

Paralegal Studies (LA) Program Review 2022-23

Cover

Overview

Program Review Year

Title Paralegal Studies (LA) Program Review 2022-23

Year of Last Comprehensive Review Fall 2016

Year of Last Mini Update, if applicable 02/01/2018

Originator Ruppenthal, Rama

Area Dean Robbie Kunkel

Division

Bus & Workforce Development

Department

Legal Assistant

Subject

- LA - Legal Assistant

Is this a review for a degree/certificate or all the courses in the subject?

All Courses

Courses

- LA 010 - Introduction to Law, Legal Research, the Constitution, and Ethics - Historical
- LA 014 - Civil Litigation - Historical
- LA 016 - California Courts and Litigation Practice - Historical
- LA 033 - Tort and Personal Injury Law - Historical
- LA 034 - Wills, Trusts, and Estate Planning - Historical
- LA 036 - Real Estate and Property Law - Historical
- LA 038 - Family Law - Historical
- LA 040 - Criminal Law - Historical
- LA 044 - Intellectual Property Law - Historical
- LA 046 - Immigration Law - Historical
- LA 050 - Constitutional Law - Historical
- LA 071 - Legal Research - Historical
- LA 072 - Advanced Legal Analysis & Writing - Historical

Co-Contributors

*Co-Contributor must be chosen before proposal is launched

- Kunkel, Robbie

Overview

Evergreen Valley College guides all students to pathways that reach their educational and career goals through equity-centered, innovative academic programs and support services. By creating a learning environment where everyone feels welcomed and supported, we are committed to a culture of inquiry, growth, and respect that creates an equitable society in which all can participate and prosper.

1.Student-Centered: We provide access to quality and efficient programs and services to ensure student success.

- Access
- Curriculum and programs
- Services

2. Community Engagement: We will transform the college image and enhance partnerships with community, business and educational institutions.

Areas of focus are:

- Increase visibility
- Develop strategic partnerships
- Building campus community

3.Organizational Transformation: We create a trusting environment where everyone is valued and empowered.

Areas of focus are:

- Communication
- Employee development
- Transparent Infrastructure

- **1. Provide a brief summary of your program. Please include a brief history and discuss any factors that been important to the program's development.**

Silicon Valley is the home base of many businesses, particularly technology companies. Many of them have their own in-house legal departments. Nearly all of them utilize outside counsel from law firms based in San Jose and Silicon Valley. Additionally, there are government agencies and nonprofit organizations which employ trained paralegals. Most job opportunities occur in private law firms. With the high cost of living and legal specialty work available for paralegals, San Jose has one of the highest median salaries for paralegals in the nation.

California regulates the paralegal profession, being one of the few U.S. states to do so. Under California Business and Professions Code Section § 6450, anyone using the job titles “paralegal” or “legal assistant” must meet certain educational and training requirements. The terms “paralegal” and “legal assistant” are considered synonymous under this law, all portions of which went into effect between 2000 and 2004. Several educational options are provided, one 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, which has been in existence for more than two decades, offers students three educational options: the A.A. degree, A.S. degree, and Specialty Certificate in Paralegal Studies. Early on, the college also tried legal secretarial and office management curricula, but the market for those was not strong enough to continue them. This program was established as the Legal Assistant program, but has slowly transitioned along with the career field into the Paralegal designation. Under state law, the terms "paralegal" and "legal assistant" are now synonymous.

From the beginning, this Paralegal Studies (Legal Assistant) program has attracted many older students (once known as reentry students) and working adults in search of second careers. In recent years, the program has seen a rising number of students who already work in the legal profession; their employers (primarily law firms) send them to this program to complete their paralegal training. Sometimes, these students come to take a single class, such as Family Law or Immigration Law, that they need for their work, but other times they need the full certificate. Because the program has a diverse blend of students with a wide array of needs, it is important to continue to provide students with flexible career options.

The degree and certificate options each 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.

The paralegal career is a good choice for a broad range of students. Many incoming students come to the program directly from high school and are seeking a college education or a first career. But on average, EVC paralegal students tend to be older than the college's overall student body. That is mostly due to the number of students who are seeking second careers. Some have lost jobs due to economic reasons or workplace injuries; others find themselves stuck in low-wage jobs and are going back to school to find a more professional career with upward mobility. Still others have taken time off to raise children and are looking for re-entry into the workplace.

Finally, many students already work at law firms. Their employers often pay for them to take classes to improve their legal skills and substantive knowledge of the law. Law firms benefit from having well-trained paralegals, since the United States Supreme Court held in the *Missouri v. Jenkins* case that law firms may bill professional paralegal time directly to clients. Under state law, paralegals must meet educational requirements in order to perform substantive legal work, and many legal employers have learned that they can leverage paralegals' time by billing them out at a higher rate than their wages (which can be a win-win situation for both paralegals and attorneys).

The legal workforce is in the midst of a profound shift. In recent years, software has played a much bigger role as more legal work has shifted online and to more skilled positions. A robotic software program started writing briefs. Legal research databases and document review software became as

smart as an experienced human in a law library or in a law office, respectively. Meanwhile, lawyers and law firms continued to hire paralegals at steady rates, though more of them than ever before are working in contract positions.

