralegals should have a voice...

"Paralegals" will always be supervised by attorneys - that is the nature of our profession. We would need to be called something else in order to change that.

I believe all FRPs should have the voice - not ALL FLORIDA PARALEGALS generally. If you want to have a voice you have to join.

FRP Paralegals

Minimal licensing requirements and Florida residency or Florida work requirement are essential to maintain professionalism - no offshoring of legal services!

That question should read: All REGISTERED Florida paralegals should have a voice.....

i agree, but I believe they should be certified paralegals AND FRP's to be able to participate

Paralegals should have the ability to have, and voice thier opinions, but that doesn't mean they alone will decide the direction of their profession.

Yes but there are many types of paralegals in different specialities.

Disagree because so many are called paralegals, but really are not.

Yes, but if they do not want to join the FRP through the Bar, then I do not think that the Bar should spend time and effort advancing those who do not want to join. If they do not join, then their voices should be heard through a different avenue i.e. paralegal organizations.

ONLY IF THEY ARE REGISTERED FLORIDA PARALEGALS

While paralegals should have a voice, there should also be senior attorneys who can provide input using thier perspective(s).

Some paralegals really don't care about their jobs, they are very sloppy, and are just pushing paper and getting a salary and really just don't care about improvement and I would hate for someone like this to help decide my future and how the profession should be developed versus someone who cares about what they are doing and really and truly wants to be a good as they can be at their job and takes pride in their work.

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional comments to question 7: All Florida paralegals should have a voice in deciding the direction of their profession.

*All Florida Registered Paralegals...

I would agree if the statement read "All Florida Registered Paralegals should have a voice in deciding the direction of their profession." Not all paralegals are registered.

All paralegals should have a voice until it becomes mandatory to be registered. When it becomes mandatory, then only registered paralegal should have a voice.

I disagree assuming "all Florida paralegals" is not referring only those registered with the state.

That's like saying an unlicensed attorney should have a voice in deciding the direct of licensed attorneys! Ethics being the utmost concern, I strongly disagree.

Until any regulation would be mandatory, the input from all paralegals should be sought regarding the profession; however more emphasis should be given to the voices of those paralegals that are certified and registered as FRPs.

Only those professionals who take the time to take the CLA exam and/or become registered should have the right to decide.

Florida Registered Paralegals

there should be a pay scale set up for tenure because as a paralegal you hit a glass ceiling with no incentive and no pay recognition other than the usual 2 - 5% annual pay raise.

Yes, we should have a voice, but ours should not be the only voice heard.

Absolutely! This will separate the committed paralegals from the non-committed paralegals.

Do you mean all Florida registered paralegals? Do you mean paralegals with other certifications?

Mostly, I agree. If one is concerned enough to take the steps to become registered, one is more likely to strive to be professional in one's work. However, there certainly are a number of paralegals in Florida, even though not FRPs, who are a credit to the profession.

I disagree with the implication of the question which is that FRP's want to run the Bar not be a member of the Bar. This attitude will be what prevents changing FRP's from voluntary to mandatory. I do agree that paralegals should have a voice in deciding the direction of their profession if the direction we are seeking is to be regulated to validate and strengthen our profession by weeding out unqualified paralegals.

Those individuals who have expended their time, energy and funds to achieve the educational, professional and personal goals needed to have the designation of FRP should be the ones who decide the direction of the profession they have committed to. There are far too many people still utilizing the "Paralegal" designation that are not qualified to do so from the standpoints of experience, education and dedication.

I don't believe you could get "all Florida paralegals" to agree on anything.

If the Bar wants to regulate us than we need to be afforded the opportunity of full membership in the Bar not a conciliation prize. The paralegal profession and its professionals need to be respected and treated as such. We are not a subset of the attorney profession. We are our own legal profession; one that most law firms and corporate legal departments could not survive without.

I think we all know who really runs the practice -- and it is time to get the recognition we deserve.

The response is based upon "Florida paralegals" within the Rule 20 definition of "paralegals."

Nominated representatives and/or leaders of Florida and National Paralegal Associations should have a voice. I'm not sure if this question means all Florida "registered" paralegals, or just people who call themselves paralegals?

We should be directed by attorneys

paralegals and the attorneys who hire them are the only ones who should be involved in where their profession is going. who's regulating the secretaries?

