**Paralegal Studies (Legal Assistant) Program**

**2011-12 Program Review**

**Last Review: 2006-07**

**Current Year: 2011-12**

**Preparers’ Names: R.J. Ruppenthal, Faculty Member**

**Area Dean: Dr. Jonathan King**

**Summary of the Department/Program (“Program”)**

1. Provide a brief summary of your program. Assume the reader does not know anything about it. Your explanation should include a brief history and a discussion of any factors that have been important to the program’s development. Please explain the purpose of your program, what students you serve, what services you provide, and why these services are valuable.

**The paralegal and legal assistant job field is one of the fastest growing careers in the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in a report updated in June 2011, employment for paralegals and legal assistants is projected to grow “much faster than the average for all occupations.”[[1]](#footnote-1) In explaining the job growth in this field, the BLS report includes the following information:**

*Employers are trying to reduce costs and increase the availability and efficiency of legal services by hiring paralegals to perform tasks once done by lawyers. Paralegals are performing a wider variety of duties, making them more useful to businesses. Demand for paralegals also is expected to grow as an expanding population increasingly requires legal services, especially in areas such as intellectual property, healthcare, international law, elder issues, criminal law, and environmental law. The growth of prepaid legal plans also should contribute to the demand for legal services.*

**In California, the job outlook for paralegals is strong also. According to the Employment Development Department (EDD) Occupational Guides, “the number of Paralegals and Legal Assistants is expected to grow much faster than average growth rate for all occupations. Jobs for Paralegals and Legal Assistants are expected to increase by 19.4 percent, or 5,500 jobs between 2008 and 2018.” [[2]](#footnote-2) The EDD includes this job field on its list of the state’s fastest growing professions. [[3]](#footnote-3)**

**There is a particularly high demand for legal professionals in Silicon Valley, since many companies are based here and many law firms have local offices. The BLS estimates an average salary of $65,520 per year ($31.38 per hour) for paralegals and legal assistants in the San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA metropolitan area. This salary is far high than the national average, and in fact it places this region at #2 on BLS’ list of paralegal salaries for all metropolitan areas in the nation. [[4]](#footnote-4)**

**In 2000, in response to the growing demand for paralegals and perceived lack of training standards in the profession, California became the first state in the nation to regulate this job field. As a result of this legislation, both the “paralegal” and “legal assistant’ job titles are defined under Business and Professions Code §6450, all portions of which went into effect between 2000 and 2004. The terms “paralegal” and “legal assistant” are considered synonymous under this law. The most important change under §6450 was the requirement that anyone using the job title “paralegal” or “legal assistant” must complete the proper education. Several educational options are provided, the simplest of which is for someone to complete at least 24 semester units of law-related courses at a regionally-accredited college or university.**

**Evergreen Valley College’s Paralegal Studies (Legal Assistant) Program enables graduates to meet this requirement. The program offers students three educational options: the A.A. degree, A.S. degree, and Specialty Certificate in Paralegal Studies. All three options include the same major courses, which are built around the 24 core units of law-related courses required by state law. The Certificate allows students to attain an educational goal in two years or less that qualifies them for employment as a “paralegal” or “legal assistant”. Those with a more academic orientation may continue on to complete their associate degrees and perhaps transfer on to a four-year school. The program encourages all students to complete college degrees, as this improves employment and promotional opportunities.**

**While this program was founded more than two decades ago, its success is relatively recent. Its early tenure was marked by the untimely departure of one full-time instructor and the subsequent death of another. For five or six years prior to 2005, the program had no full-time instructor and was staffed by adjunct instructors while the division dean attempted to promote the program to incoming students and area employers. In 2005, the college made a decision to stabilize and grow the program by hiring a full-time instructor in R.J. Ruppenthal, an attorney with experience teaching in another college’s respected paralegal program. Since then, the program overhauled its curriculum, created and launched a robust Advisory Committee, and supported students in creating SPA-EVC, a successful Paralegal Studies student club which provides networking opportunities, career workshops, and mentoring opportunities between alumni and students.**

**In recent years, the program has been able to retain and develop two fabulous adjunct instructors who contribute greatly to its student success by teaching courses, recruiting students, and assisting with job placement for program graduates. Professor Chavez, who works as Law Firm Administrator for the largest family law firm in San Jose, is a past president of local chapters of both the Association of Legal Administrators and the Legal Professionals Association. She has been instrumental in organizing the program’s advisory committee and in developing internship and job opportunities for graduates. Professor Lorelei Lashley, a tax attorney, has brought a high level of dedication and professionalism to teaching the program’s transactional and business-related law classes.**

**The program has grown swiftly in recent years as its graduates have been in great demand from Silicon Valley law firms, corporate legal departments, and public agencies. As part of the program’s requirements, all students must complete a two-course sequence of Legal Research and Writing classes (LA 71 and 72) to graduate. In 2005, in Professor Ruppenthal’s first semester as the new full-time instructor, there were 13 students in the required LA 72 “capstone” class. At the beginning of fall semester this year, 50 students were registered and wait-listed for the same LA 72 course. Enrollments in all classes have grown along with the economic demand and due to positive word of mouth and repeated successes in graduate job placement.**

**Today, the student body includes some students coming directly from high school and many students who are re-training for a second or third career. Some have lost their jobs due to the economic downturn or due to workplace injury, while others have taken time off to raise children. In addition, a growing number of the program’s students already work in the legal field and are being referred to the Evergreen Valley College program by their employers, many of whom pay for them to take classes and improve their legal knowledge and skills. Paralegal certification for staff members provides a net benefit for many law firms, since the United States Supreme Court held in the *Missouri v. Jenkins* case that law firms may bill professional paralegal time directly to clients. The catch is that paralegals must be well-trained in order to perform substantive legal work, and some law firms are only starting to realize how this provides them with an opportunity to leverage their paralegals (in other words, make more money). This provides another rationale for the program’s growth.**

***\*Note: For the following items, you may use Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and SLO assessments to gauge effectiveness. If so, you may wish to complete Part C, below, and then return to this section.***

2. How does your program define effectiveness, and what measures have you chosen to gauge it?

**The program gauges effectiveness through assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and through successful job placement of its graduates in professional law-related positions. The Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee provides an additional source of evaluation by reviewing curriculum and student success. By evaluating the program and advising program faculty on any needed improvements, the Committee provides assurance that program graduates possess the requisite knowledge and skills to succeed in paralegal and legal assistant jobs in law firms, corporate legal departments, public agencies, and other organizations. When our graduates get hired and their employers are pleased with the skills and knowledge they possess, that is the ultimate validation of the program’s effectiveness.**

3. Please summarize the results of any measures you have applied. What do these results mean for your program?

**The program’s assessment of SLOs is in its early stages. So far, this work has centered on measuring the three program SLOs which describe advanced job-ready skills. As indicated in Part C, below, these are Program SLOs #3, #4, and #5, dealing with high level proficiency in legal research, legal terminology, and the preparation of written memoranda of law. These three SLOs are evaluated in the LA 71 and 72 classes, which make up the Legal Research and Writing course sequence which students must take prior to completing the Paralegal Studies Certificate and the major portion of the A.A. and A.S. degrees. Assessment results indicate that the vast majority of the students have proven (by the final project of the semester) that they possess the requisite skills at either the “Acceptable” or “Exceptional” levels.**