In 2018, the California court system moved to mandatory e-filing. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, moving both court hearings and client consultations online. Even since the pandemic has eased, older patterns seem to have shifted. Some lawyers believe that online court hearings and online client consultations are “the new normal”, since they are a more efficient use of peoples' time. Several of our students and graduates now work for attorneys who are based in other cities and states.

The Paralegal Studies Program has been offering hybrid courses for many years, so the shift to remote learning during COVID-19 was fairly smooth. And we learned that these online courses were quite popular with students, many of whom are working adults. Since the pandemic has eased, in-person courses have had only single-digit student enrollment, while online courses have been close to fully enrolled. For example, at the beginning of Fall 2022, the in-person section of the LA 010 introductory course began with eight students enrolled, while the online section of LA 010 was completely full. This program's future appears to be online, either fully or mainly.

All program faculty members have been trained in distance education. We have worked hard to transition the majority of our courses to the Online Education Initiative (OEI) quality standard with fully accessible written material and captioned video content (the remaining courses are being transitioned currently). The Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee believes that online courses are more convenient for students and that online courses are meeting the needs of students and the profession.

This has been a big change for a small program over the last few years and it is probably just the beginning. This period of rapid change promises to continue as employment patterns adapt to greater technology adoption. The Paralegal Studies Program will need to keep adapting to new realities as we serve the needs of the legal workforce and help prepare students for meaningful careers as paralegals.

- **2. Please provide an update on the program's progress in achieving the goals (3 years) set during the last comprehensive program review.**

In its last comprehensive program review, the Paralegal Studies Program focused on achieving steady growth, expanding its use of hybrid courses, and investigating the possibility of creating a three separate areas of concentration within the certificate and degrees. While we did consider the idea of creating three prongs within the program (those focus areas being Litigation, Transactional Law, and Family & Criminal Law), we made the decision not to pursue that path. The upside with employers was limited, while committing to that change would have imposed rigidity in the course

schedule. Basically, it would have forced us to offer the less popular courses more frequently. That would have impacted the program's productivity in a negative way, which is not the right decision for a small program.

As for steady growth, the program has achieved that over time. Even as the college's enrollment has dropped in recent years and an historically strong labor market has hit other programs hard, the Paralegal Studies Program's enrollment has been quite healthy with most sections near capacity. The program did embrace and increase the use of hybrid courses until the COVID-19 pandemic hit. COVID then showed students, employers, and the advisory committee that fully online courses were both popular and viable in terms of similar student success rates. And so, for the reasons described above in the previous section (Overview, Section 1), the Paralegal Studies program has worked hard to develop fully OEI-compliant online courses and pursue a program that can be completed fully online.

- **3. Please state and recent accomplishments for your program and show how it contribute to the College's mission and success.**

Evergreen Valley College's Mission focuses on helping students "reach their educational and career goals through equity-centered, innovative academic programs and support services." With Silicon Valley's expensive cost of living, most people from underrepresented backgrounds are working to make ends meet. In our current economy, some of them are working multiple jobs and/or driving for ride-share services or delivering groceries in the evenings when they previously were able to take in-person evening courses. Many of these potential students need flexible options in order to take courses to improve their skills and unlock greater career opportunities. By offering online courses which are innovative and equity-centered, our program is able to reach a greater number of students who otherwise would not be able to attend classes and access such opportunities.

The Paralegal Studies program has transitioned eight courses to a fully online format that complies with Online Education Initiative (OEI) standards and features fully accessible videos and written content. This helps the college fulfill its mission and goals by making our educational content more accessible to a broader range of students. This also provides opportunities for advancement for students who cannot take in-person classes, including many from underrepresented backgrounds, thereby helping the college advance "opportunity, equity, and social justice" by supporting student access and supporting student needs. Ultimately, this helps the college fulfill its vision of "equity in student success".

The program created career discussion group for online students. This helps the college fulfill its mission and goals by "advancing opportunity, equity, and social justice through supporting students' aspirations, education, and career attainment."

We have partnered with Santa Clara County Legal Professionals Association to create more networking opportunities for students and graduates. This serves the college's goal of enhancing "our commitment to students (by establishing) ongoing relationships" with local leaders and groups in San Jose. Furthermore, it serves the career needs of students and the workforce in this district, helping the college advance "opportunity, equity, and social justice through supporting students' aspirations, education, and career attainment."

- **4. If you received resource allocation for your last program review cycle, please indicate the resources you received and how these resources were utilized to impact student success and / or importance to your program. (The resources can be personnel or fiscal)**

N/A. This program did not receive resource allocation through the last program review.

- **5. Please describe where you would like your program to be three years from now (program goals) and how these support the college mission, strategic initiatives and student success.**

As described above, the Evergreen Valley College Mission focuses on helping students "reach their educational and career goals through equity-centered, innovative academic programs and support services." The Paralegal Studies Program will continue to work to create innovative and equity-centered courses and learning options for students so that they can access better career opportunities. Additionally, the program helps the college fulfill its Institutional Learning Outcomes in the areas of Information Competency, Social Responsibility, and Inquiry and Reasoning. Learning legal research skills involves the use of library and database materials for use in legal analysis and writing; the program will continue to adapt to the fast-changing technologies in this area and help students harness them to improve their skills. Paralegal students are trained to comply with legal ethics guidelines and learn to respect the viewpoints of others, which are very important in understanding legal arguments. In addition, critical thinking is at the core of legal work. The program will continue to train students to use legal research and concepts to solve problems, help clients, and contribute to society.

