

#6

INCOMPLETE

Collector: Email Invitation 1 (Email)
Started: Tuesday, December 15, 2020 5:35:48 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, January 14, 2021 7:01:50 PM
Time Spent: Over a week
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Page 1: I. Program Overview and Update

Q1

I.1. Department(s) Reviewed:

Paralegal Studies (B&PS)

Q2

I.2. Lead Author:

Mary Sessom

Q3

I.3. Collaborator(s) - List any person that participated in the preparation of this report:

Joan Rettinger, Brandon Baker, Harold Rucker, Eddie Sturgeon, Pat Newman, John Hafner, Paralegal Advisory Committee, Cuyamaca Association of Paralegal Students Officers, Jeri Edelen

Q4

1.4. Dean/Manager:

Larry McLemore

Page 2: II. Program Reflection and Description

Q5

II.1. Provide your program's mission statement:

This degree program is specifically designed to prepare and provide students with the analytical skills and written abilities necessary to assist attorneys in the practice of law.

Q6

II.2. How is this program advancing the college mission, vision and values?

Vision: Students entering this program have an end goal; become a paralegal. That is their future and what they are studying for.

Mission: The data from Program Review (PR) and the Strong Workforce Institute (SWI) shows that the program meets or exceeds the Mission of the college. The program serves a diverse community. If one looks at a snapshot of the data from SP20, one can see that the program had 8% of its students from the African-American community while the College was at 6%. Hispanic/Latino/a students stood at 40% for the program and 34% for the college. The White community had 42% of its students in this demographic while the college had 38%

As the reader will be able to see throughout this document that three of the four priorities that form the foundation of the Strategic Plan are met in various ways. The college Values are reflected in many of the initiatives and actions the program has taken from constantly working to maintain approval by the American Bar Association (ABA), supporting the PARA student organization, and ensuring that the program is meeting the needs of the legal community through its advisory committee and various information gathering tools such as focus groups.

Q7

II.3. How does your program support the college's strategic goal of implementing guided pathways?

- A. Clarify the Path: The program constantly updates its webpage so students, new or returning, have the latest information. The program director relays information about any curricular changes to Counseling.
- B. Enter the Path: The program director advises students on a one on one basis to help them understand what is expected of paralegals in the profession, expectations of PARA students, expectations of PARA faculty, and how to plan their PARA courses after they have their Education Plan.
- C. Stay on the Path: The program has several tools it uses to help students move forward. Tutors, both from the ARC and Writing Center, are heavily used and made available to students especially embedded tutors. The student organization, Cuyamaca Association for Paralegal Students (CAPS), also holds regular meetings to keep students involved with each other as well as to hear various presentations. All-Hands meetings involving students, faculty and the advisory committee members are held in the Fall semester.
- D. Ensure learning: The program had developed a capstone portfolio project to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses as well as give them a tool to help in landing a job. This has been put on hold due to the COVID logistics of physically checking and verifying each student's portfolio. Staff from the career center and legal recruiters are brought into classes or CAPS meetings for sharing with students what employers are looking for in entry level paralegals.

These are only a few of the support efforts of the Paralegal Studies Program for Guided Pathways. All are reported to the ABA for the Interim Reports and the Re-Approval Reports.

Q8

Yes

II.4. Is the program description in the current college catalog up to date and accurate?

Q9 **Respondent skipped this question**

II.4a. What steps will you take to revise the college catalog description?

Page 4: III. Course Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success

Q10 **Yes**

III.1. Access the Five Year Curriculum Review Cycle (requires GCCCD login). Have all of your active courses outlines been reviewed within the last five years?

Q11

III.2. What is your program doing to prepare students for successful transition (e.g. transfer and career readiness)?

The program has taken several steps to ensure its graduates are ready for their careers.

Every student is offered a 2 year free membership into the National Legal Technology Society. The NLTS offers training in software commonly found in all law offices. At the end of the training, the student is given a certificate attesting to the software in which they are now proficient.

The program has revised its webpage on the department website to include more information on careers, the specialization tracks, and student testimonials.

The Cuyamaca Association of Paralegal Students (CAPS) continues to hold virtual meetings and events despite the COVID limitations. The association has always held meetings with invited guests who are legal recruiters, legal temporary hiring agencies, guest speakers who are practicing attorneys, or speakers from the San Diego Association of Paralegals.

The program added an E-Discovery online class in 2018. The class drew not only Cuyamaca PARA students but staff from law offices who needed to learn about this new area of procedural law. Some competency in E-Discovery is being required of paralegals, especially in Civil Litigation.

Q12

III.3. Please list any planned changes for curriculum and the rationale for those changes:

The legal specialization tracks were approved by the Advisory Committee in 11/2020. They are now ready to be implemented in Spring of 2021. They were developed as curricular pathways to employment and further education. When these tracks (which include suggested GE courses) are fully implemented, students will have an opportunity to customize their electives to fit their interests and goals in the professional work environment.