**Furthermore, many of our graduates continue to secure meaningful employment in the legal field. Unfortunately, the program lacks the resources to conduct full-scale surveys of placement/employment (please see Part F: Future Needs, below), so no reliable data has been produced to document its success in placing graduates. Anecdotally, students continue to get jobs, employers provide feedback that Paralegal Studies graduates are well-prepared, and the program’s Advisory Committee continues to provide positive feedback on the program’s curriculum, skills training, and teaching and learning.**

**Despite positive performance, the program continues to seek ways to innovate and improve. When new needs are identified, the curriculum and teaching can be adjusted to respond. For example, based on discussions with the Advisory Committee and with industry contacts, the program recently decided to strengthen its litigation courses, revising two courses and adapting assignments to ensure that students are exposed to more civil litigation material and have the opportunity to engage in more related skills practice within these courses. In the Legal Writing class, when a need for more specific letter-writing practice for future paralegals was detected, the program made sure to expand coverage of letter-writing to include material and practice in how to prepare client opinion letters and demand letters.**

4. Where would you like your program to be three years from now?

**We would like to keep the Paralegal Studies Program in steady growth mode and add additional elective courses to allow students more options for courses needed to graduate. Once a few more courses are added, we would like to create a three-pronged career track program, giving students a choice of specializing in Criminal/Family Law, Corporate/Transactional Law, or Civil Litigation. Since the college has not been able to support a formal paralegal internship and job placement service (aside from the broad-based services offered by the college’s Cooperative Work Experience Coordinator), we continue to assist students with job placement on an informal, ad hoc basis. Over the last two years, the formation and success of the SPA-EVC student club has enabled the program to organize more career training workshops and improve networking with alumni. With the help of this organization and its student volunteers, we hope to develop and maintain more internships and mentoring opportunities between alumni and students.**

**PART A: Overview of Program**

1. Identify your program/department’s Commitments to Action (CTA’s) for this year.

### **A. Student Centered**:

* **Program faculty will develop and offer an additional online hybrid course in the next year**
* **SLO assessment at the course and program level will continue on a regular cycle.**

### B. Organizational Transformation:

* **All older courses in need of revision (2004 and older) will be revised, and course revisions submitted, by the end of the year.**
* **Curriculum changes to the Paralegal Studies Certificate and degrees will be finalized and implemented this year with the new changes communicated to counselors.**

### C. Community Engagement:

* **Program will continue to expand its outreach efforts to local area high schools.**
* **Program will work with SPA-EVC student club and with local area organizations to create mentoring opportunities between program alumni and students.**

2. Please explain how your program’s CTA’s are aligned with the goals of the College. How does your program help the College fulfill its Mission, Strategic Initiatives, and Commitments to Action (CTA’s)?

**In line with the Mission Statement of the college, the Paralegal Studies Program helps students from diverse backgrounds realize their potential. The program’s CTAs are designed to ensure student success in the classroom and in the working world once they graduate from the program. By acquiring professional-level skills and knowledge, students can fulfill their academic potential and embark on rewarding careers in a growing job field. In providing ethics training and a balanced vocational educational curriculum, this program also prepares graduates to engage in the global economy as civic-minded citizens. Each of the program’s CTAs (listed in Part A (1), above) is aligned with one of the college-wide initiatives and helps to promote fulfillment of both the college’s broad Mission and its more targeted Strategic Initiatives. Based on any measure: enrollment, productivity, student success, graduate employment, or average salaries in the profession, the Paralegal Studies Program is one of the college’s top achieving vocational CTE programs.**

3. Please state at least three recent accomplishments for your program which show how it contributes to the College’s success.

1. **The program recruited the membership of, and for several years has maintained, a robust and purposeful Advisory Committee with strong representation from the local legal community. Its composition and accomplishments are more fully described in Part 1 (9), below. This committee’s feedback helps ensure that the program and its curriculum remain current in the field, allowing the program to continue graduating successful students who are well prepared for their careers.**
2. **Thanks to hard work from the student body, the program enjoys an active student club (SPA-EVC). In cooperation with this club, the program has held several workshops and invited guest speakers to campus for presentations on timely topics such as proper preparation for a job search.**
3. **The program has added several online hybrid courses in the last two years as a response to student requests for more scheduling flexibility. This promotes better access to education for our students, and ultimately helps the college remain Student-Centered.**

4. State the goals and focus of this department/program and explain how the program contributes to the mission, comprehensive academic offerings, and priorities of the College and District.

**The central goal of the Paralegal Studies Program is to prepare students to obtain good jobs in the legal field. Every aspect of the department’s work, from curriculum development to the Advisory Committee to SLO Assessment, contributes to this core objective of ensuring that our students are well prepared for challenging and rewarding careers. The college’s mission includes the mandate to help prepare students from diverse backgrounds to succeed academically and beyond. Career Technical Education (CTE) programs are an important career choice for many students whose aptitude and interests are best suited towards vocational education and careers. In addition, the college serves many mid-career adults, stay-at-home mothers returning to the workforce, and workers re-training after being laid off or suffering debilitating injuries in other job fields. Much of the Paralegal Studies Program’s student body is comprised of these types of students and the program is able to help them prepare for high-paying, professional careers in as little as 3-4 semesters (for those attending full-time). Based on enrollment, productivity, student success, graduate employment, and average salary in the profession, the Paralegal Studies Program is one of the college’s shining stars among the CTE programs that it offers.**

5. Identify current student demographics. If there are recent changes in student demographics, explain how the program is addressing these changes.

**This program serves a very diverse student body. Demographic patterns indicate steady increases in enrollment and student success in recent years. By and large, all ethnic, gender, and age groups are experiencing success. Certain target groups enjoy success rates in the Paralegal Studies Program which exceed those groups’ overall success rates at the college. Success rates are more fully discussed in Part A (8). The demographics for age, gender, and ethnicity are explained below by comparing the Paralegal Program’s student population to that of the college as a whole.**

**Age**

**The Paralegal Studies Program serves a higher age demographic than the college as a whole. The paralegal job field is attractive to students seeking a second career, stay-at-home parents returning to the work force, and people who have suffered workplace injuries and are no longer able to perform the physical labor required in their previous professions. One important result of this older age demographic is that about 2/3 of our paralegal students take at least some evening classes, while only about 1/2 of all EVC students take evening classes.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age of Students, 2011 average** | **EVC (All)** | **Paralegal** |
| **<18** | **3%** | **0%** |
| **18-19** | **20.50%** | **6%** |
| **20-22** | **29.50%** | **18%** |
| **23-24** | **10.50%** | **12.50%** |
| **25-29** | **13%** | **17.50%** |
| **30-39** | **12%** | **22%** |
| **40-49** | **6.50%** | **13.50%** |
| **50>** | **5%** | **9.50%** |

