

2018-2019 Program Review Cycle



Instructional Programs

CAN Program Review (Instructional) - Paralegal (Odd Year)

Program Review Narratives

2018-2019

Instructional Program Review (IPR)

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Executive Summary

0. Executive Summary: History

Over 40 years ago, the Paralegal Program (LEGL) at Cañada College 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 preparing students to interview clients and witnesses, conduct legal research, investigate case information, draft legal documents, prepare cases for trial, analyze issues for appeal, and master industry technology tools.

In 2000, in response to the growing demand for properly trained paralegals, California became the first state to regulate who can be called a paralegal. California Business & Professions Code §6450 requires that anyone using the job title "paralegal" or "legal assistant" must complete specific education requirements. Both the Paralegal Certificate and the A.S. degree satisfy these mandated educational requirements and graduates are entitled to be called paralegals.

Students who want to continue their legal education can transfer to a four-year college or university. The Paralegal Program encourages students to complete a baccalaureate degree because this improves employment opportunities. The Paralegal Program is also excellent preparation for students planning to attend law school or for foreign attorneys who are preparing for a Masters in Law (LLM) Program that is required in order to take the California Bar Exam.

The substantive, procedural, and practical legal courses combined with the practical experience prepare paralegals for employment in Silicon Valley law firms, corporate legal departments, non-profit organizations, federal and state courts, and public agencies.

continue to believe that the Program's instructional delivery faculty should be a mixture of practicing paralegals and attorneys.

New Program

In response to declining enrollment, in 2018 the Paralegal Program revamped its curriculum, switched courses to an online format, and created and launched a strong Advisory Committee. A Paralegal Program Coordinator was hired to facilitate the expansion and strengthening of the program.

In 2018, in response to declining enrollment, the Paralegal Program began the transition to a completely online program.

Program Strengths:

The Paralegal 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 and professional 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.

Our faculty members are our best asset. The Paralegal (LEGL) program consists of four adjunct faculty members who work full time in the legal profession as lawyers or paralegals. Our faculty are high-caliber professors, teaching the most up-to-date information about their subjects and incorporating technology into classroom lectures.

Program Challenges and Proposed Actions:

-Challenge: Declining Enrollment.

Until recently, we have continued to see a decline in enrollment. For the past three years, classes were placed on the schedule but were cancelled before the first day of class because of low enrollment.

Proposed Action: Reformatting the Paralegal Program to be completely online.

Beginning in 2018, we began the process to transform the Paralegal Program into an online-only format. The switch to an online program has dramatically increased enrollment in the Paralegal Program courses.

-Challenge: Lack of a Program Coordinator.

For many years, the Paralegal Program has not had a program coordinator. The Director of Workforce Development (Alex Kramer) had worked to provide coordination leadership for the Program moving forward. However, Alex Kramer is no longer in this position.

Proposed Action: Hiring a Program Coordinator

In the Fall of 2018, Assistant Professor Althea Kippes agreed to become the Paralegal Program Coordinator and is now providing leadership and coordination for the Program moving forward.

-Challenge: Lack of American Bar Association (ABA) Accreditation

The paralegal program at Skyline College received ABA accreditation in 2018. We were not offered an opportunity to partner with Skyline College in the accreditation process. As a result, the Paralegal Program at Cañada College did not receive ABA accreditation.

Proposed Action: Updating and revising curriculum to be relevant to workforce needs

The motivation for students to enroll in an ABA-paralegal program is to increase employment opportunities after program completion. For example, some law firms will only hire paralegals who have a Certificate from an ABA-paralegal program. In response to this challenge, in 2018 we extensively updated and revised the paralegal program curriculum. We added courses in high demand practice areas and that covered skills business and legal employers desired. We have also added a new stackable paralegal certificate in litigation, since this is a practice area that is in high demand by employers. Switching to an online format has also enabled us to attract working professionals who otherwise would not be able to take classes on campus.

Program Context

1. Mission: It is the mission for the Paralegal Program of Cañada College to ensure that students from diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to achieve their educational goals by providing quality instruction in paralegal studies and activities that foster students' personal development and academic success. The Cañada College Paralegal Program places a high priority on supportive faculty/staff/student teaching and learning relationships, responsive student support services, and an environment that contributes to personal growth and professional success for students. The Paralegal Program is committed to the students and community to fulfill this mission.

Vision

The Paralegal Program at Cañada College ensures student success through personalized, flexible, and innovative instruction. The faculty and staff of the Paralegal Program infuses essential skills and competencies throughout the curriculum and assesses student learning and institutional effectiveness to make continuous improvement. The faculty and staff of the Paralegal Program respond to the changing needs of the people it serves by being involved in and responsive to the community, developing new programs and partnerships and incorporating new technologies and methodologies into its programs and services.