In the near future, this program's main goal should be to continue preparing paralegal students for rewarding careers in legal field in furtherance of the college's mission. In doing so, we are helping fulfill the needs of the legal workforce here in Silicon Valley. Law firms, corporate legal departments, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations all hire paralegals and the job field is projected to continue growing in coming years. EVC's program enables its graduates to comply with California's paralegal licensing law. The program therefore fills a vital need for students and in the community. Enrollment has been healthy and it may increase slightly in the next few years, so we will keep an eye on employment needs and will put our program in the position to increase classes or adjust offerings to fit the local employment needs and student demand.

An additional goal is to expand our partnerships with local legal organizations to add additional networking and job opportunities for students and graduates. We are working with one organization to establish a new membership tier for students and additional mentorships.

Also, we will work to create several paid internships for students in the near future through the state's new Learning Aligned Employment Program (LEAP). The state and college are making these easier and more affordable for employers, so we will reach out to several major legal employers to discuss the possibility of creating more formal internship programs.

And finally, we will monitor California's progress toward the establishment of a limited non-lawyer practice option. If this option progresses further, it could create the need for an expansion in many paralegal education programs. Our program would consider creating new courses and certifications to fit that emerging need.

Program Set Standards (Summary Tab)

Overall, EVC's Institution Set Standard for success rate is 72%, and the aspirational goal for student success is 75%.

Success Rate (completion with "C" or better)	Program	EVC	Program Set Standard (established during last comprehensive PR)	Program Success Goal (new)
F'15-F'21 average		72.00%		

Courses with no Degree or Certification

LA 010 - Introduction to Law, Legal Research, the Constitution, and Ethics	Created: 02/14/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 014 - Civil Litigation	Created: 02/12/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 016 - California Courts and Litigation Practice	Created: 02/13/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 033 - Tort and Personal Injury Law	Created: 02/13/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 034 - Wills, Trusts, and Estate Planning	Created: 02/13/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 036 - Real Estate and Property Law	Created: 02/13/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 038 - Family Law	Created: 02/13/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 040 - Criminal Law	Created: 02/13/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 044 - Intellectual Property Law	Created: 02/13/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 046 - Immigration Law	Created: 02/14/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 050 - Constitutional Law	Created: 02/14/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 071 - Legal Research	Created: 02/12/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal
LA 072 - Advanced Legal Analysis & Writing	Created: 02/12/2020
Modify Course	Originator: Rama Ruppenthal

Program Success Rate 75.69

Program Set Standard: It is recommended that programs identify a success standard. This standard should reflect the baseline success rate.

Program Set Standard 62.5

Recommendation: 90% of the 6 year average success rate could be your program standard (average x 0.9).

Program Success Goal: It is recommended that programs identify a success goal. This goal should reflect the success rate to which your program aspires.

Program Success Goal 75

- **Is your program success rate higher or lower than the campus?**

The program's success rate is higher than that of the campus.

- **If your success rate is higher than the campus, how are you helping students succeed in and outside the classroom? If your program success rate is lower, what are some strategies your program is implementing to improve?**

This is a career program. Students are motivated to succeed because there is a clear link between education and employment prospects. All program faculty work (inside and outside the classroom) to help students prepare for jobs and legal careers.

- **Is the current program success rate higher than the program set standard?**

Yes, the program success rate is higher than the program set standard.

- **How close is the program to meeting the program success goal?**

The program is meeting its goal overall, but there is some semester-to-semester variation. The program will work to ensure that it reaches this program success goal on a consistent basis.

- **Are these measures (program set standard and program success goal) still current/accurate? If not, please describe here and reset the standards.**

Yes

Success Rates: Measures by IPEDs Race/Ethnicity

- **American Indian: 102 - 78.380%**
Program Average Total Enrolled
 1.000
Program Success Rate
 0.000
- **Asian: 9380 - 79.320%**
Program Average Total Enrolled
 20.000
Program Success Rate
 73.000
- **Black or African American: 464 - 61.430%**
Program Average Total Enrolled
 5.000
Program Success Rate
 84.400
- **Hawaiin/Pacific Islander: 95 - 65.790%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

1.000

Program Success Rate

50.000

- **Latinx: 9005 - 64.730%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

55.000

Program Success Rate

75.240

- **Two or More Races: 614 - 70.030%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

4.000

Program Success Rate

85.380

- **Unknown: 1655 - 72.640%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

8.000

Program Success Rate

80.660

- **White: 1256 - 73.480%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

8.000

Program Success Rate

75.920

Success Rates: Measures by Gender

- **Female: 12340 - 73.970%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

81.000

Program Success Rate

76.050

- **Male: 10154 - 69.610%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

19.000

Program Success Rate

75.310

- **No Value Entered: 77 - 72.590%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

0.000

Program Success Rate

0.000

Success Rates: Measures by Age

- **17 & Below: 736 - 86.260%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

2.000

Program Success Rate

57.500

- **18-24: 15285 - 69.350%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

31.000

Program Success Rate

68.020

- **25-39: 4470 - 75.390%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

46.000

Program Success Rate

78.330

- **40 & Over: 2065 - 78.860%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

