



## **PROGRAM REVIEW**

### **Paralegal**

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# **PARALEGAL**

## **CAÑADA COLLEGE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (2 page maximum)**

### **Short Summary of Findings**

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The Paralegal Program at Cañada was developed in cooperation with the San Mateo County Bar Association to train personnel to assist attorneys in civil matters. Instruction focuses on assisting the attorney in interviewing clients and preparing for court appearances, as well as conducting legal research and preparing legal documents. Some graduates of the Program may decide to practice as independent paralegals working for various attorneys.

A variety of substantive and procedural law-related courses are offered to prepare paralegals for employment in the legal field. We believe students should be taught communications skills, computer applications used in the law office, and legal concepts to become well-trained professionals and provide legal services in such law-related environments as law firms, corporate legal departments, governmental entities, and other law-related occupations.

Per the Economic Modeling statistics, the projections indicate an increase in Paralegals and Legal Assistants occupations over the next four years. The average hourly earnings is \$26.21 and there are 39 annual openings and 145 replacement jobs yearly.

### **Three Strengths of the Program**

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1. **High caliber of professors teaching in the Paralegal program.**
2. **Up to date curriculum infusing technology and forms into classroom lectures.**
3. **Up to date website - <http://canadacollege.edu/academics/degrees/paralegal.html>**

### **Three Suggestions for Improvement**

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1. **Access to Lexis and more access to the campus library as well as a law library.**
2. **Need a full-time coordinator for the program to focus on internships and marketing the program to the legal community.**
3. **Assist the students in finding employment as Paralegals.**

## **PARALEGAL PROGRAM REVIEW**

### **I. Overview of Program**

- A. Describe your program in terms of its goals and focus. How does your program contribute to the mission and priorities of the college and the District? How does your program coordinate with other programs in the College and related programs at other education institutions? How does this program make use of advisory boards and professional organizations? How does this program fill the needs of our diverse community?**

#### **Program Goals and Focus**

The Paralegal Program at Cañada was developed in cooperation with the San Mateo County Bar Association to train personnel to assist attorneys in both civil and criminal matters. Instruction focuses on assisting the attorney in interviewing clients and preparing for court appearances, as well as completing legal research and preparing legal documents. Some graduates of the Program may decide to practice as independent paralegals.

A variety of substantive and procedural law-related courses are offered to prepare paralegals for employment in the legal field. We believe students should be taught communications skills, computer applications used in the legal offices, and legal concepts to become well-trained professionals and provide legal services in such law-related environments as law offices, corporate legal departments, governmental entities, and other law-related occupations. We continue to believe that the Program's instructional delivery providers should be a mixture of practicing paralegals and attorneys.

#### **Contribution to the Mission of the College and the District**

The Program contributes to the mission of the College and District by:

- 1) Providing a quality Paralegal program that leads to a Career Technical Education career as a Paralegal and is in cooperation with business, industry, labor, and public service agencies.
- 2) Providing a supportive faculty/student teaching and learning relationship that contributes to personal growth and success for students.
- 3) Providing a lower division program to enable students to transfer to baccalaureate institutions;
- 4) Celebrating the community's rich cultural diversity.

The Paralegal Program embraces the College's mission and goals by providing quality career education. While there are no full-time professors hired to teach in the Program, a very active faculty assists the Dean in the managing, scheduling, and staffing. The Paralegal Advisory

Committee developed a two-year course schedule and a certificate/degree planning sheet to ensure that students complete the Program in a timely manner. Since the introduction of the two-year course schedule and certificate/degree planning sheet, students can plan their course schedules to ensure completion of the 27-unit certificate and 60-unit Associate Degree in two to five semesters.

Student course planning is vital due to courses being offered only during the evening, some Selectives are offered during the day. The course schedule guide provides a two-year listing of when courses are offered each semester. Additional strengths of the program include Cooperative Education credit for students who presently work in legal environments and Cooperative Education internships for students who are not presently in the workforce.

Students who are enrolled in the Paralegal program are encouraged to attend the meetings of two local professional organizations. Many students enrolled in the Program currently work in clerical positions in local law offices and enter the Program to develop the skills needed to work as paralegals. An unpaid internship allows students to gain work-based skills in local law firms and legal departments.