**Gender**

**The Paralegal Studies Program serves more women than men. Historically, most law office jobs have been held by women. In the last two decades, the rising salaries and professionalization of the paralegal field have attracted an increasing number of men to the field as well. Also during this time, law schools have continued to graduate more gender-balanced classes of future lawyers, and this democratization has blurred the traditional law office gender roles. As these stereotypes begin to disappear, more opportunities are created for everyone.**

**While EVC’s college population currently runs about 53% female to 47% male, the Paralegal Program’s students are 79% female to 21% male (these are 2011 averages). Interestingly, this gender ratio has remained about the same for the last six years in the Paralegal Studies Program. Based on informal research into national paralegal demographics, it appears that as recently as 2003, only about 11% people holding paralegal jobs were male, and the percentage of males in the profession continued to increase rapidly for a few more years. However, like EVC’s program, the national paralegal gender ratio appears to have stabilized at about 80% female to 20% male. According to several sources, this ratio has remained constant for several years now. Therefore, it appears that the EVC Paralegal Program’s gender demographics mirror those of the profession.**

**Ethnicity**

**The Paralegal Studies Program’s student body is extremely diverse. That said, there are some important differences in the ethnicity data between the paralegal student population and the college’s overall student population. Students of both Latino/Latina and African-American backgrounds are more heavily represented in this program than in the larger student body at the college. A recent snapshot indicates that enrollment of Latino/a and African-American students are both 5% higher for the paralegal program than for the college. At the same time, the program serves a lower proportion (6% less) of Vietnamese-American students than the college’s general student population would suggest. And there are some smaller differences with other ethnic groups; participation of Asian/Indian, Filipino, and Asian (all other) are slightly lower for the program than for the college, while White students participate in the program at a slightly higher rate than the group’s representation at the college.**

**While the program has not conducted any surveys to determine the reasons for this demographic profile, there are two theories. First, most students understand that the legal field requires a high level of spoken and written communication skills. For first-generation immigrants and even those growing up in non-English speaking households, this mastery of the language at such a high level of fluency and comfort may seem elusive. Vietnamese-American and other Asian students may participate in the program at lower rates because much of the Asian immigration in this community college district has been more recent than that of other groups, such as Mexican-Americans. There has been a large Latino/a population in east San Jose for many decades, whereas the waves of Asian immigration started and accelerated later. Second, another theory is that this program largely succeeds on its word of mouth advertising. Students who go through the program and get good jobs tend to spread the good tidings, encouraging their friends (and oftentimes family) to enroll here as well. That is how we get many of our students. In recent years, the program has been blessed to have a number of high-achieving Latino/a and African-American students who have experienced success and happened to be good word-of-mouth promoters. So perhaps this has influenced the enrollment just enough to make a difference in the program’s ethnic profile.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ethnicity of Students** | **EVC (All)** | **Paralegal** |  | **EVC (All)** | **Paralegal** |
| **African American** | **3%** | **8%** | **Filipino** | **6%** | **5%** |
| **Asian (All other)** | **7%** | **6%** | **Latina/o** | **28%** | **33%** |
| **Asian/Cambodian** | **2%** |  | **Native American** | **1%** | **0%** |
| **Asian/Chinese** | **1%** | **1%** | **Pacific Islander** | **1%** | **0%** |
| **Asian/Indian** | **2%** | **1%** | **White** | **5%** | **7%** |
| **Asian/Vietnamese** | **16%** | **10%** | **Other/Unknown** | **29%** | **28%** |

6. Identify enrollment patterns of the department/program in the last 6 years and provide an analysis of any notable trends or patterns.

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| **EVC Paralegal Studies (LA) Program, Student Enrollment Trends** | **Spring 2007** | **Fall 2007** | **Spring 2008** | **Fall 2008** | **Spring 2009** |
| **Seatcount** | **146** | **186** | **184** | **191** | **203** |
| **Headcount** | **97** | **121** | **113** | **118** | **126** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Fall 2009** | **Spring 2010** | **Fall 2010\*** | **Spring 2011** | **Fall 2011** |
| **Seatcount** | **207** | **211** | **198** | **203** | **223** |
| **Headcount** | **134** | **140** | **124** | **147** | **150** |

**\*The enrollment/productivity drop in Fall 2010 appears to have been the temporary result of a mistake in scheduling. Due to a scheduling error, an extra litigation class was offered in place of a more popular elective class, when many students already had completed the class being offered.**

7. Identify department/program productivity (WSCH/FTEF).

**The Paralegal Studies Program is one of the most productive CTE programs at EVC. Most career programs have lower-than-average productivity because it is much more demanding to train students in a skills field than it is to pack a lecture hall for a general education transfer subject. As a California community college, Evergreen Valley College strives for an overall WSCH/FTEF ratio in the range of 500-525. In general, CTE classes drag the average down, while general education classes bring it up, due to their larger class sizes.**

**Paralegal Studies is one of the few CTE programs with a WSCH/FTEF number in the 500-525 range. Its average WSCH/FTEF for 2011 is 507.9, which is more than twice as productive as some other CTE programs. Overall, this college has very few career programs and all of them are important. But while supporting some of these programs may be a difficult financial choice, the productivity of Paralegal Studies indicates that it is essentially a break-even program for the college. Of course, since EVC’s Paralegal Program is well-known in the San Jose legal community, the program also attracts students who would not otherwise have attended this college. Many of these students then take general education courses en route to an A.A. or A.S. degree, so overall the program provides a net financial gain for the college.**

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| **Paralegal Studies (LA): Productivity** |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Spring 2007** | **Fall 2007** | **Spring 2008** | **Fall 2008** | **Spring 2009** |
| **Census (CAP) %** | **38%** | **53%** | **58%** | **74%** | **77%** |
| **Completion Rate %** | **84%** | **93%** | **90%** | **91%** | **94%** |
| **WSCH** | **538** | **719** | **675** | **674** | **735** |
| **FTES** | **16.9** | **22.5** | **21.3** | **21.2** | **23.1** |
| **FTEF** | **1.4** | **1.4** | **1.4** | **1.4** | **1.4** |
| **Productivity** | **380.6** | **508.3** | **475.2** | **472.1** | **519.6** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Fall 2009** | **Spring 2010** | **Fall 2010** | **Spring 2011** | **Fall 2011** |
| **Census (CAP) %** | **105%** | **77%** | **99%** | **88%** | **110%** |
| **Completion Rate %** | **94%** | **94%** | **90%** | **95%** | **---** |
| **WSCH** | **736** | **745** | **680** | **699** | **733** |
| **FTES** | **23.2** | **23.2** | **21.4** | **21.6** | **21.8** |
| **FTEF** | **1.4** | **1.4** | **1.4** | **1.4** | **1.4** |
| **Productivity** | **520.4** | **529.6** | **478.8\*** | **494.6** | **521.2** |

**\*The enrollment/productivity drop in Fall 2010 appears to have been the temporary result of a mistake in scheduling. Due to a scheduling error, an extra litigation class was offered in place of a more popular elective class, when many students already had completed the class being offered.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Productivity of EVC Vocational/Career Programs** |  |
| **Comparison of WSCH/FTEF, 2011 average (both semesters)** | **WSCH/FTEF** |
|  |  |
| **Business Information Systems** | **632.4** |
| **Accounting** | **589.75** |
| **Paralegal Studies (LA)** | **507.9** |
| **Computer & Information Tech** | **478.45** |
| **Automotive** | **440.5** |
| **Engineering** | **411.4** |
| **Nursing** | **342.95** |
| **CADD** | **246.75** |
| **Surveying/Geomatics** | **243.2** |

8. Identify student success rate and patterns within the department/program paying particular attention to our college’s target groups.