22.000

Program Success Rate

81.010

- **Unknown: 16 - 71.080%**

Program Average Total Enrolled

1.000

Program Success Rate

100.000

- **a. With respect to disaggregated success rates, list any equity gaps that are identified and discuss interventions your program will implement to address these equity gaps? Please include a timeline of implementation and reassessment.**

The data reveals some interesting impressions. First, no major equity gaps are present, but there are some patterns that are worth addressing. The program's success rate for Latinx and African-American students significantly exceeds the college average, while the program's success rate for Asian students comes in somewhat lower than that of the college. This appears to be an anomaly, since two semesters' worth of data dragged down what was typically a higher average in every other year (and has returned to that point since). However, it is still worth monitoring and the program will be proactive to ensure that any emergent gaps are addressed. We will monitor success rates and make an effort

to reach out to any groups that are falling short of expectations. To do so, we will utilize early intervention and encourage tutoring where needed, and ensure that they are getting the support they need. Meanwhile, we are proud that such a high proportion of Latinx and African-American students experience success in this program.

- **b. With respect to disaggregated success rates (ethnicity / race, gender and age), discuss student performance in reaching your program set standard for student success as well as reaching the program success goal.**

Student performance has been strong across all groups and this has contributed to program success rates that are higher than those of the college. The overall picture shows all groups succeeding at a fairly high rate. However, there is some variation from one semester to the next, which is why we have not fixed the program set standard any higher than it is. We will continue to reach out and support all students and make every effort to improve success rates for them and for the program.

- **c. If your program offers course sections fully online, please contact the office of Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness to obtain a student success report on the online sections. Address any differences in student success rates between fully online courses and classroom courses.**

Success rates for the program have been similar in face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses. Success rates in all types of courses are generally well above 70%.

Program Awards - If Applicable

If the classes in your program lead to a degree or certificate, please visit the DataMart and indicate how many degrees/certificates were awarded in your program:

http://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program_Awards.aspx
(http://datamart.cccco.edu/Outcomes/Program_Awards.aspx)

You will need to select drop down menus and then “select program type by major of study” (for example, select Legal for paralegal studies).

Then at the bottom of the report, select the box “program type- four digits TOP”, then update report to get program specific information.

Degree Type

- **AA**
Number of Awards (Examine 2017-18, 2018-19 data, 2019-20 data and 2020-21 data)
48
Discussion
- **AS**
Number of Awards (Examine 2017-18, 2018-19 data, 2019-20 data and 2020-21 data)
37
Discussion

- **Certificate of 12-18 units**

Number of Awards (Examine 2017-18, 2018-19 data, 2019-20 data and 2020-21 data)

61

Discussion

The Paralegal Certificate is a 24-unit certificate, which is the state-mandated size. This form shows no option for certificates over 18 units in size, so I reported the totals in this field (which covers 12-18 unit certificates).

Student Enrollment Types

Student Enrollment Type: Day or Evening Student

- **Day: 4639 - 50.900%**

Program Average Headcount

11.000

Program Percentage of Total

15.300

- **Day & Evening: 2929 - 32.100%**

Program Average Headcount

30.000

Program Percentage of Total

41.700

- **Evening: 1022 - 11.200%**

Program Average Headcount

31.000

Program Percentage of Total

43.100

Student Enrollment Type: Academic Load

- **Full Time: 2259 - 24.800%**

Program Average Headcount

13.000

Program Percentage of Total

19.100

- **Half Time or less than half time: 6084 - 66.700%**

Program Average Headcount

48.000

Program Percentage of Total

65.750

- **a. Discuss any changes in program enrollment types (day vs evening, full-time vs part-time) since your last program review?**

The percentages are similar. Most students in this program are working adults. Historically, the program has more evening students than the college average. The program's full-time vs. part-time breakdown is similar to that of the college. However, these numbers do not reflect the most significant change for our program, which is the shift to online courses. Many sections are asynchronous and there is no category in the data set or on this form to capture these students. During the COVID-19 pandemic and since in-person courses have resumed, this program's online enrollment has surged, while its in-person enrollment has plummeted by a similar degree. The students who used to take evening and daytime courses are now taking online courses instead.

- **b. Discuss how do your program enrollments (Pct of total) compare to EVC?**

EVC's enrollment has been declining. As a CTE program, the Paralegal Studies program's enrollment ebbs and flows with the economy, but has been quite healthy overall and as a percentage of the college's enrollment.

- **c. Based on the data, would you recommend any changes?**

We do not recommend any changes from an enrollment perspective. Enrollment moves in cycles, both for the college and for CTE programs. In a historically strong labor market (as we have experienced recently), the college's enrollment drops. We would have expected to have seen declines in this program's enrollment also, though this has been remarkably healthy during this period, probably slightly outperforming the college. If there is a labor market slowdown, then the enrollment should surge higher once again. From a higher altitude view, and particularly with online courses (that attract more working adults), we believe the program is experiencing slow growth over time.