Only FRP's should have voting rights

Those not closely related to and involved with many of the processes regarding the FRP Prgraom and who are not familiar with the details may not be qualified to make some of those decisions.

Limit to FRPs

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional Comments to Question #10: The FRP Program should be mandatory, not voluntary.

I did not like my email address being provided to so many solicitors.

Requires CLE fulfillment, time spent outside the scope of employment, should be voluntary on an individual basis.

If you are going to use the designation "paralegal" you should either be part of the FLA Bar's FRP program or NALA, because they both have similar requirements.

The Florida Bar Association is mandatory for attorneys, so why not mandatory for paralegals, as long as paralegals receive similar membership benefits?

I think this was the intent of FAPA and would certainly like to see it become mandatory at some point to weed out paralegals that are not properly credentialed, i.e. education, experience, certification, etc.

A mandatory program would insure that all paralegals maintain the education and credits necessary to provide members of the Bar and other employers with confirmation that the paralegals they hire are competent professionals.

Only real way to regulate. If it's voluntary and it costs money, you will have less participation.

If you are going to use the term "paralegal" then we need to regulate the profession and who uses the term, making FRP mandatory should weed out those that are not true paralegals.

Some firms do not pay the dues. I do not think I would have registered if I had to pay the dues. it can be costly to some people that have limited discretionary funds.

I would like to be reminded the requirements i.e. seminars or number of courses to attend to maintain the good standing of my registration as a FRP.

While I agree with the need for oversight of paralegals, I believe most law firms already have policies for such oversight. Mandating would disadvantage smaller firms who cannot afford the annual fees and individual paralegals who do not wish to participate.

I believe, in the best interests of clients in Florida, that they should be.

Many paralegals do not have the money to pay the annual dues nor to pay for the CLE classes required to maintain membership in the program. They should not be penalized due to economic circumstances if they are not able or unwilling to join. You must remember that we work under attorney supervision, do not compete with attorneys and don't make the money attorneys make to justify "mandatory" membership.

Currently there is little benefit to FRP Program.

In order for regulation of the profession, a paralegal must be an FRP; otherwise the profession is diluted by those who just say they are paralegals and aren't.

Agree but only if the law firm employing the paralegal pays the dues or reimburses the expense of the dues.

Under the circumstances by which one becomes a FRP, I do not think it should be mandatory because the person doesn't have to be qualified by education and/or formal testing.

I am very much in favor of mandatory participation, just like the Bar. If a paralegal in Florida wants to be recognized as a paralegal and work in that capacity they should be a participant.

I am aware of many certified paralegals who decided not to be part of the FRP program as there does not seem to be any benefit for CLAs by enrolling into the FRP program. If anything, I have noted many who do not have the NALA standard qualifications obtaining a FRP designation, and are able to hold themselves out as paralegals, this in turn has caused a flood of inexperienced and under trained paralegals within the workforce. If the FRP Program became mandatory, then the requirements to become a FRP, must be more stringent.

Only because some people may not be able to afford the annual dues.

If you want the title as a paralegal, you should be part of the FRP program. Too many "secretaries" without broad knowledge of the law consider themselves to be paralegals. For example, a person who has a minimum of 3 years experience and has only practiced family law, should not hold the title of a paralegal. I believe a paralegal needs knowledge in at least three areas such as family, litigation, probate, real estate, etc.

This is the only way to regulate this profession in Florida and make sure that those representing themselves as paralegals are held to set standards, rules and regulations. This is also the only road that leads us to considering paralegals as professionals, thus falling under the professional overtime exemption laws.

IF YOU WANT TO BE KNOWN AS A PARALEGAL - SAME FOR ANY OTHER OCCUPATION -

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional Comments to Question #10: The FRP Program should be mandatory, not voluntary.

Agree only because it is all we have at the moment. However, simple "registration" does not imply very much. Paralegals should be licensed and regulated in the same fashion as paramedics.

I believe that in order to have the designation of "paralegal" or "legal assistant" that you must have at least an FRP designation. And, I believe that there should be one (1) formal designation and licensing/registering process with the ability to obtain specialty certifications (like attorneys do and like the certified program has now). I strongly feel that the "certified" designation and "registered" designation should be melded at some point into the same designation.

The cost, the classes, if you are paying out of pocket some cannot afford to do this. I think the cost should be about 1/2 and the cost of classes should be reduced as well. Firms will find a way around this program if mandatory, I just don't see it

If the program continues, it will over time become self mandatory in that a paralegal will need it to establish a certain level of expertise and commitment to the field.