**It appears that all ethnic, gender, and age groups are experiencing success. Students in the Paralegal Studies Program, including those in historically underachieving target groups, are experiencing success at higher rates than the general college population. The program’s high success rates are partly attributable to an excellent and dedicated group of faculty members who work hard to help students realize their potential. In addition, students in a career program such as this are highly motivated and, therefore, somewhat self-selecting. Please note that this data is most accurate for groups that are well-represented in the Paralegal Studies Program, such as Latino/a, African-American, and Asian/Vietnamese students (please refer to data and charts in Part A(5), above, to see this demographic information). These groups do not experience a significant achievement gap in this program like they do at the college as a whole.**

**For other ethnic groups which are not as well-represented in this program (such as Native American and Pacific Islander), these success figures are based on a small handful of students, and therefore their accuracy is questionable. Also, though the program enjoys more Filipino students in some years, there happened to be very few Filipino students enrolled during this particular year, so the lower success rate reported for Filipino students is based on only five enrolled students. Therefore, we cannot draw any broad conclusions about the lower success rate reported for that group.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Success Rates by Ethnic Group (2010-11 academic year)** | **EVC (All)** | **Paralegal** |  | **EVC (All)** | **Paralegal** |
| **African American** | **56%** | **75%** | **Filipino\*** | **67%** | **50%** |
| **Asian (All other)** | **71%** | **90%** | **Latina/o** | **59%** | **73%** |
| **Asian/Cambodian\*** | **59%** | **0** | **Native American\*** | **61%** | **75%** |
| **Asian/Chinese** | **74%** | **100%\*** | **Pacific Islander\*** | **65%** | **100%** |
| **Asian/Indian** | **67%** | **90%\*** | **White** | **74%** | **85%** |
| **Asian/Vietnamese** | **73%** | **87%** | **Other/Unknown** | **65%** | **83%** |

9. If the program utilizes advisory boards and/or professional organizations, describe their roles.

**The Evergreen Valley College Paralegal Studies Program has an active Advisory Committee comprised of law firm administrators, attorneys, paralegals and legal assistants, program alumni, and members of the SPA-EVC student club. Members of the Advisory Committee have served as past presidents and officers of the Santa Clara County Legal Professionals Association and the Silicon Valley Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators (legal administrators often are the people who hire paralegals). The Advisory Committee meets on a regular basis to discuss matters of importance to the Paralegal Studies Program, providing advice and feedback on curriculum improvements, trends in the legal field, and internships and job placement for students and graduates. By regularly reviewing the program’s curriculum and student success, the Advisory Committee provides an important source of evaluation and assurance that the program is meeting its goals at a high level of quality. Between meetings, members of this committee stay active in helping the program by guest lecturing in classes, helping to organize workshops for students, and developing internship and job opportunities for students and graduates.**

**PART B: Curriculum**

1. Identify all courses offered in the program and describe how the courses offered in the program meet the needs of the students and the relevant discipline(s).

**The Paralegal Studies (Legal Assistant) department offers 17 courses designed to support its three certificate and degree programs: the Paralegal Studies Certificate, Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree and Associate in Science (A.S.) degree. To enable graduates to comply with the California law regulating paralegals, the Certificate and the two degrees each require students to complete 24 units within the major. New revisions to the program’s curriculum were approved by the Curriculum Committee in Fall 2011.**

**The Paralegal Studies Certificate is comprised of the 24 core units of law-related courses required by the state. The A.A. and A.S. degrees have the same major requirements in addition to the college’s general education requirements for each degree. Taking into account the Fall 2011 curriculum revisions, the program’s major requirements for both the Certificate and degrees will appear as follows:**

Major Requirements

LA 010 Introduction to Law   3.0

LA 071 Legal Research 3.0

LA 072 Legal Analysis and Writing  3.0

Legal Specialty Courses from below  15.0

Total: **24.0**

Legal Specialty Courses

LA 011 Overview of Contracts, Property, and Tort Law 3.0

LA 014 Civil Litigation 3.0

LA 016 Introduction to California Courts 3.0

LA 020 Legal Technology and Software 3.0

LA 030 Bankruptcy 3.0

LA 033 Tort and Personal Injury 3.0

LA 036 Real Estate and Property Law 3.0

LA 038 Family Law 3.0

LA 040 Criminal Law 3.0

LA 042 Laws of Corporations, Partnerships

and Sole Proprietorships 3.0

LA 044 Intellectual Property Law 3.0

LA 046 Immigration Law 3.0

LA 048 Mediation Principles and Practices 3.0

LA 050 Constitutional Law 3.0

**As the major requirements suggest, the program has three required courses: the LA 10 introductory course and the two-course Legal Research, Analysis, and Writing sequence of LA 71 and 72. Beyond these required courses, students may choose to acquire more specialized knowledge in any of our Legal Specialty (elective) courses. To complete the major, students also must take five Legal Specialty courses of three units apiece to reach the 15-unit total needed from this list. For example, students interested in working in a law office serving individual clients may select the courses in Criminal Law, Family Law, and Tort and Personal Injury Law, while students who focusing on a business-related career may choose to study Real Estate and Property Law, Corporations, and Intellectual Property Law.**

**In practice, some Legal Specialty courses are considered more important than others. For example, Civil Litigation is so critical to modern day paralegal work that the program faculty and advisory committee members have considered making LA 14 a required class. However, it was determined that making this change would bring some scheduling difficulties, and so the compromise solution has been to offer LA 14 as often as possible and to revise LA 16 (Intro to California Courts) to include a supporting litigation overview. Either LA 14 or LA 16 is offered every semester. Other courses are regularly rotated into the schedule, some more often than others, to help meet demand from students and legal employers. Course descriptions are as follows (from the college catalog):**

**Course descriptions:**

**LA-010 - Introduction to Law, Legal**

**Research, the Constitution, and Ethics**

**Units: 3**

This course provides an introduction to law, legal research, constitutional law, and

legal ethics while helping students build the foundational skills necessary to

succeed in legal specialty courses and in professional careers. The course

includes an overview of constitutional law and court systems, a survey of legal

ethics, an introduction to legal research methods, and an examination of current

careers for legal professionals. Course objectives include the development of a

working knowledge of the legal system, acquisition of basic legal research skills,

and an understanding of current ethical guidelines in the law.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-011 - Overview of Contracts, Property,**