Student Demographics - Headcount

Student Demographic: Gender

- **Female: 5008 - 54.950%**
Program Headcount
53.000
Program Percentage of Total
79.100
- **Male: 4075 - 44.640%**
Program Headcount
13.000
Program Percentage of Total
19.400
- **No Value Entered: 37 - 0.410%**

Program Headcount

1.000

Program Percentage of Total

1.490

Student Demographic: Age

- **17 & Below: 486 - 5.310%**

Program Headcount

2.000

Program Percentage of Total

2.900

- **18-24: 5493 - 60.210%**

Program Headcount

21.000

Program Percentage of Total

30.430

- **25-39: 2168 - 23.800%**

Program Headcount

29.000

Program Percentage of Total

42.000

- **40 & Over: 966 - 10.600%**

Program Headcount

16.000

Program Percentage of Total

23.190

- **Unknown: 8 - 0.090%**

Program Headcount

1.000

Program Percentage of Total

1.450

Student Demographic: Race/Ethnicity (IPEDs Classification)

- **American Indian: 40 - 0.430%**

Program Headcount

1.000

Program Percentage of Total

1.450

- **Asian: 3689 - 40.480%**

Program Headcount

13.000

Program Percentage of Total

18.840

- **Black or African American: 208 - 2.290%**

Program Headcount

3.000

Program Percentage of Total

4.350

- **Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 36 - 0.400%**

Program Headcount

1.000

Program Percentage of Total

1.450

- **Latinx: 3636 - 39.850%**

Program Headcount

38.000

Program Percentage of Total

55.070

- **Two or More Races: 248 - 2.730%**

Program Headcount

3.000

Program Percentage of Total

4.350

- **Unknown: 690 - 7.520%**

Program Headcount

5.000

Program Percentage of Total

7.250

- **White: 573 - 6.300%**

Program Headcount

5.000

Program Percentage of Total

7.250

- **a. Based on the program total headcount and percent change year to year, discuss if your program growing or declining. If so, what do you attribute these changes in enrollment to and what changes will the program implement to address them?**

Enrollment moves in a cycle; CTE program enrollment tracks closely with local employment patterns, so the healthiest enrollment comes when the economy is doing poorly. Recently, more students flocked to the program's online courses during COVID-19, while the historically-strong labor market since then has led to enrollment declines for the college, so the program's enrollment has dropped year-to-year. It should surge again as the job market weakens over the next few months. Overall, the patterns have been remarkably consistent over time, showing that the program is experiencing slow growth overall.

- **b. Discuss any gaps have you identified in your program. Discuss how your program enrollment is similar or different from the campus. Discuss which gender, age, and/or ethnic group are proportionally smaller than campus make up.**

The Paralegal Studies enrollment patterns are consistent over time. The program enrolls higher percentages of older students, female students, and Latinx students than does the college as a whole. There are half as many younger students and twice as many working adults (ages 25-39 and 40+) as the college's general population. Also, this remains a popular career program for Latinx students. The program enrolls Latinx students at a rate that is more than 15% higher than the college's average population. This greater Latinx enrollment comes at the relative expense of other groups, particularly Asian students, who have a lower enrollment in this program than they do for the college as a whole. As for gender balance, the program's female-male ratio is similar to other paralegal programs across the country; this profession attracts more women than men.

- **c. Discuss what interventions the program can implement to address any gaps in enrollment.**

The much higher Latinx enrollment (compared with the college as a whole) translates to a lower percentage of some other groups enrolling in the program. The only one of these that is really notable is the difference for Asian students, who do not enroll at a high level (numbers for other groups are comparable to those of the whole college). As for Asian students, we believe there may be a language issue for some recent immigrants as well as a greater career interest in other programs rather than this one. The gender balance in this program (about 80/20 female/male) is in line with historical patterns and is similar for other paralegal education programs across the country.

The program will increase its outreach to groups that do not enroll as often as others. There are several successful program graduates from each of these groups. We will explore ways to utilize their success stories and bring them in for guest appearances and career mentoring.

Institutional Effectiveness (6.5 year average, see Summary Tab)

EVC Capacity: 61.70% EVC Productivity: 14.43

Program Capacity

54.6

Program Productivity

11.26

Is your capacity rate higher or lower then the campus?

Lower

Is your productivity goal higher or lower than the campus?

Lower

If the program capacity and/or productivity is lower than the campus, please provide rationale:

Career programs are less "efficient" than GE classes with large sizes, which boost the college's average productivity. When it comes to training future professionals, smaller class sizes are often beneficial (and some professional licensing organizations even mandate them). That said, Paralegal Studies is one of the more productive career programs at the college (compare the productivity of Paralegal Studies (11.26) to Nursing (7.04), Medical Assistant (10.06), CADD (10.48), Automotive (11.07), CNA (8.3), and CIT (10.39)). Since Spring 2019, the program's capacity has averaged above 70%, exceeding that of the college.