2. Articulation: Currently, the Paralegal (LEGL) courses are not part of the "A" through "G" requirements at our local high schools and we do not have an articulation agreement with the high schools for any of the LEGL courses. The College has programs allowing high school students to take courses, including LEGL courses, while they are still in high school. Any changes in the LEGL program and the course outlines will not impact the high school enrollment since the course are degree applicable and transferrable to CSU campuses.

3. Community & Labor Needs: 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 in a business environment. The demand for paralegals is expected to grow and an expanding population increasing require legal services, especially in areas such as intellectual property and elder law. In 2018, the Paralegal Program conducted a survey of attorneys and law firms in San Mateo County. The results indicated that there is a need for paralegals with practical skills related to law practice management, legal trial technology, and electronic litigation and investigation. The Paralegal Program Advisory Committee also supports offering the courses for the Legal Secretary exam. There is also demand that the Paralegal Program can satisfy in preparing students for law school and preparing foreign attorneys for the Masters in Law program that must be completed in order to take the California Bar Exam.

Looking Back

4. Curricular Changes: The most significant change to the Paralegal Program is changing the format from in-person classes to a

completely online format. The curriculum has been updated, with new courses created that target the needs of the business and legal community. New courses include Law Office Management, Intellectual Property, Elder Law, and Animal Law. We have also modified existing courses to add relevant components that employers desire. We have also added new paralegal certificate in Litigation, since paralegals with litigation skills are in high demand by law firms and businesses.

5A. Progress Report - IPC Feedback: In response to the low enrollment prior to 2018, we have revised the Paralegal Program to be offered completely online. Data from 2018 indicates that this strategy is working and the number of students enrolled in paralegal classes has increased significantly. Registration has been open for one week and the number of students enrolled is now in double digits whereas, the previous semester the enrollment was in single digits by census.

IPC prior feedback suggested that the program become ADA compliant. Due to restrictions of budget, the program cannot justify the requirement of a full-time faculty member. ABA accreditation is a rigorous process that lasts a minimum of three years. The process is meant to insure a level of national uniformity in legal education and practice. If students attend a school approved by the ABA, they are eligible to sit for the bar exam in any state. At this time, paralegal job opportunities do not require the bar exam for employment.

5B. Progress Report - Prior Action Plans: There were not prior action plans; the department didn't have a full-time faculty member nor a coordinator. All prior plans were developed by non-paralegal individuals, including the strong workforce director and a part-time faculty member in another discipline.

6A. Impact of Resource Applications: We have Althea Kippes serving as a part-time program coordinator at 7.5 hours per week after Alex Kramer's leaving in October 2018. With this help, we have been able to complete all of the tasks required to update the Program such as annual program reviews, annual SLO assessments, course SLO completion, website updates, and coordination of the faculty and advisory boards. Other options for coordination include:

1. Making the Paralegal Program part of the larger disciplines, such as the Business, Accounting, and Technology (BAT) Program. With this arrangement, the Paralegal Program will benefit from additional resources, support, and program coordination;
2. Forming strategic partnerships with the legal professional associations, such as the San Mateo County Bar Association, the San Mateo County Trial Lawyers Association, the Consumer Attorneys of California, the San Mateo County Legal Professionals Association, and the San Francisco Paralegal Association, in order to increase awareness of the Program and promote growth;
3. Forming partnerships with the San Mateo County Law Library and the San Francisco Law Library to take advantage of the legal technology resources and classroom space. Should the Paralegal Program seek ABA Accreditation at a future date, we will already have the mandated partnerships with the law libraries in place.
4. Expanding current Program marketing efforts to include students who plan to attend law school in the future, foreign attorneys who want to prepare for the mandatory LLM program needed to take the California Bar Exam, and people currently employed in a legal position who want to expand their skills by earning a paralegal certificate or degree. Note: A Master of Laws (LLM) is an internationally-recognized, second-level law degree offered in many countries around the world. ... Students wishing to pursue an LLM are normally required to hold an undergraduate degree in either a related subject or in a law degree like an LLB or a JD.

6B. Impact of Staffing Changes: Due to faculty unwillingness to teach classes online, two of our part-time faculty members have resigned the Program. However, we still have four faculty members available to teach courses in our Program: two experienced, licensed California attorneys and two experienced paralegals who are able to teach online. We are networking with our advisory board members to offer part-time opportunities to those who are interested in teaching.

Current State of the Program

7. Enrollment Trends: Note: charts and graphs under documents.

Total number of students enrolled have declined. The decline created a situation where as students decreased - classes were cancelled - as classes were cancelled - students stopped enrolling. This decline can also be seen throughout all unique student counts as well as load.