**and Tort Law**

**Units: 3**

This course provides an essential overview of the three main areas of civil law:

contracts, property, and tort law. Students will learn the legal requirements of valid

contracts and the functions of commonly used provisions as they gain experience

drafting and customizing various contracts. Students will also receive an

introduction to property law, including the basic concepts involved in the

ownership and use of personal property and real property. The class will also

cover the fundamentals of tort law, including intentional torts, negligence, strict

liability torts, and the policies and procedures of a personal injury law office.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: 0 Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-014 - Civil Litigation**

**Units: 3**

This course provides students with an understanding of the fundamental principles

and preparation of civil cases for trial. Upon completion of this course, students

will be able to draft pleadings, motions and other documents required in a civil

action, and will understand trial and appeal procedures.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010 with C or better or 6 months full-time experience as

a Legal Secretary, Paralegal, or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-016 - Introduction to California Courts**

**Units: 3**

This course serves as an introduction to the various courts of law in the California

state court system; including the Supreme Court, the Courts of Appeal, the

Superior Courts, and the many specialized courts of limited jurisdiction. The

course covers the location of courts, local court rules and statewide rules of court

procedure. It will also detail the rules and procedures utilized in many of the

specialized courts, such as Family Court, Juvenile Court and small Claims Court.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: 0 Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-020 - Legal Technology and Software**

**Units: 3**

This course gives students a thorough overview of technology used in the law

office. Students will learn how legal assistants/paralegals can use computer

systems and legal software applications to make their jobs easier and improve

their value to employers. Topics include word processing, spreadsheets, and

databases for the law office; timekeeping and billing; case

management/calendaring/docket control; litigation support; computer-assisted

legal research; electronic court filing and service of process; courtroom

presentation graphics; and specialized legal software. Students will complete

online research assignments and use demonstration models of a variety of legal

software applications.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: 0 Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 010, with grade of C or better. And, BIS 091 or CIT 010, with

grade of C or better, or concurrent enrollment in BIS 091 or CIT 010.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-030 - Bankruptcy**

**Units: 3**

This course provides an overview of conditions and laws of bankruptcy and its

alternatives. It prepares the student to research and prepare legal documents for

handling Chapter 7, 11, and Chapter 13 bankruptcy cases, whether representing

the debtor or creditor or serving as a court appointed trustee.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010 with C or better, or 6 months full-time experience

as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal, or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-033 - Tort and Personal Injury Law**

**Units: 3**

This course prepares the student to assist attorneys and corporations in tort and

personal injury law. The primary legal principles of tort and the various means of

establishing insurance plans are covered. The student will be trained in the use of

specific forms and procedures utilized in tort and personal injury work. Course

content includes intentional torts, negligence, causation, proximate cause, strict

liabilities, employer’s liability, nuisance, misrepresentation, and product liability.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010 with C or better, or 6 months full-time experience

as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal, or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

**LA-036 - Real Estate and Property Law**

**Units: 3**

This course covers real property law, purchase and sales agreements, mortgages,

leases, easements, deeds, closing and recordings of documents, and title

searches. Emphasis will be placed upon interpreting the law, drafting and

recording documents related to real property law.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-038 - Family Law**

**Units: 3**

This course covers the substantive law in the area traditionally known as “family

law” or “domestic relations.” Subjects covered will include dissolution of marriage,

adoptions, guardianship, child/spousal/family support, child custody, and paternity.

The class will train the student in the skills necessary for working as a legal

assistant in the area of family law. Content will include the use of judicial counsel

forms, the preparation of pleadings, drafting of declaration, preparation of Income

and Expense declarations, the drafting of property settlement agreements, and the

use of interviewing checklists.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010 with C or better, or 6 months full-time experience

as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal, or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-040 - Criminal Law**

**Units: 3**

This course provides the student with a comprehensive understanding of the

provisions of criminal law and procedure. Content will include the criminal court

system and how it functions; the criminal justice system from arrest to trial and

sentencing; elements of and defenses to all major crimes; and an overview of the

criminal procedure.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or 010 with C or better, or six months full-time-experience as

a Legal Secretary, Paralegal or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-042 - Laws of Corporations,**

**Partnerships, and Sole**

**Proprietorships**

**Units: 3**

This course provides students with a general understanding of the various legal

structures of businesses and the laws governing business transactions. Students

will learn the basic law of contract, partnerships, corporations, and the Uniform

Commercial Code. Emphasis will be on drafting documents appropriate to various

business transactions.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010, with C or better, or six months full-timeexperience

as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-044 - Intellectual Property Law**

**Units: 3**

This course will provide occupational competency for students in the expanding

field of patents, copyrights, and trademarks. Course content will include patents,

trade protection, semiconductor chip protection, Section 43(a) false advertising,

unfair competition, publicity rights, and idea submission. For each major specialty

area, coverage will also include: The nature of the protected right; what is

protected; the requirements for protection; who may be protected; the duration of

protection ownership; transfer of ownership; infringement; and remedies.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010, with C or better, or six months full-time experience

as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-046 - Basic Immigration Law**

**Units: 3**

This course covers basic immigration law for the paralegal. This is a hands-on

approach to identification of people eligible to immigrate, types of visas,

citizenship eligibility and application, and special conditions: topics include I.N.S.

structure, procedures, and filings; factual, country, and legal research; and

immigration case management and technology.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: O

*Advisory Level:* Read: 2 Write: 2 Math: None

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-050 - Constitutional Law**

**Units: 3**

This course is designed to present a basic understanding of the U. S. Constitution,

from its development to present-day applications. Topics covered include: the

formation of the 3 branches of government, state's rights and responsibilities, and

the rights afforded individual citizens such as freedom of speech, religion,

assembly, and the right to privacy. The course also covers the rights of persons

accused of a crime, which are guaranteed by the Constitution and subsequent

statutes.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: 0 Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

CAN: CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

**LA-071 - Legal Research and Writing-A (pending curriculum revision will re-title it as “Legal Research”)**

**Units: 3**

This course provides the student with a working knowledge of the essential

techniques used to research legal issues. The proper use of many law library

references are covered including federal and state statutes and codes, Shepard's

citations, the West digest and key number systems, legal periodicals, treatises,

and the legislative history of statutes and regulations at the federal, state and local

levels. Students will also learn how to locate, analyze and brief federal and state

case decisions at the county law library.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 010, with grade of C or better. And, BIS 091 or CIT 010, with

grade of C or better, or concurrent enrollment in BIS 091 or CIT 010.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-072 - Legal Analysis and Writing**

**Units: 3**

This course provides students with advanced skills training in legal analysis, legal

writing, and the use of electronic legal research using databases like WESTLAW

and LEXIS. Students will be presented with complex legal problems and will learn

how to analyze them using the IRAC method (Issue, Rule, Analysis, Conclusion).

Students will learn to present their legal analyses in professional quality written

documents, including trial court pleadings, research memoranda, motions, client

opinion letters, demand letters, and more.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 010, with C or better

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

**LA-138 - Work Experience**

**Units: 1 - 8**

Occupational Work Experience is designed for students who work or volunteer in

a field related to their career major. Students are required to provide evidence that

they are enrolled in a career program (e.g., education plan or coursework in a

career/occupational subject area). Students can earn one unit of credit for each 60

hours of unpaid volunteer time or 75 hours of paid work during the semester.