### **Advisory Board and Professional Organizations**

There is a formal advisory committee for the Paralegal program comprised of attorneys, practicing paralegals, and a student representative. Students have the opportunity to join the San Francisco Paralegal Association and the Legal Secretaries Association at a reduced rate.

The Paralegal Program is open to everyone who is interested in the field of law. The faculty members are members in their professional organizations.

### **B. Evaluate the progress the Program has made toward previous Program Goals**

One of the department's goal was to offer a Boot Camp to enhance the students' job employment possibilities. Professor Althea Kippes volunteered her time for seven hours on a Saturday during the month of May 2007 and the event was quite successful. After that event, Professor Kippes decided to put on another camp which is scheduled for spring 2008. Another goal was to update the Computers in the Law course that was done during the spring 2008 semester. The new title is Electronic Litigation and the two professors who taught the course updated the course curriculum and is now a 2 unit course. This course teaches prospective paralegals how to use PC/Windows based computers, peripherals, software and the Internet in a law office environment. Since all federal courts and many state courts now handle litigation electronically (online and with computers), the course covers the functions of PC computers and the use of main or core PC software and programs that law firms use in daily operations and in litigation. Students also learn about the power of the Internet, (troubleshooting, backup programs, online filing, research, etc.), and using the Internet in litigation (investigation, evidence gathering, accessing the courts, etc.). We are fortunate to have a very active student representative that sits on the Paralegal advisory board and has done an extensive job in pulling a paralegal reference book collection together for the Paralegal section in the newly designed library on campus. The student rep has also done extensive work on a reference binder for internship possibilities and has included state and local website links for

students' reference and has added quite a bit to the Paralegal website that will be launched soon.

## **II. CURRICULUM OFFERINGS**

### **A. How adequately do the courses offered in this program meet the needs of the discipline and the students?**

The Paralegal Program provides the basic knowledge and skills for a person to succeed as paralegals. The Advisory Committee, which includes practicing paralegals and attorneys, is very active in overseeing the program, as there are no contract professors teaching in the Program. The teaching faculty brings "real world" work experiences to the classroom. Students gain the benefit of up-to-date practices and information. Attorneys are able to teach students what is expected in a working relationship between attorneys and paralegals. Practicing paralegals are able to teach students the practical skills needed to succeed in the profession. One of the major objectives of the Program is to provide students with the theory of the law along with practical applications of the law. The Core requirements for the Certificate and Degree have increased from 12 to 15 units by adding the Introduction to Word for Windows and Intermediate Word for Windows courses; however, the total required units of 27 have not changed.

### **B. Describe changes in the discipline and student population and how the curriculum is addressing these changes. Have all courses in this program been reviewed and modified, if appropriate, during the last six years? Is the program current with respect to external regulations? What plans are there for future review and modification?**