There are to many legal secretaries that represent themselves as a "paralegal" when truly they are not. To be able to transcribe a letter or a motion does not qualify you as a paralegal.....it just means you can transcribe a document. For that reason if you are going to make the FRP mandatory, they you need to make additional education mandatory as well. I do not believe working for an for a certain number of years is adequate qualification; put some meat behind those qualifications.

However, the program should be designed to provide more than just an obligation to it's members to obtain mandatory CLE credits. It should have motivating reasons and should offer certain benefits and privileges that would not be otherwise available to those paralegals not registered in the program. For instance, one idea would be having the privilege of obtaining ID's that would identify those paralegals in the program as being registered with the state, and said ID's would provide certain privileges and benefits. One could be that of using the ID to gain entry into all Florida Courthouses through the same entryway as used by attorneys. I'm sure that we can think of many other ways in which we could increase the benefits of being enrolled in the FRP Program without having to make it mandatory.

It is a joke! I can't find work if I'm not an FRP, but I can't stay or obtain an FRP is I can't find work! What a rip-off!!! And you take my money and keep it if you decide I don't qualify? Bunch of thieves! FRP gets NO good press from me!

Other professions are regulated. The excuse for years is that attorneys want to elevate a secretary with no educational background I don't think it should be mandatory but I don't think someone should be able to hold themselves out to be a paralegal without some type of certification, again FRP, CLA, CP.

those who do not wish to be involved with the FRP Program should continue to keep the legal secretary title. If you take the programs, continue your education and work in the legal community as a paralegal you should be recognized as such. Most legal secretaries I know do more administrative work and are clearly only secretaries.

Should not be mandatory unless the cost is decreased. There are alot of great paralegals that cannot afford the designation.

Yes, that way it could weed out unqualified people claiming to be paralegals.

While the FRP program should set forth the requirements so office managers can at least determine that a person meets a minimum requirement and to help promote the professionalism of paralegals, I do not believe it should be forced on the profession.

Just like the requirements for the bar since we work so closely with attorneys. There should be no margin for error in a field that can change a person's life with the stroke of a pen. We may not make that stroke, but we contribute to the case.

I am already a certified paralegal and I feel like I receive very few benefits by being a Florida Registered Paralegal. Even though the company pays the annual fee of \$200, I am considering dropping out of the program.

To call yourself a "paralegal" there must be some parameters for knowledge, continued education and attorney supervision

A few people that I have talked to state that their firms' require them to be FRP so it is mandatory anyway. Again, what is special, if I go the extra mile to voluntarily register if everyone is now required to do so?

I would agree if the qualification requirements were more stringent.

I think that those who are actually doing paralegal work and are true paralegals would not mind mandatory registration.

I think this is something all paralegals want. I also feel that we need to take smaller steps in getting this process going. Taking smaller bites of the apple instead of the whole chunk. In doing this I think we build a mutual respect between our profession and the attorneys. Remember they have a hard time still figuring out what we do or what we can do and we all bring various skill sets to our jobs. They need to feel comfortable with us.

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional Comments to Question #10: The FRP Program should be mandatory, not voluntary.

I don't think that a lack of FRP designation should completely preclude a Paralegal from working in this field, because many are well qualified but have other plans for their future, and not all employers are generous in paying for the membership/designation.

See answers to 1 and 5. Mandatory and require that the paralegals have actually obtained a paralegal degree. In my firm alone, there are 2 "paralegals" who have never received a degree in this area; they were secretaries promoted to the status and paid the \$150 for the title of FRP. This should not be allowed.

I think it should be easier & maybe a little cheaper for the Paralegals to earn their required CLEs.

Again, not completely sure how I feel about this being mandatory, because it is costly and we have not seen much benefit to it yet.

My thinking for making the FRP Program mandatory would be to get the attention of the legal profession and the citizens of Florida

The program should be 100% voluntary. I would leave the profession if such things were mandated.

I do not appreciate that my FRP Certificate specifically states I am not a member of The Florida Bar. I believed the whole purpose of the FRP program was to include FRPs as members of The Florida Bar, although I agree that any FRP Certificate should clearly reflect that FRPs are not licensed to practice law. It appears to me that my employer just paid for an annual "dog license" for me as The Florida Bar does not particularly acknowledge FRPs on any seminar flyers, does not apparently consider or accommodate FRPs in the pricing of seminars, and appear to only be interested in FRPs as a source of income.