Students can repeat Career/Occupational Work Experience, combined with

General Work Experience, or alone, up to a maximum of 16 units. Internship/job

placement is not guaranteed.

Lecture Hours: None Lab Hours: 1.81 Grading: O

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Corequisite: Be employed or a volunteer at an approved work-site for the minimum

number of hours per unit as stipulated for paid and unpaid status.

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

2. State how the program has remained current in the discipline(s).

**Program faculty members remain current in the discipline by completing Continuing Legal Education (CLE) courses on a regular basis. Two program faculty members are attorneys and must complete a minimum number of CLE hours every three years in order to maintain an active law license, while the third faculty member has worked as a paralegal, legal secretary, and legal administrator, attending regular training classes to maintain current knowledge in each field. In addition, the program has a strong Advisory Committee, which includes attorneys, legal administrators, paralegals and legal assistants from law offices throughout Silicon Valley. This Advisory Committee ensures that the program curriculum remains current in the field, providing regular feedback and advice on trends and needs in the legal field. Finally, maintaining a close relationship with local organizations in the legal field helps the program draw upon the current expertise of industry professionals as guest lecturers and workshop presenters.**

3. All course outlines in this program should be reviewed and revised every six years. If this has not occurred, please list the courses and present a plan for completing the process, including timelines and dates for each course.

**The program has completed a revision of all courses that had not been updated prior to 2003. In addition, updated versions of the Paralegal Studies Certificate and degrees were submitted for curriculum review and approval in 2011. However, there are several remaining courses that have not been updated since 2004, and these need to be revised. These remaining revisions are underway and will be submitted for curriculum review as soon as possible.**

4. Identify and describe innovative strategies or pedagogy your department/program developed/offered to maximize student learning and success. How did they impact student learning and success?

**Over the last few years, the program’s full-time faculty member has converted several traditional courses to an online hybrid format. In recent semesters, two hybrid courses per semester have been offered. The hybrid courses have been featured a blend of 50% live, in-class meetings and 50% structured online work. Online work has consisted of readings, videos, interactive exercises, forum postings, quizzes, and written assignments. These courses have been extremely popular with students, who face rising economic pressures due to the economic downturn and rising costs of fuel, textbooks, food, health care, and basic living expenses. A hybrid class allows them more flexibility in attendance, reducing their gasoline costs from commuting and allowing some students to hold part-time jobs that would have conflicted with a traditional, live class. Students are able to complete the online work over a period of several days rather than having to complete it real time. This structure also benefits single parents, working parents, and parents who have trouble obtaining affordable child care during at traditional class times. However, personal interactions are so important in the legal field that the program probably will continue to offer many of its classes in live, or hybrid format, rather than ever going fully online.**

5. Discuss plans for future curricular development and/or program (degrees & certificates included) modification. Use a Curriculum Mapping form as needed.

**The program plans to continue its steady growth and hopes to be able to teach additional subjects each semester. Once the annual schedule includes 2-3 more courses, the program will be able to create a three-track career program for students. Students will complete the same core classes, yet the tracks will offer them the chance to develop greater expertise in one of three areas: Criminal/Family Law, Corporate/Transactional Law, and Civil Litigation. We hope that this change will increase the program’s appeal for incoming students and increase the program’s ability to place graduates in more highly skilled (and salaried) positions.**

6. Describe how your program is articulated with the High School Districts, CCOC (if applicable), and/or other four year institutions. (Include articulation agreements, common course numbering etc.)

**There are no four-year colleges or universities in this region with an upper-division paralegal major. While many of our graduates use the Paralegal Studies A.A. or A.S. as a means of transferring to a four-year school, they must choose another major when they get there. At San Jose State University, for example, the closest subject is Criminal Justice. In addition, California law requires that paralegals and legal assistants must complete a minimum number of units in related courses at a regionally-accredited post-secondary institution. For this reason, the program must offer these units ourselves and is not able to accept high school or CCOC classes for credit. The program continues to improve its outreach to local area high schools and to develop good relationships with high school counselors.**

7. If external accreditation or certification is required, please state the certifying agency and status of the program.

**No external accreditation or certification is required. However, as noted above, the program is structured to enable graduates to comply with California Business and Professions Code Section 6450, which regulates training and education requirements for paralegals and legal assistants. Separately, there are certain courses in the program which include curriculum that is approved by outside organizations. The program’s Immigration Law course, for instance, is approved by certain immigration services organizations. These organizations provide their own certification for employees to enable them to provide immigration services to members of the community. Because our course is an approved offering, these organizations then send their employees to Evergreen Valley College to be trained.**

**PART C: Student Outcomes**

1. On the course level, list all the courses that have current student learning outcomes (included in the course outline) and provide link to the course outlines for review purpose. Provide a plan and timeline to include student outcomes for the courses that do not have one.

**All active courses in the program have Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Curriculum for each course is located on the district server: \\Do\_data\_whse\r&p\Curriculum\Course Outlines\6 - Final .**

2. On the program level, list all programs (and degrees) that have current student learning outcomes.

**The Paralegal Studies (Legal Assistant) Program offers three terminal achievements: the Certificate, A.A., and A.S. degrees. All of these were revised in 2011. Each one includes Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), which will be assessed on a regular basis to promote a better understanding of how best to promote student success. These SLOs, which are the same for each achievement, are listed below:**

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Paralegal Studies Certificate, A.A., and A.S. degrees:**

**At the completion of the program, students will be able to:**

**1. Demonstrate a proficient knowledge of the various areas of law and their importance**

**2. Describe the legal profession's basic ethical guidelines and apply them in hypothetical situations**

**3. Demonstrate effective legal research skills by selecting and utilizing appropriate sources of law**

**4. Prepare legal research memoranda and other documents commonly used by attorneys**

**5. Use legal terminology capably in an appropriate context**

3. List or describe all assessment mechanisms you are using to evaluate SLOs. Provide results of any analysis.

**The Paralegal Studies Program prepares students with job-ready skills that they can begin using upon graduation. The program-level SLOs measure the extent to which students possess the requisite skills, knowledge, and readiness to begin working in an entry-level paralegal or legal assistant job. Program-level outcomes are assessed in three required classes: LA 10 (Introduction to Law), LA 71 (Legal Research) and LA 72 (Legal Analysis and Writing). SLOs #1 and #2 are knowledge-based outcomes. These two outcomes are assessed in LA 10 following the course’s coverage of the material on legal ethics and various areas of law. Students demonstrate proficient knowledge of these areas by completing quizzes and assignments. The results of these evaluations indicate the extent to which the program is meeting its outcomes #1 and #2.**

**SLOs #3, #4, and #5 measure advanced skills. Since LA 71 and LA 72 are the last two courses students must complete before graduating, they provide the program with a conclusive opportunity to assess students’ skills with an eye toward their readiness to work in an entry-level paralegal or legal assistant job. (Please see attached assessment rubric entitled *2010-11 Paralegal Studies SLO Assessment*, which demonstrates a recent assessment of SLO #3.) While these assessments measure students’ readiness for jobs, they are really measuring how well the Paralegal Studies Program is doing its job in educating, training, and preparing students.**