Curriculum

Related Assessments

010 Spring 2022- Created: 02/10/2022 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2266)

AA degree 2022- Created: 10/04/2022 New PLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2911)

010 Spring 2022 - Created: 02/10/2022 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2267)

AS Degree 2022- Created: 10/04/2022 New PLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2912)

010 SLO 2- Created: 09/19/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1403)

Legal Assistant Certificate 2022- Created: 08/25/2022 New PLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2766)

LA 014 All- Created: 09/27/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1435)

016 Spring 2022- Created: 02/11/2022 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2268)

LA 016 All- Created: 09/21/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1411)

LA 033 All- Created: 09/21/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1410)

LA 034 All- Created: 09/25/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1431)

LA 036 All- Created: 09/20/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1408)

LA 038 All- Created: 09/27/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1436)

LA 040 All- Created: 09/26/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1433)

LA 044 Spring 2022- Created: 02/23/2022 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2287)

LA 044 One- Created: 09/21/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1413)

LA 044 Most- Created: 09/21/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1414)

LA 046 All- Created: 09/25/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1432)

LA 050 Assessment Spring 2022 - Created: 09/09/2022 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report

Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2818)

LA 050 All- Created: 09/21/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1412)

LA 071 Legal Research 2022- Created: 08/30/2022 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2788)

LA 071 All- Created: 09/21/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1415)

LA 072 All- Created: 09/26/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1434)

- **1. Identify and updates to curriculum since the last comprehensive program review, including and new programs and indicate the 6-year timeline for scheduled course outline revision. For CTE, the time line is 2 year.**

All of the program's active courses were revised in 2020 and again in 2022. Inactive courses were deactivated. The most recent revisions are pending curriculum committee review, having gone through its technical committee already.

- **2. Identify all the courses offered in the program and describe how these courses remain relevant in the discipline. For courses your program has not offered in the past two years, please discuss a plan on how to deal with these courses (if your program is not going to deactivate these courses, please explain why).**

The following courses are active and essential parts of the Paralegal Studies certificate and degrees. They are reviewed regularly by the program's advisory committee, which suggests content adjustments when needed. All have been updated recently and their learning outcomes have been assessed. Any inactive courses have been deactivated.

LA 010: Introduction to Law, Legal Research, the Constitution, and Legal Ethics (3 units). This is the gateway course for the Paralegal Studies Program. It introduces students to the subject matter and the legal career field.

LA 014: Civil Litigation (3 units). Civil Litigation is one of the most common sources for paralegal jobs. This course introduces students to the process, steps, and workflow in a civil case.

LA 016: California Courts and Litigation Practice (3 units): Students learn about the California court system: how it is structured, how it operates, and how a paralegal participates in the common stages in a typical case.

LA 033: Tort and Personal Injury Law (3 units): Students learn about personal injury law practice and the substance of tort law, including intentional torts, negligence, and strict liability. The course also covers available defenses to tort claims and potential remedies.

LA 034: Wills, Trusts and Estates (3 units): In this course, students gain a practical understanding of the laws of estate planning in California. Students will learn the appropriate procedures for drafting and interpreting will and trust documents, and will become familiar with the initial planning and preparation necessary for a comprehensive estate plan.

LA 036: Real Estate and Property Law (3 units): This course teaches students the substance of property law for personal and real property. In addition, it focuses on the practice of real estate law, including contracts, sales, deeds, closings, mortgages, and landlord-tenant law.

LA 038: Family Law (3 units): This course trains students in the substance and procedure of family law, including dissolution of marriage, adoptions, guardianship, child/spousal/family support, child custody, and paternity.

LA 040: Criminal Law (3 units): Students in this course learn the substance and procedure of criminal law. The course covers 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 criminal procedure from arrest through appeal.

LA 044: Intellectual Property Law (3 units): Students in this course learn intellectual property law, including patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets. They gain practice experience working with the proper forms and databases that are used in intellectual property practice.

LA 046: Immigration Law (3 units): This is a basic immigration law course in which students learn about immigration eligibility, types of visas, citizenship eligibility and application, and special conditions. The course trains students in how to use and file appropriate immigration forms.

LA 050: Constitutional Law (3 units): Students in this course learn a basic overview of the U.S. Constitution and its importance in protecting basic rights. Topics covered include the three branches of government, federalism, the Bill of Rights, and the rights afforded individual citizens. These include freedom of speech and assembly, the right to bear arms, unlawful searches and seizures, the Miranda warnings and associated rights of the accused, cruel and unusual punishment, due process, equal protection, voting rights, and federal and state legislative efforts to prevent discrimination and protect voting rights.

LA 071: Legal Research (3 units): This course trains students in legal research techniques using both print sources and online databases such as Westlaw and Lexis. They gain the skills necessary to conduct legal research in various client cases that arise in a law office setting.

LA 072: Advanced Legal Analysis and Writing (3 units): Students in this course learn how to use the law and facts of a client's case to conduct legal analysis and begin writing legal documents. They are trained in how to write professional level legal documents that synthesize their legal research and turn their analysis into informative or persuasive writing.

- **3. If you have a degree or certificate, please include a diagram of your program's guided pathways program map. (A program map indicates courses suggested for each semester, across two years, upon completion a student would qualify for a degree/certificate).**

Program Maps for the Paralegal Studies Certificate, A.A. degree, and A.S. degree are available from the following links:

Certificate in Paralegal Studies: https://www.evc.edu/sites/default/files/2022-05/Program_Map_Paralegal_CERT.pdf

A.A. degree in Paralegal Studies: https://www.evc.edu/sites/default/files/2022-05/Program_Map_Paralegal_AA.pdf

A.S. degree in Paralegal Studies: https://www.evc.edu/sites/default/files/2022-05/Program_Map_Paralegal_AS.pdf

- **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?**

As a small department, the bulk of our efforts recently have gone to creating OEI-quality online courses with captioned videos and accessible written materials. We hope that this greater accessibility provides additional opportunity and success for students.