The number of males has always been less than females; paralegals and legal secretaries have historically been women whereas, lawyers have historically been men. Possible solution is for the program to create a pipeline to law school and offer niche classes (such as animal law and elder law).

Strong workforce funds were used to keep pathway open for student completions.

Spring 2019, all paralegal classes will be online, reaching students throughout California and offering flexibility for students with work or with family obligations.

8-A. Access & Completion: As the charts and graphs (located under documents) clearly depict, in order to meet college equity standards, the LEGL program must work to recruit more students from various backgrounds. The largest equity gap noted is a lack of student of Asian descent. In order to fill this gap, it is vital to reflect these students in marketing and outreach materials in order to increase enrollment of these populations. The college can support this effort by providing marketing support through the Strong Workforce Program and by providing additional resources through the marketing department. Additionally, online classes will allow access to students with work or family obligations.

8-B. Completion - Success Online: This program has historically not offered courses online. As of Spring 2019 all paralegal classes will be offered online. The hope is to increase enrollment, success, retention and offer students flexibility.

9A. SLO Assessment - Compliance: All SLOs are systematically assessed. Focusing on one SLO per course has resulted in more in depth examination of course goals and outcomes by faculty. However, as of this program review, spring and fall 2017/spring 2018 SLO assessments need to be entered. In the fall 2016 semester three courses were cancelled due to low enrollments. Moreover, this program lacked a program coordinator who can organize the SLO assessment process for adjunct faculty members. As of fall 2018 a coordinator has been hired and will be working on SLO assessment in Spring 2019.

9B. SLO Assessment - Impact: The faculty discuss the SLOs and SLO assessments each spring to evaluate the process and the assessment outcomes. As a result, the SLOs are more specific and more helpful with our program evaluation.

10. PLO Assessment: Due to course cancellations and the lack of a program coordinator, program level outcome assessments have not yet been entered. Plans to address this situation when leadership is in place.

Looking Ahead

11. Program Planning: Offer classes online, increase marketing efforts and develop program leadership through department coordinator.

Program Review Narrative Status: Complete

Objective: Online Classes.

Offer all classes online.

Objective Status: 2 - Continuing (PR)

Objective Year: 2019-2020

Estimated Start Date: 08/01/2018

Estimated Completion Date: 06/01/2020

Please select the college goals with which this objective aligns.: Student Completion/Success - Provide educational and student services programs that highlight inclusivity, diversity, and equity in their mission to help students meet their unique educational goals and minimize logistical and financial barriers to success., Organizational Development - Focus institutional resources on the structures, processes, and practices that invest in a diverse student population and prioritize and promote equitable, inclusive, and transformative learning.

Please select the district goals with which this objective aligns.: District Goal #1 - Develop and Strengthen Educational Offerings, Interventions, and Support Programs that Increase Student Access & Success, District Goal #2 - Establish And Expand Relationships With School Districts, 4-year College Partners, And Community-based Organizations To Increase Higher Education Attainment In San Mateo County, District Goal #3 - Increase Program Delivery Options, Including the Expanded Use of Instructional Technology, to Support Student Learning and Success

Action Plans

2018-2019 - All part-timers are encouraged to learn to teach on-line. (Active)

Who's Responsible for Completing this Action Plan?: LEGL team; identifying adjuncts who are experienced online instructors.

Estimated Completion Date: On-going.

Objective: Marketing.

Increase marketing: create new brochures, videos, banner ads, outreach at legal conventions, and sponsor the law libraries in San Mateo County and San Francisco.

Objective Status: 1 - New (PR)

Objective Year: 2019-2020

Estimated Start Date: 01/01/2019

Estimated Completion Date: 12/31/2019

Please select the college goals with which this objective aligns.: Student Completion/Success - Provide educational and student services programs that highlight inclusivity, diversity, and equity in their mission to help students meet their unique educational goals and minimize logistical and financial barriers to success., Community Connections - Build and strengthen collaborative relationships and partnerships that support the needs of, reflect, and enrich our diverse and vibrant local community.

Please select the district goals with which this objective aligns.: District Goal #2 - Establish And Expand Relationships With School Districts, 4-year College Partners, And Community-based Organizations To Increase Higher Education Attainment In San Mateo County, District Goal #3 - Increase Program Delivery Options, Including the Expanded Use of Instructional Technology, to

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Support Student Learning and Success

Action Plans

2019-2020 - Increase marketing collateral. (Active)

Who's Responsible for Completing this Action Plan?: Marketing team and strong workforce team.

Estimated Completion Date: June 30, 2020