**Each course includes a final project known as a Memorandum of Law. It is the pinnacle of legal writing, requiring the preparer to demonstrate effective legal research, analysis, and writing techniques. These memoranda are used as the basis for many legal documents, including certain court briefs, motions, and appeals. SLO #4 squarely evaluates whether students are able to complete these projects at a high level of quality. SLO #3 (legal research skills) and SLO #5 (legal terminology) can both be evaluated also on the basis of the students’ final projects. However, since students are able to take the LA 71 and LA 72 courses in either order, some LA 72 students have not yet learned the full-scale legal research skills that are taught in LA 71. As a result, SLO #3 is assessed by means of the LA 71 final writing project, in which students must demonstrate strong legal research skills. SLOs #4 and #5 are assessed by means of the LA 72 final writing project.**

**In time, the program hopes to improve outcomes assessment in two ways: First, course-level SLOs need to be linked more effectively with program-level SLOs, simplifying the process of assessment. Once this is done, it will be simpler to calendar the assessments as well. Second, the program hopes to add additional assessment tools. Multiple measures of assessment will provide an added dimension of understanding into student success and how the program can continue to help students succeed.**

**PART D: Faculty and Staff**

1. List current faculty and staff members in the program, areas of expertise, and how positions contribute to the program success.

**Full-Time Faculty**

**Rama (R.J.) Ruppenthal is a licensed attorney in California. He has been a full-time faculty member at Evergreen Valley College since 2005. Previously, he worked in the legal field in Wisconsin and San Francisco after completing an internship at the Supreme Court of Wisconsin. Professor Ruppenthal has a Bachelor’s degree from the University of California, Davis, a vocational EFL/ESL teaching certificate from Cambridge University, and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School. He worked as a teaching assistant in law school and also taught at Saint Mary’s College of California and at Sejong University in Seoul, Korea. His articles on law and sustainable gardening (a personal interest) have been published in the *Wisconsin International Law Journal*, *Legal Assistant Today* magazine, and *Urban Farm* magazine. His book *Fresh Food From Small Spaces* (2008) was featured on a number of radio programs and received positive reviews from the *National Gardening Association, Associated Press*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Library Journal*.**

**Part-Time Faculty**

**Lynda Chavez is Director of Administration at Hoover & Bechtel, Silicon Valley’s largest family law firm. She has many years of experience working as a Paralegal, Legal Secretary, and Office Administrator. Mrs. Chavez has served as past president of local chapters of both the Association of Legal Administrators and the Legal Professionals Association. She has been instrumental in recruiting and running the program’s advisory committee, anchoring the program’s civil litigation and family law offerings, and teaching a regular section of the introductory course .**

**Lorelei Lashley is a trained attorney and certified public accountant. She works as a tax specialist in Oakland. Mrs. Lashley most enjoys teaching the Intellectual Property class, while she also brings a strong knowledge of other subjects in the transactional arena, including torts, contracts, and business law. Mrs. Lashley also teaches the Legal Environment of Business course in the Business Department at Evergreen Valley College.**

2. List major professional development activities completed by faculty and staff in this department/program in the last six years and state proposed development and reasoning by faculty in this program.

**Recent professional development activities for the program’s full-time faculty member are discussed in Part B, Item 2, above. Professor Chavez has been past president of local chapters of both the Association of Legal Administrators and the Legal Professionals Association, maintaining a very active involvement with both organizations. All faculty members participate in regular Continuing Legal Education (CLE) and other professional training courses within their disciplines.**

3. Identify current schedule for tenure review, regular faculty evaluation, adjunct faculty evaluation, and classified staff evaluation.

**Currently, the program has no tenure-track faculty, so there is no active tenure review process. In regard to regular faculty evaluations, both the program’s full-time tenured faculty member and its adjunct faculty members are evaluated regularly per the college’s schedule and standards. There are no permanent classified staff members in the department.**

4. Describe the departmental orientation process (or mentoring) for new full-time and adjunct faculty and staff (please include student workers such as tutors and aides).

**The department has not hired any new faculty members in recent years; when this is done, a mentor is appointed in the faculty member’s first year to help provide assistance and answer questions. In addition to departmental orientation provided by the Division Dean and Paralegal Studies faculty members, Evergreen Valley College has a Teaching and Learning Center which provides an orientation for new faculty members.**

**PART E: Facilities, Equipment, Materials and Maintenance**

1. Identify and discuss the facilities, equipment, equipment maintenance, and materials allocated to the program. Identify and explain additional facility needs and rationale.

**The Paralegal Studies Program has modest needs. In terms of facilities and equipment, the program utilizes regular campus classrooms, requiring no additional accommodations. Most campus classrooms now have instructor computers and data projectors, a technological improvement that has helped support the program's development of hybrid online courses. The LA 71 (Legal Research) and LA 72 (Legal Analysis and Writing) courses have been able to make use of computer lab rooms in the Library and Educational Technology Center, allowing students access to online legal research tools during the class sessions.**

**The program requires extensive legal research materials in order to train future paralegals and provide them with entry-level professional job skills. The library maintains several stacks' worth of bound volumes to meet the program's needs. Each semester, students in the LA 10 (Introduction to Law) and LA 71 (Legal Research) classes are provided with training on how to use the hard copy legal resources. The largest sets of legal materials maintained in the library's collection are the California Code (state statutory law, also containing the state's Constitution), West's California Reporter (case law from state courts), West's California Digest (a case finding resource), Shepard's Citations (a reference to update case law and statutes), Witkin's Summary of California Law (popular legal treatise), and West's Encyclopedia of American Law (general legal encyclopedia). Due to budget constraints in the library and program budgets, very few of these resources are being updated with ongoing subscriptions. Rather, the books are used to train students to become fluent in legal research skills.**

**Once students understand how the print volumes are organized and are accustomed to conducting proper searches, then the program trains students in proper electronic legal research techniques. Online sources are more up-to-date, and thus more reliable sources of law, but students who understand how the print volumes are organized will be far more efficient online legal researchers. In addition, most specialized legal research databases are expensive and charge users a search fee, so a skilled legal researcher can save his/her client a great deal of money by exercising the type of discipline that they can learn only in the library. The library volumes help build fluency, while the online sources provide accuracy.**

**The program's need for access to online legal research databases is more fully discussed in Part E, Item 2, below.**

2. Describe the use and currency of technology used to enhance the department/program. Identify projected needs and rationale.

**The program's major expense (aside from teaching salaries) is its subscription to the WESTLAW legal research database. This subscription covers individual access for all students in the LA 71 (Legal Research) course and continues to be used by students in the LA 72 (Legal Analysis and Writing) course. This subscription is essential for students to learn modern legal research skills and it helps the program's graduates get jobs, many of which list WESTLAW and LEXIS research skills as entry-level job requirements. The library maintains a subscription to LEXIS/NEXIS Academic Universe for the whole college, and the program uses this, but students in job environments are expected to have a stronger mastery of online legal research databases than this academic version of LEXIS can deliver. Therefore, the program uses a fuller version WESTLAW to provide students with this exposure and skill development. The WESTLAW subscription cost (about $5,000 annually) normally is covered by the college's Perkins/VTEA funding. In the future, if this funding source is not available, the college will need to absorb that annual cost in order for the program's students to be qualified for entry-level legal professional positions upon graduation.**

3. If applicable, describe the support the program receives from industry. If the support is not adequate, what is necessary to improve that support?

