

PARALEGAL PROGRAM PODCAST TRANSCRIPT:

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AMIE RAY DAVIS: And I'll tell you something. I have never been more impressed with young people in my life.

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AMELIA REECE: I'm currently interning at the Attorney General's office in Atlanta as a paralegal intern. They just opened it up for paralegal students, and so I'm actually one of the first people that I've gotten to intern there.

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TRAVIS MCQUAIG: And I looked into it, ended up changing my major and really fell in love with it and really enjoyed it and the classes itself. So I did a complete 180, but I'm really glad I did.

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NARRATOR: 98.7 Chatt Tech, where 98.7% of our students earn a career. On this episode, we'll be discussing one of the newer programs at Chatt Tech, the Paralegal program. We'll hear from current students and an instructor. So let's get started and meet our first guest.

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AMIE RAY DAVIS: All right, I'm Amie Ray Davis, and I'm the lead instructor for the Paralegal program at Chattahoochee Tech.

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NARRATOR: The Paralegal program is relatively new. How has it evolved over the past year?

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AMIE RAY DAVIS: Oh, wow. It's incredibly strange thinking about where it was last year versus where it is now, because I'd never anticipated that it would grow as much as it has. We have gotten to where we have three other instructors, and we have a whole bunch of students, and they're just plugging away.

And I've got some that are going to be graduating in the spring. And it's just been incredible growth. And I especially love watching the students grow.

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NARRATOR: Can you tell us about the program and what does it teach students?

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AMIE RAY DAVIS: So what we are teaching them is we're giving them the basics that they would need to work in a law office or in some kind of capacity, because there's paralegals and like where there's in-house counsel for, say, a corporation. So the paralegals can be found in a variety of places that can function in other roles as well. They can also function as union reps for like the teamster unions and things like that. They have basically the same kind of skills, but they just call them something different. But basically we are taking them from square one, and by the time they get to the end of the program, they will have drafted many different types of documents. They will have taken a multitude of different classes that are going to touch on different areas of law. And hopefully, you know, they're going to come out and be like, I have a lot of experience from this. You know, we're trying to offer them different opportunities, like we have a legal studies club and we're doing a mock trial. We actually have two mock trial competitions in this semester, and that's something else they can add. And we're trying to put together other things that they can participate in.

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NARRATOR: Like what?

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AMIE RAY DAVIS: For example, last year at the end of our first semester, we did a pop up legal clinic with the Cobb Bar Association and the Cobb Legal Aid. And, you know, we helped at that clinic and we helped, like, do documents and stuff like that that needed to be prepped on the spot.

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NARRATOR: Now that we know a little bit about the program, let's hear what some of the students have to say.

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TENNILLE REDMOND: My name is Tennille Redmond, and I am currently a student at Chattahoochee Tech in the Paralegal Studies program. I'm an older student, so I've been through this before. You know, I have a bachelor's degree in business management, and it's been over 20 plus years since I've last been in school. And one of the reasons why I've decided to come back to school is actually because of my 16 year old son, who kind of encouraged me to get back into school because he's actually interested in law, but he feels like I've taught him a lot and encourage him. So he was like, mom, why not? But I don't want to do law. I don't want to actually be a lawyer, I should say. So. That's kind of why I'm here.

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NARRATOR: Why did you choose the paralegal program?

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TENNILLE REDMOND: The reason I chose paralegal, like I said, in talking to my son, I knew I didn't want to actually go to law school, but the more that I thought about him, like, okay, well, maybe I can go into paralegal studies. And I found the program at Chattahoochee Tech. And in doing so, the more I thought about it, because my background is in accounts payable and I do a lot with financial. So I kind of thought maybe I want to go into tax law. And so that's my goals. So that's what I'm working towards.

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TRAVIS MCQUAIG: I am Travis McQuaig. I'm 19 years old. I am one of the students in the paralegal program at Chattahoochee Tech. I'm in my third semester.

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NARRATOR: What's your story of why you enrolled in the paralegal program?

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TRAVIS MCQUAIG: So one of the main reasons I enrolled in Chat Tech was because it was one of the biggest technical schools, I guess, in the state, really. And I knew it was really popular. And I had quite a few friends that went to Chatt Tech. And I initially did not role in the paralegal program. I actually completed my prerequisites for nursing school and actually started the nursing program. But I realized it wasn't for me. And my aunt, who actually is a paralegal, inspired me to look into that. And I found out that Chattahoochee had a paralegal program, and I looked into it. I ended up changing my major and really fell in love with it and really enjoyed it and the classes itself. So I did a complete 180, but I'm really glad I did.