An advanced E-Discovery class has been discussed in discipline meetings. There has been significant interest in this from the students and the legal community.

Page 5: III. Course Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success continued

Q13

III.4. Please upload the most recent version of your program's course SLO assessment plan. Click here for an Assessment Plan Template

PARA SLO assessment plan.pdf (15.8KB)

Q14

III.5. Please provide a high-level analysis of your SLO findings over the past year and what changes, if any, were made as a result:

The program has been undergoing significant changes in the last 3 years. Several courses were reconfigured in terms of their units and their format. All electives were turned into smaller unit classes and organized by Specialization Tracks for those students wishing to participate. For example, the content in PARA 150 is now offered in PARA 150 and 151. During the period of the curriculum change work, the classes were infrequently offered. With the changing of the SLOs, all former SLOs were not consistently assessed. However, all courses that did not experience these reconfigurations, had their assessment rates in the program's accepted rate of 70% as a minimum. Prior to reconfiguration, all classes had success rates of a minimum of 70% passing.

Q15

III.6. What student learning-related successes and challenges have SLOs results revealed for your department?Note: If SLO data are not offering useful feedback regarding student learning, and are not currently informing program improvements, please instead discuss the specific steps you plan to take to make learning outcomes and assessments more meaningful.

No assessment was done in SP 2020 due to the COVID response of taking all classes online. Many instructors had never taught online and had never been trained to teach online. Thus, the decision was made to do no assessment.

The work done on the Specialization Tracks was approved by the Advisory Committee in FA 2020. The program is now on track to do more consistent assessing. The assessment data on file shows that the students are meeting the standard of 70% passing on each SLO.

The discussions on the Specialization Track classes led to discussions on SLO's in general. It was decided, program wide, that all classes would have a written assignment as part of the assessment and not just rely on objective test questions.

Page 6: III. Course Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success continued

Q16

III.7. How was the department of discipline's success rate across all courses changed within the past 4 years (the time frame covered in this comprehensive program review)?

The average four year success rate in Paralegal Studies is 76%, with a low of 70% and a high of 86%. The average college-wide success rate is 74%, never getting above 76%.

Q17

III.8. The College has set a 2024 goal of reaching a 77% course success rate (students passing with a grade of A, B, C, or P out of those enrolled at census) for the College as a whole. What is your department or discipline's four-year (2024-25) goal for success rate across all courses in the department or discipline?

This program, on average, is one percentage point away from meeting the college success rate of 77%. It is addressing its equity gaps by working towards meeting the priorities of the 2019 Equity Plan as follows:

Professional Development for Faculty: The PARA faculty is actively engaged in professional development. This training is essential for instructors to learn new techniques and philosophies in the teaching profession. Additionally, the ABA requires that each faculty member report, on a yearly basis, the training that individual has done for their profession as well as for their teaching. Professional Development workshops are only part of the way of meeting this priority.

Several faculty members attended various American Association for Paralegal Educators conference workshops which focus on how to improve teaching in the classroom. Many of these workshops dealt with equity issues. For example, one such workshop, held in San Diego in March 2019, was devoted exclusively to the appropriate use of pronouns when working with students of differing demographics.

Additionally, 50% of the PARA faculty have taken equity training from @One, the Strong Workforce Institute, or the college's EMTL courses. One is enrolled in the February 21 @One equity training. Additional training for the other remaining faculty is being pursued.

Curriculum: The PARA program has undertaken extensive revamping of the curriculum in order to give students a better grounding in the PARA profession and allow each student to develop their own legal specialization path. For over three years, the program included faculty, students, and the Advisory Committee in putting together the Specialization Tracks. This required identifying the tracks and the courses that belonged to each track. Then, every 3 unit elective was "pulled apart" into smaller unit classes so it is easier for a student to customize their track. Faculty and students were involved in every step. The curriculum work was completed and the Advisory Committee approved the tracks in Fall 2020. Work on curriculum will continue as needed should employment data indicate a change is needed.

Student Engagement and Validation: In 2018 and 2019, the PARA program held All Hands meetings after the last finals were over. Invited to these meetings were all students, PARA faculty and the Advisory Committee. In addition to work on the Specialty Tracks, the introduction to the Student Portfolio Project was also rolled out. Students were able to question the Advisory Committee members on the legal industry. The Advisory Committee members were able to meet the students impacted by their recommendations. These will be continued as soon as the campus reopens with a focus on program improvement including addressing all equity gaps.