- **5. Discuss plans for future curricular development and/or program degrees & certificates included) modification.**

The current certificate and degrees are meeting the needs of employers and students. The certificate matches the state's requirements under California Business and Professions Code Section 6450. The program will consider adding some additional elective course subjects in the subject areas of employment law and contracts. In the event that the state creates a nonlawyer practice option, the program will consider adding additional certificates and courses to fit these expanding needs.

- **6. Describe how your program is articulated with High School Districts, and/or other four year institutions. (Include articulation agreements, CID, ADTs...)**

The program has no formal articulation agreements with high schools, though it accepts dual enrollment students. The paralegal profession is regulated by California law; all required courses must be completed at a regionally accredited college or university.

The program primarily serves vocational students and those desiring to complete a paralegal certificate along with their A.A. or A.S. degree. Four-year colleges or universities do not offer baccalaureate degrees in Paralegal Studies, so the program does not have articulation agreements. A few four-year colleges and universities offer undergraduate degrees in Legal Studies or Law & Society, but their required courses are substantially different from our paralegal curriculum.

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

The program does not require external accreditation. However, it is structured and designed to allow graduates to comply with California's paralegal licensing law, which is California Business & Professions Code Section 6450.

Student Learning Outcome and Assessment

Related Assessments

010 Spring 2022- Created: 02/10/2022 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2266)

AA degree 2022- Created: 10/04/2022 New PLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2911)

010 Spring 2022 - Created: 02/10/2022 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2267)

AS Degree 2022- Created: 10/04/2022 New PLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2912)

010 SLO 2- Created: 09/19/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1403)

Legal Assistant Certificate 2022- Created: 08/25/2022 New PLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2766)

LA 014 All- Created: 09/27/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1435)

016 Spring 2022- Created: 02/11/2022 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2268)

LA 016 All- Created: 09/21/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1411)

LA 033 All- Created: 09/21/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1410)

LA 034 All- Created: 09/25/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1431)

LA 036 All- Created: 09/20/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1408)

LA 038 All- Created: 09/27/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1436)

LA 040 All- Created: 09/26/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1433)

LA 044 Spring 2022- Created: 02/23/2022 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/2287)

LA 044 One- Created: 09/21/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1413)

LA 044 Most- Created: 09/21/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1414)

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LA 071 All- Created: 09/21/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1415)

LA 072 All- Created: 09/26/2021 New Section Level SLO Assessment Report Originator: Rama Ruppenthal (/Form/Module/Index/1434)

Student Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes

Paralegal Studies - Certificate of Achievement: Certificate of Achievement - Describe the legal profession's basic ethical guidelines and their importance, applying them in practice situations. (Active)

Paralegal Studies - Certificate of Achievement: Certificate of Achievement - Analyze a client's case, determining the legal issues to be addressed and the legal rules that apply. (Active)

Paralegal Studies - Associate in Arts: Associate in Arts - Describe the legal profession's basic ethical guidelines and their importance, applying them in practice situations. (Active)

Paralegal Studies - Associate in Arts: Associate in Arts - Analyze a client's case, determining the legal issues to be addressed and the legal rules that apply. (Active)

Paralegal Studies - Associate in Science: Associate in Science - Describe the legal profession's basic ethical guidelines and their importance, applying them in practice situations. (Active)

Paralegal Studies - Associate in Science: Associate in Science - Analyze a client's case, determining the legal issues to be addressed and the legal rules that apply. (Active)

- 1. On the program level, defined as a course of study leading to degree or certificate, list the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs), and how they relate to the GE/ILOs. Please also indicate how the course SLOs have been mapped to the PLOs. If you are completing this program review as a department or discipline and do not offer any degrees or certificates, please write N/A in this space.**

The Paralegal Studies Program's Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are as follows:

1. Describe the legal profession's basic ethical guidelines and their importance, applying them in practice situations.

The contributing course for this PLO is LA 010: Introduction to Law, Legal Research, the Constitution, and Ethics. All students in the program must take LA 010, which is required for graduation with a Certificate, A.A. degree, or A.S. degree. The LA 010 material covers the profession's ethical guidelines and their importance, so that is the appropriate place to measure this outcome. This relates to the college's ILO #4 (Social Responsibility). Students who learn and can apply ethical guidelines are better equipped to communicate effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and to work effectively within groups.

2. Analyze a client's case, determining the legal issues to be addressed and the legal rules that apply.

The contributing courses for this PLO are LA 071 (Legal Research) and LA 072 (Advanced Legal Analysis & Writing). All students must take both LA 071 and 072, which are required for graduation with a Certificate, A.A. degree, or A.S. degree. In both of these courses, students work with hypothetical client cases, conducting legal research and using the applicable laws they find to analyze what that means for the client's case. Students then turn that research and analysis into legal writing, creating professional-level written documents that are informative or persuasive in nature.

This helps the college fulfill its college's Inquiry and Reasoning ILO. Students in this program are trained and develop the skills to conduct legal research, analyze it, and apply it to the facts of a given client situation to help make an informed decision in the case. In doing so, they show strong critical thinking skills that relate to the Inquiry and Reasoning ILO. Information Competency and Communication are the other two college ILOs that are relevant here. Students gain Information Competency through their extensive legal research and they demonstrate communication by delivering and communicating the results of their analysis through the legal documents that they write.

