Professor Bonnie Shane taught at Sinclair Community College for 22 years, from 1989 to 2011. Bonnie Shane’s exemplary service to Sinclair Community College and its students spanned a quarter century. Along her path she accomplished the roles of instructor, professor curriculum developer, grant director, and department chair, and she earned recognition – repeatedly - for her leadership in college innovation, distinguished community service and teaching excellence.

After serving the Dayton Community as the supervising attorney at the Legal Aid Society, Bonnie joined what was then known as the Legal Assisting Program in 1986, first as a part-time instructor, then a tenure track professor. She helped build the program into a respected cornerstone of the local legal community. In order to meet shifting nomenclature the legal profession, the program became known in 2004 as the Paralegal Program.

This was work creation and invention. In the 1980s, the concept of paraprofessionals serving in legal settings under the supervision of licensed attorneys was brand new. The legal profession was just beginning to recognize these paraprofessionals would prove so valuable to law firms that their services could be separately billed, simultaneously reducing legal bills to the clients, and generating income to the firm. Not only was the paralegal profession being invented, so was the education of paralegals. There were no standards for educating these paraprofessionals to meet the new role of “legal assistant” or “paralegal.” In the Miami Valley, Bonnie Shane was one of the pioneers promoting this new profession within the legal community, while creating a stringent educational curriculum to produce high quality, ethical graduates who could earn acceptance in the legal community.

Bonnie’s pioneering work, first as a professor, then as chair of the Sinclair Paralegal Program, emerged in a variety of educational realms.

Bonnie championed process learning in the classroom for all paralegal courses, integrating team work, critical thinking skill development, authentic learning tasks, general education skills, and technology skills in an interactive learning environment. She developed individual student journals document course work and student growth. Outside the classroom, to improve the chances of student success, Bonnie organized resources of the Paralegal Department to create a new student orientation program twice a year. To better link students with the legal community, she organized the annual presentation of the local Ohio
Paralegal Day celebration at Sinclair. Everyone on campus knew Bonnie never sat still, and neither did her students.