I think it should be managed like the nursing program. The program should have levels ranging from what is equivalent to a medical office worker, through a physician's assistant, with the LPN, RN, etc. in between.

Is voluntary now but I feel it will become mandatory very soon.

I also think that if a FRP is a licensed real estate sales associate, they should not be required to take the 14 hr real estate continuing education every 2 years for DBPR. Just like attorneys, the DBPR should waive that requirement.

I don't believe in making the FRP program mandatory. I am of the opinion, however, that there should be some clear distinctions drawn between those who take the extra steps to become and maintain FRP status and those who remain content/complacent in just doing a 'job'. I feel those who further themselves personally and professionally by obtaining and maintaining their FRP status should be regarded as having attained a higher level of responsibility and knowledge and be valued accordingly within the profession.

If CLE credits are mandatory, then the Florida Bar should provide those opportunities. If the Florida Bar is not going to provide the courses, then the requirement of CLE credits should be discontinued.

If the requirements are made more stringent.

More stringent requirements to become and FRP should be enacted. Similar to NALA's exam for CLA/CP - not that stringent but not simply an attorney saying their employee is a paralegal and signing a paper.

Already explained previously

Again....your question is ambiguous.

I don't understand the reason to become certified if one is a registered paralegal. Also, I think the CLE for paralegal is too high because it's not easy to find a CLE course to attend that is not too expensive.

Agree, but I feel there should be some type of certification testing - not just sign up and pay your money and get your employer to designate you with the title "paralegal".

I wouldn't want to answer this question off the top of my head. It would require an in depth assessment. I do not have all the information I would need to assess this.

I am not satisfied with the CLE standards applied to FRP's by the Florida Bar. For example, I can take a West LegalEd course that is a FL Bar ""deemed approved" course for which a FL attorney would simply submit application for credit; yet I cannot submit the same application for credit to the FL Bar simply because I am a FRP and not an attorney. I am forced to apply through NALA or another paralegal association for credit. If the FL Bar has seen fit to approve the course for attorneys, should it not also be fit to issue credit through the FL Bar to FRPs? I understand that it is a money issue for the FL Bar, but we are trying to better ourselves and our profession by voluntarily adhering to the higher standards. Help us -- don't hinder us.

Many paralegals cannot afford the annual dues, in addition to paying for their CLE's. Some of us work at firms that don't even pay for health insurance, vacations or sick time. I don't belong to the local paralegal chapter because I can't pay my annual dues to the Florida Bar plus local dues plus CLE's.

Let's keep our profession credentialed, so as to give us a better voice with the Florida Bar so that changes that affect our profession can be made by us, as a group.

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional Comments to Question #10: The FRP Program should be mandatory, not voluntary.

Again, if the FRP was administered through an issue neutral agency, I would be willing to have FRP mandatory. But I do not feel I should be forced to participate in the FRP program under the circumstances I have described, with the program being a part of the Florida Bar. I have my CP designation which shows more of an accomplishment than the FRP designation.

It should be mandatory for the title Paralegal, however, I also believe that if someone is a Legal Assistant for 8 or more years than they should be able to be grandfathered in as a paralegal at any time, with proper documentation.

I think you already asked this question, previously.

The program supports the growth and professional development of paralegals who can spend the time and money to participate. Many paralegals may have beliefs, financial constraints, and/or limitations that prevent their mandatory involvement.

The fee to belong should be cut in half because the majority of paralegals have to pay this annual fee themselves, and the current fee is cost-prohibitive. Currently, FRP's get nothing for the annual fee they pay except The Florida Bar newspaper.

If someone wants to claim they are a "legal assistant" that is fine; however, that is not the same as being a "paralegal". Paralegal means someone who is actually trained to do the work they do. Legal assistants can help attorneys without being paralegals, because that is just what they are, "legal assistants". Many legal secretaries these days call themselves legal assistants, and sometimes their attorneys bill their time. However, paralegal denotes experience and/or training to qualify them for the job, like "paramedic" does. That is why the FRP title is a qualification that can be provided to employers to show that someone meets the training requirements of a "paralegal". It shouldn't be required, but should be recognized as a distinction between the FRP titleholder and someone who holds themselves out as a "legal assistant" without similar qualifications.

