

## JOINT CONFERENCE SUMMARY

*By Erin Cafferkey*

On April 19-20, 2013 I attended the NFPA Joint Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. The goals of my attendance were to network on behalf of PACO as the NFPA Primary Representative and gain information that would be helpful to both the Executive Board and the membership as a whole. I am *jazzed* to tell you about what I learned!

The conference had two portions. The first day was about regulation of paralegals and the status of regulation in other states. Presenters discussed current legislation with regards to paralegals in West Virginia, New York, California, and Washington.

The regulation portion also included an ethics presentation. This presentation went over Lawyer/Paralegal Guidelines and the Unauthorized Practice of Law. The American Bar Association guidelines can be applied to multiple states and jurisdictions and is a helpful frame of reference.

In addition, there was a presentation about how to build a relationship with your local bar association. The New Orleans Paralegal Association discussed strategies that they used to promote a relationship with their bar association.

The highlight of the conference was the leadership portion. During this portion we learned about different leadership styles, such as the charismatic, autocratic, situational, and bureaucratic leader and the current research about which styles are more effective. I also learned about different personalities and how to best communicate with each personality type, and most importantly, get goals accomplished together. We participated in two group activities, which highlighted how it is advantageous for an organization to have multiple personalities and leadership styles.

Another useful portion was the social media segment where we discussed twitter, facebook, linkedin, skype, and blogging. I learned the importance of having a social media presence professionally, but in a carefully constructed way. The goals of using social media professionally are to build relationships, collaborate, and network; however it is easy to be distracting and overbearing. Thus, there is a social media balance one must achieve. Social media is a great way to reach shy and introverted members as well.

In sum, the Joint Conference touched upon multiple topics that impact both paralegals and their associations today.