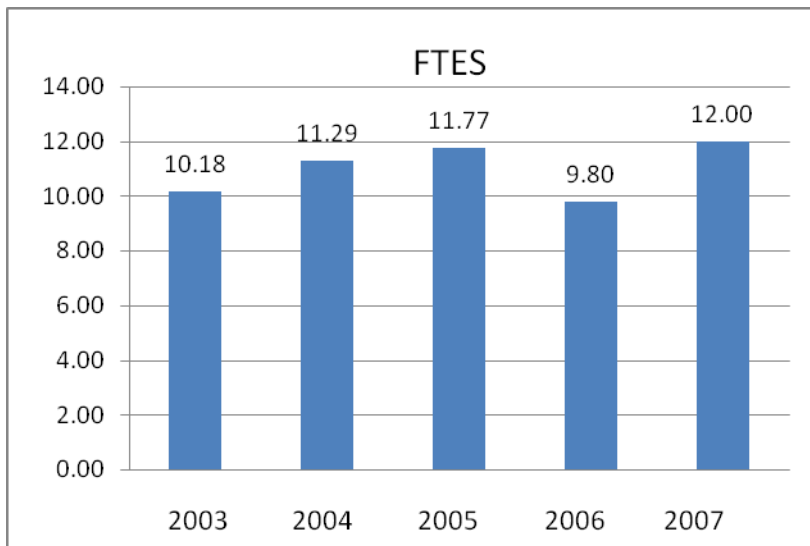
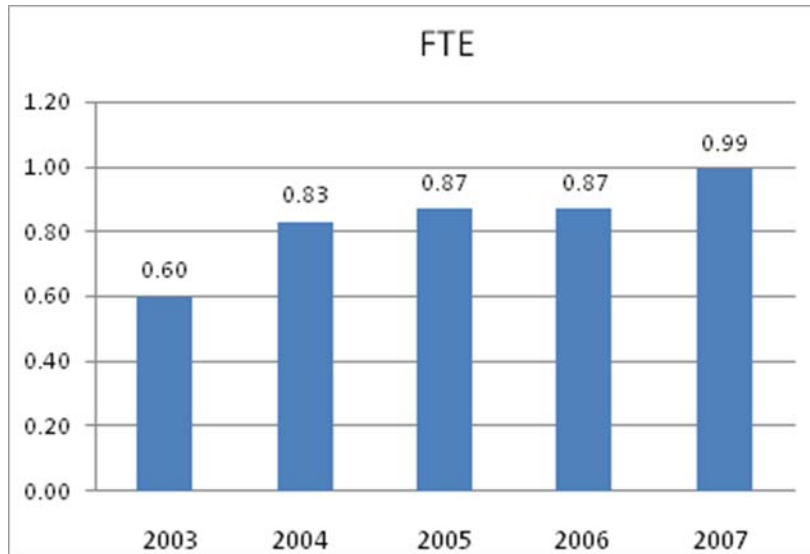
The courses in the Paralegal program are being reviewed at this time and all the courses will have Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) attached to each course. Five of the Paralegal courses have been reviewed and updated within the past two years. All of the Paralegal course offerings recommend: Eligibility for READ 420 and ENGL 100. The LEGL 250, Legal Research and Writing, LEGL 262 Paralegalism and Study of Legal Ethics, and LEGL 274 Advanced Family Law projects recommend: Eligibility for ENGL 110. This Basic Skills Advisory was established to provide the writing skills needed for success in the legal assisting profession. All courses are transferable as electives to local four-year institutions. At this time, the Project Director is working closely with the current and new Paralegal students and refers all to meet with the Division counselor for direction.

The Department is seriously looking into becoming an official ABA (American Bar Association) site. One of the faculty members, the Project Director, and the Dean are pulling together the necessary materials and will be requesting a visit within the next six months.

### III. ENROLLMENT AND PERFORMANCE TRENDS

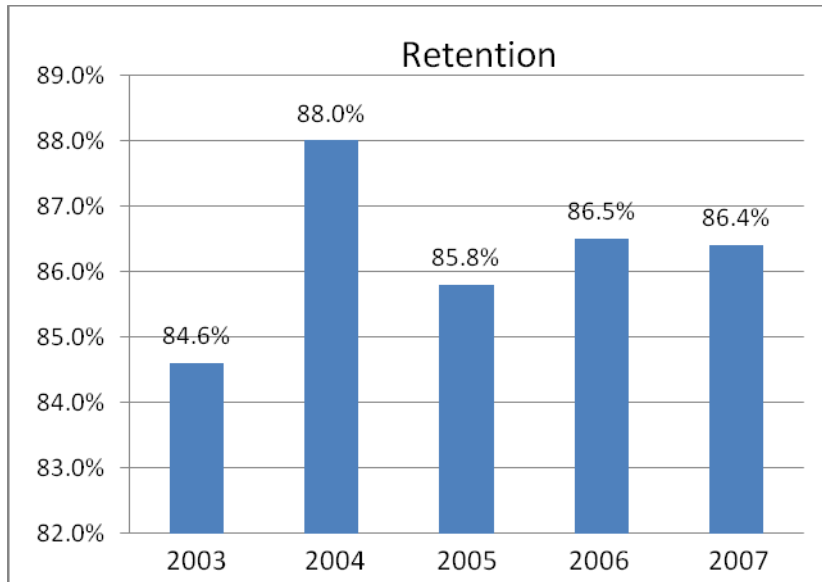
A. Review, attach, and comment on the program enrollment reports/graphs for the last three years (Fall and Spring Semesters). Based on the data provided, discuss expected trends.