- 2. Since your last program review, summarize SLO assessment activities and results at the course and program level. Please include dialogue regarding SLO Assessment results with division/department/college colleagues and/or GE areas. Provide evidence of the dialogue (i.e. department meeting minutes or division meeting minutes, etc.) List any SLOs or PLOs that have not been assessed in the last two years and provide an explanation of why they have not been assessed. This will be reviewed by the IEC to determine if your Program Review is approved or not.**

In Fall 2021, the Paralegal Studies Program reached 100% compliance with its SLO assessments. All SLOs have been assessed in every course offered since that time, maintaining 100% compliance for each semester. Additionally, the PLO assessments for the Certificate and degrees were completed in 2022. The program's full-time faculty member works with the two adjunct instructors to obtain their SLO data and complete the reports. These discussions take place in person, via Zoom, or by phone and we have recordings of them, but the work has been done each time.

- **3. What plans for improvement have been implemented to your courses or program as a result of SLO assessment? Please share one or two success stories about the impacts of SLO assessment on student learning.**

Overall, SLO assessments have provided confirmation that students are learning the subject matter well in these courses. No improvement plans have been needed. Occasionally, we have realized that a particular SLO should be assessed using a different measure, which in turn may affect how that part of the course is taught. In LA 033, for example, there is an SLO involving the calculation of tort damages in a personal injury case. The SLO assessment has indicated some disconnect here. This has been assessed through an exam, but the program has considered adding a discussion activity to the course that might provide a better tool for measuring student's understanding of this topic. Instances like this help us understand that if there is some disconnect with the assessment, we may need to cycle back into a reevaluation of the course content in that unit and whether another activity should be added to measure, and ultimately improve, student learning.

Faculty and Staff

Part D: Faculty and Staff

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

Currently, the program has three regular faculty members, all of whom hold law degrees and are active members of the State Bar Association of California. R.J. Ruppenthal, the program's full-time faculty member, has been at the college since 2005. His areas of legal knowledge include real property, tort, intellectual property, and constitutional law, though he has taught most of the paralegal course subjects during his time here. Ron Cabanayan and Kasey Dunton are practicing attorneys in San Jose who teach regular classes in the program. Ron Cabanayan has his own law office in downtown San Jose and has worked with the county public defender. His practice areas include criminal law, immigration, and estate planning, three course areas in which he also teaches. Kasey Dunton has experience working at one of Silicon Valley's largest family law offices and also has experience in civil litigation, having taught both of those subjects here regularly. As needed, the program can bring in additional faculty members to teach specific courses. For example, both Lynda Chavez (now retired) and the late Henry Gee taught some of the paralegal courses.

- **2. In addition to major professional development activities completed by faculty and staff in the past, in particular with regards to students' success, equity, distance education, SLO assessment, guided pathways and/or innovative teaching/learning strategies, are there any additional professional development needs of your department in the future? What are they? Please provide details about a timeline.**

As active members of the State Bar Association of California, program faculty members complete 25 hours of continuing legal education courses every three years, which include courses in ethics, substance abuse, and the elimination of bias in the legal profession. Additionally, program faculty members have participated in the college's professional development day workshops and have taken Educational Instructional Technology (EDIT) courses and other distance education workshops. We will continue improving our knowledge and practice by taking additional courses in these and other areas in the future. We do not have any unmet needs in this regard.

Budget Planning

Part E: Budget Planning

- **1. With your Dean, review the department Fund 10 budget (operational budget) and discuss the adequacy of the budget in meeting the program's needs.**

In terms of LA faculty, the Fund 10 budget is adequate. However, in terms of counseling/student success and completion, the Fund 10 budget is inadequate. The LA department would like to request a full-time counselor to work with LA students; the counselor position would be shared with AUTO, ACCTG, BUS and BIS. The cost of this position is roughly \$225,000/annum, including salary and benefits.

- **2. List all external funds, i.e. fund 17, the department/program receives, and describe their primary use.**

BWF division has access to some of Fund 17 categorical funding from Strong WorkForce and Perkins funding. These funds are spread out to serve multiple career education pathways across the college, including T&I, Nursing, Automotive, Advanced Manufacturing Technology, Dual Enrollment, Public Relations, and related special projects. The Paralegal Studies (LA) Program uses Perkins funding for our Westlaw legal research database subscription and for professional development activities.

Technology and Equipment

Part F: Technology and Equipment

- **Review the current department technology and equipment needed and assess program adequacy. List and changes to technology or equipment since the last program review. If changes were made please indicate how the change impacted student success.**

The program has no additional technology or equipment needs at this time.

Additional Information

Part G: Additional Information

Future Needs and Resource Allocation Request

Based on the areas noted below, please indicate any unmet needs for the program to maintain or build over the next Comprehensive Review. Please provide rationale on how the request connects back to SLO/PLO assessment, strategic initiatives or student success. If no additional requests are needed in any of the areas, put N/A.

Total Cost

Attach Files

Attached File

IEC Reviewers

IEC Mentor

Robert Brown

IEC Second Reader

Guy Ras