Not sure what you mean by that question. But I do not feel that every paralegal should be required to join, pay dues, if they do not want to or can't afford to. But, on the other hand, then they should not be using the "FRP" designation but could still use the "Litigation Paralegal" or "Real Estate Paralegal", "Certified Paralegal, or simply "Paralegal".

I'm actually not sure if I agree or disagree. It is a very broad statement and would need to be further defined.

I do agree that anyone using the title of "paralegal" in Florida should be required to enter the FRP Program.

The requirements are somewhat lax. I know several FRP's who have simply been scheduling secretaries for 10 years and were grandfathered into the program (I understand the attorneys completed the attestation forms), and I doubt can even logically research a substantive issue. I think being a CP/CLA is a great way to "raise the bar". There should be some minimum requirements, not simply attestations.

again - for that unified voice and to regulate UPL

Not sure how to answer this one, it would be nice if it was mandatory but not everyone in the profession takes pride in their work or position and to have them as a voting membership is scary.

I do not believe that it should be mandatory because some may not be able to meet the financial requirements of the ongoing CLE requirements and ongoing annual dues. That would not be fair to those whose financial status does not allow for it.

the Paralegals that pay their dues as well of their other paralegal associations find it too expensive to belong to all.

I think there should be at least 3 seminars per year for which the FRPs vote for the topic/area to be discussed.

should be Voluntary

If it becomes mandatory, and the current employment requirements are not changed, then paralegals would not be able to freelance or temp for different attorneys.

Unless the State is going to somehow require licensing or overview of some type. In that event, this program would be preferable to one administered by a State agency.

There should be mandatory regulation of the profession but the FRP program should not necessarily be mandatory due to possible financial hardships on paralegals who do not have financial assistance from their firms, or who may work in the public sector which also may not support them.

Again, if you wish to be recognized as a billing professional, you should go the extra step and become registered and certified.

As in my case, I do not have a bachelor's degree, however I have been working in the legal field for over 25 years and have on-the-job training which I feel provides better qualified paralegals than an arbitrary 4-year degree. Imposing restrictions on education or working for one attorney for a long period of time (which sometimes is impossible with some attorneys) can exclude individuals who are sometimes more capable of handling the rigors of the profession than others with degrees and will eventually exclude some highly qualified paralegals in becoming FRPs.

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Additionally, I would like to see more seminars allow credits, not just Fla Bar & Paralegal Assoc. for the FRP. I attend seminars that pertain to my job that are not sponsored by the above and I can't apply the credits.

If it's made mandatory, I am not comfortable believing that "proof that I am qualified to become a FRP" that an applicant might submit would be entirely truthful

Although many of the "Certified" Paralegals I have worked with have Bachelor's degrees, they all say they have learned "on the job" MUCH more than they did at school. I've always been better @ "hands-on" myself.

Without regulation, there is no base line level of understanding between persons who identify themselves as paralegals.

Undecided

It should be mandatory for all paralegals, not for legal assistants or secretaries.

If you want to be called a Florida Registered Paralegal and be sanctioned by the Florida Bar, yes.

Some firms may not be willing to pay, and some paralegals would not be able to afford on their own.

I do agree that to qualify as a paralegals NOT require a degree and that years of experience should count toward a FRP. However, I feel that the proof requirements are not enough as I strongly believe there is a big difference between a "paralegal" and a "legal assistant".

Not every paralegal would be able to afford it.

an individual should not be held out as a "paralegal" unless he/she is an FRP...e.g. Paralegal mandatorily should be preceded by "Florida Registered"if that is not the case a title which accurately describes the individual's competency must be used.

I agree that it should be mandatory; however, when Employers do not pay the dues, some paralegals may not be able to afford the dues or attend CLE seminars to be in compliance with the Rules.

Whatever needs to be done to elevate the status of truly well trained paralegals is what I am endorsing. I do not know if statement 10 reflects that.

I strongly believe that it the FRP Program should be mandatory because there are too many problems with people trying to get away with doing unethical things. We need tighter regulation to clean up the foolishness. More importantly, it is a slap in the face when you have a paralegal charged with unethical behavior. It is a mark against the entire legal profession. While I recognize that I personally cannot control what someone else does, I certainly don't want to sit back and watch the professional go down the toilet either. We've come too far to allow a few bad seeds to damage what we have fought so hard to bring into existence. Hands down, we need mandatory regulation.