The below noted graphs are from fall 2003 through fall 2007 only. Spring semesters were not included in this data collection. The expected trend is for the Paralegal Department enrollments to stabilize.

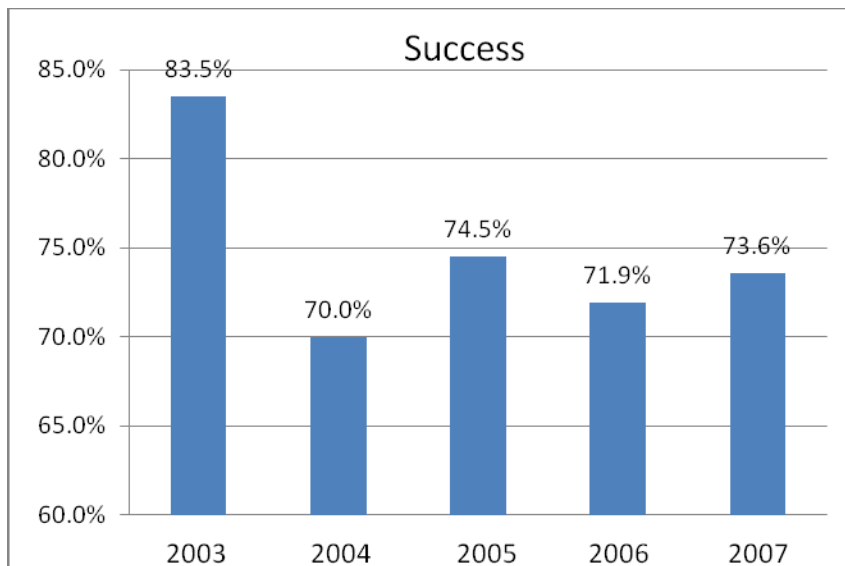


**B. Review, attach, and comment on the Program's success and retention rates.**

The **Retention Rate** for the past five years has averaged **86.26%**. This retention rate has been able to maintain in the mid eighties for the past five years. The Departmental members are very proud of this retention rate.



The **Success Rate** for the past five year has averaged **74.70%**. For the past four years, the success rate has averaged 72.5%.