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NARRATOR: We'll get back to Tenille and Travis in just a few minutes. But here's another student.

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AMELIA REECE: My name is Amelia Reese. I'm currently in the paralegal Studies program and I am set to graduate this upcoming May.

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NARRATOR: So why did you enroll at Chatt Tech? Were you always interested in the law?

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AMELIA REECE: I wanted to look into going to law school, but that is a big jump for me since I have three little kids. So I wanted to see if I would actually like law. And the Paralegal Studies program gives you really in-depth classes that are similar to what it would be like in law school. After I talked to Amy and I did my first semester, she told me, like with the amount that we read and all the coursework that we do, that it would really prepare you if you wanted to, to go to law school.

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NARRATOR: And you have kids. So how has this program been able to help you with that?

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AMELIA REECE: So I do have three little kids, and I work full time to the paralegal studies program. Almost all the classes are online and the lectures are through zoom or WebEx. And the meeting times are I feel like at pretty decent times we do around like 6:00 to like 9:45 within that range. So it really makes it easy if you work during the day to be able to attend class and still be able to get a pretty decent lecture and understand the material.

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KAITLYN GROSH: My name is Kaitlyn Gross. I go to Chatt Tech in the paralegal program. I work at two different restaurants as well as doing school. That's a little bit about me.

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NARRATOR: What's the reason why you decided to enroll in the paralegal program?

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KAITLYN GROSH: Law has always interested me. I was going to go for the criminal justice, but I didn't want to be a police officer. I like the attorney side more, and it's just really interesting. And you get to know the law and know what you're able to do and what not to do and stuff like that.

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NARRATOR: How has your experience been so far, and what about the instructors?

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KAITLYN GROSH: The classes are really good.

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KAITLYN GROSH: We do mainly online and you'll have like maybe 3 or 4 a week. There are discussion boards and they give you like assignments. You have to make an argument paper about a case that they give you, and they'll help you if you have any questions. And you can always like resubmit your answers. And then you have like quizzes to do. And it's just really helpful. It's like a really good learning curve. And at Chatt Tech we are very lucky because other colleges don't do the whole assignment stuff like we do other colleges do, like a bunch of test over the chapters and that's about it. So I feel very lucky to go to Chatt Tech and the paralegal program.

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NARRATOR: Amy, we'll go back to you as an instructor. How hands on are you with your teaching?

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AMIE RAY DAVIS: My students are probably tell you that I give them, like, the most examples I could ever give them. So I try to make sure that whenever I'm going through and I'm teaching them something, that I break it down into, like little micro pieces. For example, we have rule statements in the law which are our version of definitions. So take something like say battery, for example, in tort law, not in the criminal part, but it is, you know, a harmful or offensive touch where somebody intended to have this harmful or offensive touch and that the legal harm happened. And it only has to be that somebody felt offended. So I go through and I break it down bit by bit. So we talk about what does it mean to be a harmful or offensive touch. What does it mean to have the intent to do it? What does it mean that it happened?

And then what does it mean for the legal harm here? So I go through and I give them examples of what it looks like and what it doesn't look like.

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NARRATOR: Can you give us an example of some of your teaching strategies?

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AMIE RAY DAVIS: Oh yeah. For sure. Constitutional law. This term has been really fun. And that's because basically the way we broke it up is we're going through and we're getting to kind of debate all of the individual amendments, and we're getting to talk about, like, I give them the background of it, I give them the origin and like, who was involved in what part of it. And then we go into talking about what it means. And then I have some students who are, you know, staunch originalist, and then I have some students who are like, no, no, no, it has to be. It's living. And so we have these, you know, debates back and forth. And I'll tell you something. I have never been more impressed with young people in my life. They have been so good. My dad used to always tell me he was like, you don't talk to people about religion, politics or money. And I would tell my dad, I'd say, you just don't know how to talk to people. And these students have been that very thing. They have been the epitome of what people should be like when they're talking about politics, because they have these very opposing viewpoints and they're very respectful. It's been amazing.

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NARRATOR: Hearing what Amie just said. Tennielle, it sure sounds like the instructors are setting you up to not fail.

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TENNILLE REDMOND: Exactly. Not fail anything. And as long as you communicate with them and you let them know what you're expecting to get from the program, so far they have by far exceeded my expectations. And like I said, because I'm not a new student, I'm not new at this. I kind of know what to expect. And going into it thinking, okay, well, let's see how these professors are going to be because I am an adult. But like I said, by far exceeded all expectations with this program.

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NARRATOR: You went back to school after 20 years. So what's your mindset now that you're a little bit older?