Again, I mostly agree for the reasons set forth in previous answers.

Mandatory for all the Paralegals meeting the FRP criteria. However, the annual fee should be minimized, in my opinion.

There should be a mandatory board exam for anyone wishing to be a paralegal, although those who have been paralegals for a number of years should be exempt and grandfathered in.

I think that paralegals should be held accountable in the same way that lawyers are - otherwise we have no way of ensuring that they are abiding by the rules that mandate paralegals.

I believe if the program acknowledges what Paralegals do and it requires Paralegals to continue their education which is important in our field.

All persons who desire to be called Paralegals should be required to maintain minimum standards during their professional careers. The laws of this State are continually changing and anyone who purports to have the knowledge and experience to be called a Paralegal should also have to maintain minimum standards. Only through mandatory programs that require ongoing education can the standards be met.

As long as Florida paralegals have a voice in how the Bar regulates the program. I am uncomfortable with attorneys exclusively regulating and managing the program.

I know that through the years there have been many paralegals who became such by progressing through the ranks and not going to school to learn the profession. Although they can be granted the registration through their years of work, in some offices it is not recognized in a way to promote their position and those people usually have to pay their own fees. Most who are paralegals and enjoy their profession go to the meetings/seminars to continue to learn anyways which would be the most important reason to make the program mandatory.

If it were mandatory, the pretenders would be gone and the paralegals that remain would be better compensated.

Appendix: Additional Comments Provided by Respondents

Additional Comments to Question #10: The FRP Program should be mandatory, not voluntary.

If someone would like to hold themselves out to be a paralegal, by office title and business cards, then yes it must be mandatory.

The paralegal profession should be regulated to ensure those practicing meet minimal education/experience requirements.

I still feel it should be voluntary at this time. I do wish that it would do more financially for us than it has at the present moment in my town.

I believe there needs to be some type of licensing or certification required of paralegals for reasons stated in earlier comments, with mandatory continuing education. We live in an ever changing world, and staying on top of new ways, modern technology, etc. is so very important in our field.

If we are going to be considered true professionals that are held to a specific standard of performance and conduct, the FRP Program should be mandatory. But, we should also be assimilated into the Bar Association as completely and fully as possible. We are not just secretaries that took a few extra courses. Many of us take our profession every bit as seriously as do the best attorneys and we should be given the opportunity to improve upon it.

not yet

See earlier comments provided. Thank you.

Not all firms pay for the dues; not all paralegals can afford the dues.

Mandatory, but with a certain level of skills to be registered.

Submitting documentation of CLEs is difficult online. Need to have a mail in address.

again, i disagree with governmental regulatory agencies overseeing paralegals. i fully support agencies overseeing attys, nurses, doctors, psychiatrists, but paralegals are already being overseen by their employers, attorneys, who are being overseen by the fl bar. waste of time and money.

Today's job market/economy is way too sensitive for all non-registered paralegals to lose their jobs! This should remain 100% VOLUNTARY - with employers to decide what they wish to hire.

I'm torn on this one. I would add: "mandatory, only if paid by the employer". Although, as long as you are completing the education requirements to be a paralegal in the first place, I suppose "mandatory" would fit the situation as long as you knew going in about the requirement.

Should be mandatory to use the title paralegal. Otherwise, no.

I think it should be voluntary. Given the economy, not everyone can afford the dues and not everyone's employers pay for their fees. I also think that the CLE time should be extended over four years instead of three years.

I agree in that there is a clear distinction between an FRP and regular paralegal. On one hand I like having a leg up on fellow paralegals when applying for a job but having the FRP, but on the other hand, what if the paralegal cannot afford the dues, CLEs, etc. I'm not sure I would be happy about having to pay the dues if my employer did not pay for it. I do not make a ton of money as it is, so it would seem unfair to have to keep up the membership and costs of CLE out of my own money just to continue on in my profession.

Unsure - I think the out of pocket expense of annual dues may dissuade potential enrollment by paralegals who do not have the benefit of employer/attorney sponsorship as part of their employment package.

also feel that paralegals should also have a CP designation because of the requirements to obtain same and/or a college degree

I feel that everyone should have a choice but that FRP's should have higher recognition and privileges that are not offered to non-FRP's.