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# A CCLS Grab Bag of Information

BY TERRI QUINTON, CCLS AND ELISE DRESSER, CCLS  
LSI CCLS CHAIR, CCLS CERTIFYING BOARD CHAIR

**B**elow are some tidbits of information about the California Certified Legal Secretary program that may help you understand the program and study for the exam.

## CCLSs BY THE NUMBERS

There are 272 California Certified Legal Secretaries at this time (hopefully with even more being added to the list following the October CCLS exam.)

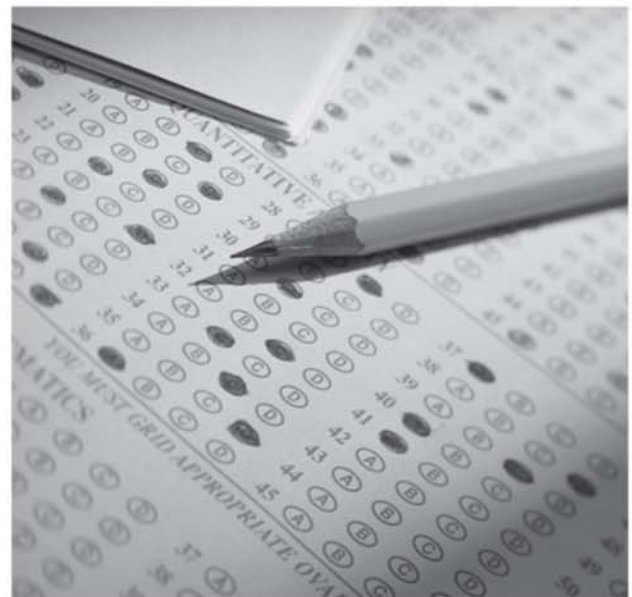
Of those CCLSs, 17 grandfathered in when the program began. These individuals were already PLSs, and did not have to sit for the CCLS exam. There are also 8 attorneys.

There are 104 who are retired, 2 who have switched fields, and 11 who have moved out of state. These individuals' educational credit requirements are stayed, but if they return to the active legal field in California, they will have to once again start acquiring educational credits.

## WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG TO GET THE RESULTS?

Many wonder why it takes so long to get the results of the CCLS exam since all answers are recorded on a scantron. Here's the low-down:

After the exam, all scantrons are sent to the CCLS Certifying Board Chair, who in turn sends them to a former Certifying Board Member who runs the scantrons. Once the Chair gets them back, spreadsheets are prepared of every question and every examinee, which are sent out to the Board Members. Each question that has more than half the examinees getting it wrong is reviewed in depth by the Members to determine if there is a problem with the ques-



tion, answer key, etc. Once they have done so, a marathon conference call takes place where the results of the exam and the review are discussed. After the call, the Chair updates the spreadsheets and sends them to the Members once again for review. Finally, once all of this has taken place, the Chair sends out the results to the examinees.

## HOW CAN I FIT STUDY TIME INTO MY BUSY SCHEDULE?

It does take a lot of studying to get ready for the CCLS exam and get through it. But there are many moments in time that can be used.

Make flash cards – keep small stacks of flash cards in your purse or pocket, and pull them out when you're standing in line at the grocery store, pumping gas, waiting at Starbucks for your morning latte.

*Continued on page 13*

## PROPERTY TAXES INCREASED FIVE TIMES

regardless of his own death or the death of the other, and the death of either of the brothers wouldn't affect the brothers' ownership interests in the property. However, under Proposition 13, the recording of this deed by the second brother amounted to a "transfer" of a property interest - and this "transfer" triggered a "reappraisal" of the property.

Why did this make a difference? Because the original value of the property had been established at \$100,631, and the brothers were paying annual property taxes on that value. But when this new deed was recorded, the property was "reappraised" at its current value of \$525,323 - which was more than five times the previous value. This meant that the brothers had to pay five times the amount of property taxes that they paid before this second deed was recorded.

The second brother may not have ever expected that his severing the joint tenancy would result in a big tax increase - but it did.

So what's the bottom line? Property owners must be very, very careful in real property title matters. Even small changes to title can have expensive, unintended consequences. The best approach? Property owners act wisely when they consult legal counsel in connection with changes to property titles.

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## A CCLS GRAB BAG OF INFORMATION

*Continued from page 11*

Use your everyday work product - if your attorney uses the *Blue Book* for citations, print an extra copy of your pleadings and then translate the citations into *California Style Manual* format; if you lose the punctuation battle with your attorney, print out an extra copy and re-punctuate it according to Gregg.

Get your children in the mix - children love playing teacher to their parents. Let your children quiz you using your flash cards, or using the Glossary from the *Law Office Procedures Manual*. It's great practice, and it also gives you some additional family time during your studies.

Study during lunch - studying during your lunch hour is a great use of time, especially if you work with or near someone else studying for the exam. Even if you are alone in your pursuit, ask your co-workers to help quiz you.

### HOW SHOULD I STUDY?

Know your study style! Some learn by listening, some by writing notes, and others by teaching. We are all different in the way we learn, and knowing your own style will help you avoid wasted time and frustration.

Use free online study tools. There are simple study tools available online, such as Quizlet at <http://quizlet.com/> which provides free study tools like flashcards, tests, and study games to make learning fun. Also, Quizlet is accessible on your home computer or on the go using your iPhone, iPad, and Android. There are many compatible mobile apps, such as Flashcards+.

Use the Internet. Download copies of study materials available free online, such as the *California Style Manual* and the *California Notary Public Handbook*. For some of us, having

an electronic version really helps. (Make sure you also have a hard copy of the *California Style Manual* so you can carry it with you and mark it up as you study.) Go to YouTube and watch videos about grammar, such as the grammar lessons on YouTube hosted by author John Green and his "38 Common Spelling and Grammar Errors" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRMRCeQBAKI>. Gets a laugh every single time!

Find a study buddy. Meet on a regular basis to review material, go through flash cards, and quiz each other. You will each have different strengths that you can bring to the table. And you can always have more than one!

Make use of your lifelines. If you are in a live study group, ask for help from your study group leader; if you have a particular area of expertise, offer your assistance to teach a section of the material. You can also always contact the LSI CCLS Chair, Terrie Quinton, CCLS, at [lsiccls@outlook.com](mailto:lsiccls@outlook.com) if you have questions or need assistance.

Join a study group. While it is possible to study on your own and pass the CCLS exam, it helps to belong to a study group, either local or LSI's on-line group. Tips and tricks are passed along, material is explained, and you have access to study buddies.

### THE EXAM

Each of the seven sections of the exam is updated each time the exam is given because court rules and code sections change. The material covered in the exam is based off the most recent updates to the *Law Office Procedures Manual* as of January and August of each year, when the exam has to be completed in preparation for the exam date.

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