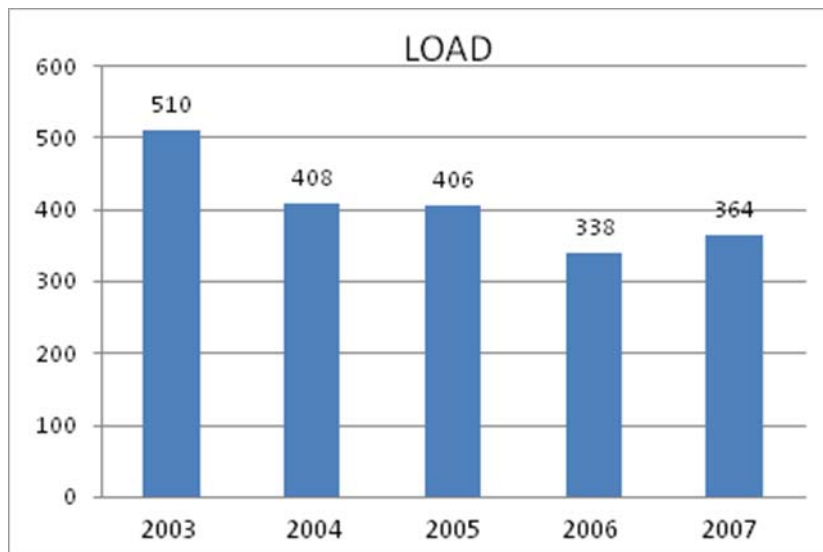
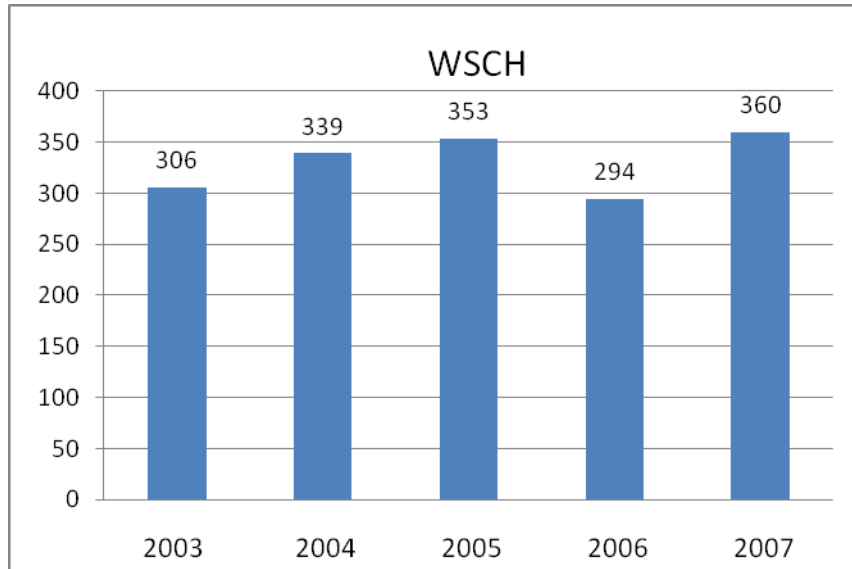
**C. What factors of the program affect its success and retention rates? How does this program use the College services to provide multiple avenues for student success?**

The factors that affect the success and retention rates are assumed; they are: 1) the quality of instruction, 2) the fact that all instructors are currently practicing in the legal field, 3) the age and seriousness of the students who return to college to obtain an employable skill--most of the Paralegal students are older than the typical community college student, 4) students enrolled in the Program have earned degrees and therefore have the skills needed to succeed, and 5) many students are learning a new skill because of a change in career.

The Division Counselor for the Program is actively involved with the professors, students, and Program Advisory Committee; therefore, the counseling services are used extensively. Students are required to take the English Placement test and referrals are made to the appropriate English courses. This requirement is recommended for the first required course in the Program (LEGL 249 - Introduction to the Legal System). Faculty members also make referrals to the Learning Center when they see students needing additional assistance. Unfortunately, the data is not available to query the number of students who are served by other services offered through the College, including the Health Center.

#### IV. FTE AND WSCH/FTE (LOAD)

Review and attach the graph providing illustration First Census FTE WSCH/FTE for this Program and for the college for the past four Fall semesters. Project next year's FTE and LOAD goals and the Program's long-term FTE and LOAD goals. In your analysis address the program's trends in comparison to College trends. If more information is needed to interpret trends on projected goals, describe what is needed in the analysis.



The projections for FTE and Load goals are as follows: The FTE goal for 2008-09 will possibly increase to .15 due to offering to due offering one additional section in spring 2009. The Load goal for the 2008-09 academic year is estimated to go to 368.

## V. Faculty and Staff

### A. List major development activities completed by faculty and staff in this program in the last six years. What development activities are needed or proposed by faculty in this program?

Below is the list of current faculty members in the Paralegal program. As you can see by the hire date, the majority of faculty members has been with us for quite a long time and has contributed extensively to the Paralegal program.

NAME	DATED HIRED	CERT/ DEGREE	INSTITUTION	CERT/ DEGREE	INSTITUTION
DeGhetaldi, Dario	9/1/88	JD	U.C., Hastings College of the Law	BA	Stanford Univ.
Professor De Ghetaldi specializes in complex business litigation, including class actions, securities, antitrust, and consumer protection issues, as well as real estate litigation and probate/trust litigation.					
Durkin, Dennis	9/1/80	JD	University of the Pacific		
Professor Durkin is a Certified Family Law Specialist, Board of Legal Specialization, State Bar of California.					
Glick, Robert	2/1/88	CERT	CCSF-Legal Assistant	BA	SFSU
Professor Glick specializes in Civil Litigation.					
Kippes, Althea	6/19/95	JD	Golden Gate University	BS	UC Berkeley
Professor Kippes specializes in all phases of litigation, employment law, animal law, and consumer law.					
Mortimer, Michael	1/16/07	JD	University of Oregon	BA	UC Berkeley
Professor Mortimer specializes in Business litigation, competitive business litigation, employment law, federal trials, electronic litigation, and website technology - <a href="http://www.employlaw.com/">http://www.employlaw.com/</a>					
Young, Alisa	1/19/94	CERT	UC Irvine-Legal Assistant	BA	UC Berkeley
Professor Young specializes in IP Litigation.					