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TENNILLE REDMOND: Definitely. Because like you said, I was able to go into this and kind of already know what to research for. So I would tell them, you can do it because you do know, especially if you have already gone through that process. I also knew what to look for as far as like financial aid, how to look for that financial aid. And then like I said, just if you got that gut feeling like you should just do it, act on it. And like I said, it took a little bit of encouragement from my son for me to go ahead and pursue it. But the more that I taught him through and I'm thinking, yeah, you're right, I do teach you a lot, and we have taught a lot, so why not do it? And just the tidbit, he thinks that when he becomes a lawyer, I'm going to work for him.

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NARRATOR: So back to you, Travis. What do you like most about the program?

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TRAVIS MCQUAIG: For me personally, the flexibility, I think that, I mean, like, I work a lot. So for someone like me that doesn't have a ton of free time with the program being offered fully online, that's a huge plus. And I really like that. Professor Davis being the program director, it makes it feel really tight knit and kind of adds a personal touch because anytime I need something, she's always there. And especially being the program director and overseeing everything going on, you know, anytime I ask a question, she knows exactly what I'm talking about. She knows exactly how to help, and that's a huge plus.

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NARRATOR: What would you say to somebody thinking about going into the paralegal program?

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TRAVIS MCQUAIG: The biggest advice I would have to give you is to stay on top of your assignments, because assignments are going to come out weekly and every week you need to start working on them on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. What I try to do is I try to get my knocked out in the first few days of the week. That way if I do something wrong or I need help with something, I can go ahead and ask the professor or question. And I still have plenty of time to actually get it done. There is a lot of assignments, but there's a lot to learn, and I think the biggest thing I would say is stay on top of your work. You have to.

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NARRATOR: Now that you're in the paralegal program, how has that affected your TV watching?

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TRAVIS MCQUAIG: Oh, yeah, so I have I've started watching, um, I never watched Legally Blonde before I started the program, so I started watching that.

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ACTRESS: Oh, look how cute. There's like a judge in everything and jury people.

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TRAVIS MCQUAIG: I started watching Suits. I watched that now. So, you know, it has. It has affected that for sure.

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NARRATOR: Amelia, I hear you currently have a really interesting internship. I don't want to spoil it. So could you tell us a little bit about it?

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AMELIA REECE: So I'm currently interning at the Attorney General's office in Atlanta as a paralegal intern for part of the program requirements. And my goal for myself is to I would like to work there or within another government agency as a paralegal.

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NARRATOR: That sounds really cool.

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AMELIA REECE: I think it is. They just opened it up for paralegal students and. I'm actually one of the first people that have gotten to intern there because of the program at Chat Tech. The sector that I'm in is public health and they go over a variety of interest. They do felony murders, death row inmates. They get a lot of correspondence from inmates that they have to deal with. They deal with post. It's part of the Georgia State Patrol. And it's really, really interesting to just see everything that goes on within the office and what they handle.

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NARRATOR: Kaitlyn, after you graduate, what would you like to use your degree for?

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KAITLYN GROSH: I would like to go into the criminal justice field and work for an attorney who does criminal justice, like criminal law. It's really interesting to me. It is pretty hard, but hopefully I can do that and maybe go back to school for law, becoming an attorney.

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NARRATOR: And what would you say to somebody who wants to enroll?

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KAITLYN GROSH: Absolutely. Go for it. There's nothing wrong with learning the law. You're not going to put yourself at a disadvantage. You're going to actually be like, more open to law jobs than anything else, because you'll understand the law and how to research and everything. And it just in the end, it really does help. You're not going to disadvantage yourself at all. So I recommend people doing it.

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NARRATOR: All right. Instructor Amie, I'm going to give you the last word. What should future students know about the paralegal program?

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AMIE RAY DAVIS: I would say that we have a great group of professors. We have an incredible group of students. They're all very supportive of each other. We are online fully. We will have classes sometimes on campus. It'll be the Marietta campus. But the intent was to make it so that it was fully online. For those who want that. And honestly, like with social media, we're shifting in that direction where everything is, you know, online. And I think that the wealth of information and experience, particularly that the other three professors bring that alone is absolutely amazing. They will feel nothing but supportive, and I hope they do. I hope they change their majors. I would be okay with stealing all the students.

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NARRATOR: Chatt Tech, the College of Real World Training and how our communities are stronger and better thanks to the thousands of Chatt Tech graduates in our local workforce. For more information

about the Paralegal program at Chattahoochee Tech, visit [Chattahoochee Tech EDU](http://ChattahoocheeTech.edu). Thanks for listening to 98.7 Chattahoochee Tech, where 98.7% of our students earn a career.