**The program's Advisory Committee enjoys strong industry representation. A number of prominent attorneys, law firm administrators, paralegals and legal assistants, and representatives from Silicon Valley legal organizations serve on the Advisory Committee. Members of the Advisory Committee also provide assistance to students in the form of opportunities for internships, jobs, and scholarships from affiliated organizations. The program's use of this committee is more fully described in Part A, Item 9, above. While the program does not receive direct funding from industry, this possibility could be pursued if the college or district were to provide greater foundational support to assist departments in soliciting donations or endowment funding.**

**PART F: Future Needs**

1. Current Budget

A. Identify the budget currently allocated for the department/program through the division budget (fund 10). Discuss its adequacy in meeting your program’s needs.

**In the current year, $126,793 is allocated to the program through Fund 10. This amount is used for instructional salaries.**

B. Identify any external (fund 17) funding the department/program receives, and describe its primary use.

**Through VTEA/Perkins, the program will receive about $15,000 in the current year. Per the Dean, this amount is approximate and has not yet been finalized for the current year as of this writing. VTEA funds primarily pay for the program’s subscription to the WESTLAW database. This is an advanced-level online legal research database on which students are trained in the LA 71 (Legal Research) course. If there is more VTEA money available in a given year, the program is able to acquire new library materials, subscribe to widely-used law office software programs used for student training, or support high school outreach and alumni-student mentoring programs.**

C. Explain any grants or other external funding sources (partnerships) for which your program is

benefiting from.

**The Paralegal Studies Program is a recipient of federal VTEA/Perkins funds (for vocational training). This money is used in two ways. First, it allows the program to maintain a subscription to the WESTLAW legal research database, which is an essential tool for legal research training. Many entry-level paralegal and legal assistant jobs require job candidates to be proficient with both the LEXIS/NEXIS and WESTLAW databases. Our program is able to utilize the EVC Library’s LEXIS/NEXIS subscription (a very limited version). And thanks to VTEA/Perkins funding, we are able to afford a full-scale version of WESTLAW, which more closely approximates the interface and search functions that students will encounter in a law office.**

**Second, beginning in 2011-12, the program has started using VTEA/Perkins funds to launch an outreach and mentoring program. The outreach program will improve our relations with local area high schools, connecting promising young students with a potentially challenging, rewarding, and lucrative career in the legal field. In addition, the program’s Advisory Committee and SPAEVC student club are collaborating on the formation of a mentoring program which will help connect the program’s alumni with current students. Our goal is to improve student retention and success, while greatly increasing the number of internships and job opportunities available to the program’s students/graduates.**

2. Explain any grants or other external funding sources for which your program would be a good candidate. Do you have plans to apply for such sources?

**This program is very fortunate to have the additional funding source described above. At the moment, as a small program, the faculty and Advisory Committee would not be able to administer any additional grants. Hopefully, in the future, we will identify additional capacity for such initiatives and use them to continue building the program.**

3. Please describe any unmet needs for your program and how you plan to address them. Are any additional resources needed to accomplish your program’s CTAs?

**The program’s CTA’s do not depend upon any additional funding. However, the expansion of our outreach and mentoring programs is wholly dependent on federal government VTEA funding, which can change on an annual basis. In addition, the WESTLAW database subscription is essential for our graduates to get jobs, and this also depends upon federal funding. In absence of this funding source, the program would need to cease these activities and graduates would find it much more difficult to find jobs.**

**Presently, the program does not have any unmet needs. However, faculty members sense that the college is on the threshold of moving towards increased expectations of accountability in relation to SLO assessment and graduation success rates. This program, like others on this campus, lacks the staffing or financial support to conduct any meaningful data collection related to student success or program success. Ideally, student surveys, placement surveys, graduate surveys, and employer surveys (in addition to course-level and program-level SLO assessments) should be conducted regularly so that the results of these evaluations can be used for program improvement. However, program faculty members do not have the resources or time to conduct these evaluations, analyze data, and keep this evidence organized. If performance expectations increase in these areas, then the college will need to provide the requisite staffing and financial support to the affected academic programs.**

4. What faculty positions will be needed in the next six years in order to maintain or build the department? Please explain. What staff positions will be needed in the next six years in order to maintain or build the department? Please explain.

**The program does not need any additional faculty or staff members to maintain its current performance. However, as the program adds classes and increases in size, more adjunct faculty members will be needed to teach additional course sections. In addition, the program faculty members foresee a possible need for additional staffing support as identified in the response to Part F (3), above.**

5. Does your program require any additional facilities, equipment, and/or supplies over the next six years (above and beyond the program’s current budget)?

**No additional needs are anticipated in this regard. However, the program wishes to encourage the college to provide better support for online and hybrid courses. Students in online and hybrid courses can only succeed with appropriate infrastructure and support services. Effective training orientations, computer-equipped smart classrooms, flexible counseling and student services, and deployment of additional technology solutions will encourage more faculty to teach online and hybrid courses.**

**PART G: Additional Information**

Please provide any other pertinent information about the program that these questions did not give you an opportunity to address.

**In summary, the Paralegal Studies (Legal Assistant) Program is a highly successful CTE program. Its Certificate and degrees prepare students for professional-level jobs in a career field that continues to grow and is projected by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics to continue growing at a “much faster than average” pace. The program is helping the college fulfill its Mission and Strategic Initiatives, working closely with a strong Advisory Committee, and creating a cycle of improvement through Learning Outcomes assessment and evaluation. Furthermore, the program’s productivity is higher, and its cost lower, than most other CTE programs on this campus. The college should remain committed to supporting and growing this valuable program.**

**PART I: Resource Allocation Table**

Program Reviews provide a valuable source of information for the College as it makes decisions on resource allocation, both in terms of funding and cuts. The following information, in table format, will be used by the College Budget Committee to help inform EVC’s Budget and Planning Process.

Item Title/Response

Productivity (WSCH/FTEF): 507.9

Student Success Rate (Retention): 93%

Number of class sections offered: 8

Changes in enrollment: +4%

Current Budget: $126,793

External funding: ~$5,000 (VTEA/Perkins)

Future Needs/Additional Costs: None projected

1. **BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-2011, available at** [**http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos114.htm**](http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos114.htm) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **EDD Summary Occupational Guide 2011, available at** [**http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/OccGuides/Summary.aspx?Soccode=232011&Geography=0601000000**](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/OccGuides/Summary.aspx?Soccode=232011&Geography=0601000000) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. **EDD Top 100 Fastest Growing Occupations in California, 2008-2018, available at** [**http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/OccGuides/FastGrowingOcc.aspx?Geography=0601000000**](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/OccGuides/FastGrowingOcc.aspx?Geography=0601000000) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. **BLS Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2010, available at** [**http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes232011.htm**](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes232011.htm) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)