### B. How would this program recruit full time or adjunct faculty and staff? How would this program orient new faculty and staff after hiring? Include student workers such as tutors and aids.

This program recruits discipline experts who have experience working within the legal profession. The Division Dean orients all new professors on their role and discusses all the paperwork required to be an effective member of the team. The Dean also assigns a mentor to work with the newly hired professor. New faculty members are invited to a college orientation sponsored by the Vice President of Instruction once per year. There are no student workers in this program.

## **VI. FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS, AND MAINTENANCE**

**A. How effectively does the facilities, equipment, their maintenance and the materials available to this program support current and projected needs? How do they affect student success? Are they accessible to all students, including the disabled?**

**Access to the online legal research database Lexis** is critically needed in the Paralegal program and should be offered through the College Library. Knowing how to use this research tool is critical for paralegal students because this program is used in all law firms, government agencies, and corporate legal departments. Moreover, all of the programs competing with Cañada College, including Skyline College, provide access to this program to their paralegal students. Failure to add this basic resource to our Paralegal Program will negatively affect our reputation in the legal community, the ability of our graduates to find employment, and have a negative impact on enrollment. Knowing how to use Lexis is required and should be available for students enrolled in the Program. If this program cannot be housed in the College Library then other alternatives must be worked out during the 2008-09 academic year.

**B. How does this program use technology? Is this Program current with respect to the use of technologies compared to similar programs at other community colleges, four-year institutions, and business or industry?**

The online technology available to legal students on campus is in no way similar to what is found in local law firms, legal departments at local corporations, neighboring no community colleges or four-year institutions. The college provides no access to any legal databases or online legal research materials. At the minimum, the legal research database Lexis should be required for students in the Program.

**C. If appropriate, how effective is the support this program receives from industry?**

The Paralegal Program receives tremendous support from the Program Advisory Committee. The Committee is very active in reviewing curriculum, developing curriculum, and advising students. The committee meets twice per academic year. Since many of the students are employed in legal environments, industry support is available through the Cooperative Education Program.

## **VII. BUDGET REQUEST**

**A. Project resources needed in the next six years. Please address the following in your projections: staff, facilities, equipment, and supplies. Consider what this program could share resources with other programs in the college or District.**

A full-time professor should be hired to coordinate the curriculum and advise students within the next six years. The Program has the potential to grow as the need for paralegals continue to grow.

The College Library should provide on-line computer database services for legal students. Equipment needed for the Program is linked to technology--computers and on-line capabilities. Supplies for the Paralegal program are minimal and are provided through the Division Office.

The Paralegal program share resources with the CBOT--Computer Business Office Technology

Department and the College Library. Paralegal students and professors currently use a countywide resource, the San Mateo County Law Library. However, financial constraints of the nonprofit San Mateo County Law Library will seriously affect student and professor use of this resource. A partnership arrangement should be investigated.

**CAÑADA COLLEGE**  
**PROGRAM REVIEW**  
**INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE SHEET**

**Program Name: PARALEGAL**

Thank you for your time and effort in preparing this Program Review. Your Executive Summary, with recommendations, has been sent to the Planning/Budget Committee and the Board of Trustees.

<b>#1. Division Dean</b>
_____ Signature
<b>Comments:</b>

<b>#2. Curriculum Committee Chair</b>
_____ Signature
<b>Comments:</b>

<b>#3. College Vice President</b>
_____ Signature
<b>Comments:</b>

3/25/2008