Research and Inquiry: On a program level basis, much work was done on research and inquiry through the most recent Strong Workforce Institute. The theme of the 2020 Institute was Rethinking the Student Experience for Retention and Success. 50% of the PARA faculty attended this Institute. Each faculty was given extensive data on the retention and success of students collegewide, department wide, and one of their own classes. Looking at the intersectionality of students was key to analyzing the data. It is critical, for example, to look at the data for African-American Females in terms of their rates of success and retention. These are different than those of African-American Males. The data is much more granular than what is given for this program review. At the end of the Institute, each faculty member produced an action plan designed to help narrow the equity gaps observed in their own classes. For example, BUS 125, Business Law, is a required class in the PARA major. The action plan included an extensive revamping of the course syllabus, an introduction to the class letter, more interactive, short, low risk work such as word gardens, and more instructor notes or videos placed in Canvas. Faculty who had not participated in this research project or have attended the EMTLI training will be encouraged and motivated to do so.

Evaluation and Culture of Improvement: The program, as mentioned above, has come to agreement as to what assessment tools will be used for the SLO assessment. As paralegals must have good writing skills, one assessment tool will be a written assignment. The discipline meetings held each professional development week have focused on working to develop tools and strategies to help students be successful. This is much more deliberate than what it had been in the early years of the program. But the program has a core of long time faculty who are committed to the success of the students. They give stability to the program and developed the culture that currently exists. The hope is to inculcate an expanded culture of improvement in closing equity gaps by training all faculty.

Q18

III.9. Please review the college-wide and program data sets, which have identified equity gaps based on the following criteria: 3% n=10 students/enrollments. Which groups are experiencing equity gaps in your program?

All work undertaken by the program for these five priorities of the 2019 Equity Plan have a goal to reduce equity gaps. At the program level that work has been driven by data. The data was found in the Program Review data (PR), the Strong Workforce Institute (SWI), or the Equity Minded Teaching and Learning Institute (EMTLI).

Data for the SWI for BUS 125, a required PARA class taught by attorneys in the PARA program, is being used to drive that course's scheduling. The program discovered that, by looking at ethnicity, students taking 14 week classes experienced greater retention (90%) and success (80%) than those students taking either 8 week (86%/71%), or 16 week (81%/58%) classes. The data by age or gender tracked closely to ethnicity.

A deep dive into the data (SWI) for Para 100, the gateway class to most subsequent PARA classes, shows that the college-wide enrollment of African-American students was 5% and for the PARA 100 class, 7%. For Latinx students the college enrollment was 33% and for PARA, 45%.

Retention has similar outcomes. Latinx students were 86% for the college but 84% of PARA 100. However, for African-American students retention was 83% for the college but 93% for PARA 100.

Looking at the data for the EMTLI showed some interesting results. College wide, the success rates was 78% and for the program it was 78%. Drilling down into the data showed that the success of African-American students college-wide was 66% and for the program 74%. Hispanic/Latino/a students college-wide had a success rate of 72% and for those students in the program, 78%. Females in the program were 1% lower than the college-wide success. The difference for males was 2% higher in the program.

It is interesting to look at the retention data on Gender & Ethnicity from the EMTLI. The rates for African-American Female students was 85% (college wide) and 85% for the program. For African-American Males it was 82% (college wide) and 100% for the program. For Hispanic/Latino/a Females the retention college-wide was 87% and for the program 88%. Similar rates are shown for Hispanic/Latino/a Males; 87% vs. 95% (program). The equity gaps here for these two groups and for the White category show that college-wide retention rate for Males is 89% and for Females 92%. For the program for Males it is 94% and 92% for Females.

Looking at trends from the "30,000 ft level" show that the rates for retention and success (PR) have not had significant swings from semester to semester over the period of FA15 to SP20. Breaking down the success/retention rates by Race/Ethnicity is problematic as some races/ethnicity have extremely low numbers of students. For example, over 10 semesters there was a total of 101 African-American students enrolled or 10.1 students per semester. Hispanic/Latino/a showed larger enrollments of 624 or 62.4 a semester. Interesting was the enrollment numbers for White Non-Hispanic students. There was a total of 514 students enrolled or 51.4 per semester. The largest equity gaps were in the Hispanic/Latino/a demographic and that is where more focus and work should occur.

Q19

III.10. What department/discipline (or institutional) factors may be contributing to these lower rates of success for these groups of students?

A question that always comes to mind when looking at data college-wide and by program is how GE classes affect retention and success. No PARA class is eligible for GE credit nor is BUS 125. Does that make a difference?

Additionally, in the past, PARA has expended Perkins funds on recruiting and supporting males as part of the non-traditional population in the paralegal profession. Are we only now experiencing the results of those expenditures? Will future changes in equity gaps show up immediately or in the future?

Q20

III.11. What action will the department or discipline take to address these equity gaps in the short-term (next year) and long-term (next four years)?

Action 1: Data from the SWI for BUS 125, a required PARA class, is being used to drive scheduling. The program discovered that students, by ethnicity, taking 14 week classes experienced greater retention (90%) and success (80%) than those students taking either 8 week (86%/71%), or 16 week (81%/58%) classes. The data by age or gender tracked closely to ethnicity. (Short term)

Action 2: This is long term action. The program appears to be on a good track in regards to all demographic groups except for Hispanic/Latino/a. That is where focus should be without losing any ground on the other demographics.

The program should put a greater emphasis on asking faculty to continue their training in equity. A very large number of faculty have full time jobs so extra training is going to be difficult. This can be overcome by providing more training during department meetings. The program should also explore a small stipend program for faculty to attend these any equity centered trainings.

The paralegal profession requires good communication skills both verbally and in writing. (2018 Employer Focus Group) Instructors have commented on the number of students whose English writing skills are less than optimal. Generally, these students have English as a second language. There is little data on our Middle Eastern population but on the Hispanic/Latino/a demographic there is a struggle for success. The program may want to consider a student survey to get a good sense of how many students are ESL students. Once that information is gathered, more concrete plans can be made.

The program is expanding its embedded tutoring program in SP21. (SWF funds) The results of this can be evaluated in the 2022 Annual Program Review.

One of the intended outcomes of the Specialization Track program is for student cohorts to develop. Students will be better able to work with their peers as they will better know them. Students, while having courses with all PARA faculty, will find themselves taking familiar instructors in their specialty classes. This may allow faculty to better identify those students who are struggling and for students to ask for support from their peers.

The student association, CAPS, should also continue to be brought into the program equity dialogue so the programs and events they offer can be geared to defined college equity goals. This student association already has a focus on equity and promotes a high order of ethics and anti-discrimination as set out in its Bylaws. The PARA program will have to respect the autonomy of CAPS as well.

Q21

III.12. What other qualitative or quantitative data (from any source) is the program using to inform its planning for this comprehensive program review?

As listed in various sections above, the program has relied on the data supplied to it through program review, on data from the Strong Workforce Institute, data from the Equity Minded Teaching and Learning Institute, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, CalJOBS, CA EDD, the Paralegal Advisory Committee, and the ABA required Employer Focus Group.

Q22

Respondent skipped this question

OPTIONAL: Please use the upload button to attach any supporting documentation you would like to include.

Q23

Yes

III.14. Does your program offer courses via distance education (excluding emergency remote teaching in 2020)?

Page 8: III. Course Curriculum, Assessment and Student Success continued

Q24

Yes

III.15. Are there differences in success rates for distance education (online) versus in-person sections?

Q25

III.16. If there are differences in success rates for distance education (online) versus in-person classes, what will the program do to address these disparities?

The program in the past had only one hybrid class, PARA 100, Introduction to Paralegal Studies. Gradually, electives were added in 2018 that were 100% online. Of course, SP20 everything went online.

It is difficult to understand these retention and success rates as the numbers of students are very small – generally 43 as the high over all 10 semesters with some as low as 5. The following data is from the Program Review link.

Hybrid classes, of which there was one, showed a retention for various demographic groups of 69% for African American students, 81% for Hispanic Latino/a students and 85% for White students. Success was a very different story with a rate of 32% for African-American students, Hispanic Latino/a of 52%, and White of 70%. Many of these low numbers reflect significant drops in SP20 as the majority of PARA faculty who took their classes online had no DE training.

Classes that were 100% online did not start showing data until F18. When the data was available, the student numbers were again low. African-American students showed a retention rate of 100% for 6 students. Hispanic Latino/a students had a retention rate of 88% and White students were retained at the rate of 90.5%. On paper, there is an equity gap for Hispanic Latino/a students but that is for 2 semesters with less than 50 students and it is still a higher retention rate than that college-wide.

Success in 100% online classes showed Hispanic Latino/a students with a success rate of 74%, African-American students at 100% (6 students over two semesters), and White students with an 87.5% success rate.

On campus classes had more significant numbers of students. The ABA requires that 9 units in the PARA program be taught in a synchronous format. This is a recent change thus the move to online in electives since 2018. The retention rate for African-American students was at 90.5%, 90% for Hispanic Latino/a students, and 93.5% for White students. In terms of success rates, African-American students succeeded at a rate of 86%, Hispanic Latino/a students at 80%, and White students at 89.5%. We have professional instructors who have primarily been with the program for 10+ years. This experience in the classroom is evident in the data. But, our work is not done.

The conclusion is that the Hybrid class is not the best way for students in any demographic group to succeed. The format of this class should be reviewed. The online classes need to have a few more semesters of data collected to make sure these numbers are representative. The online classes will also benefit from the instructors having more semesters of online teaching under their belts. The overall success rate of 75% for the whole program can be improved by focusing on professional development for instructors and having only electives being offered online.

The webpage for the Paralegal Studies program should include clear and conspicuous statements that completing the required English class (ENG 120) is significantly tied to student success. (This has been requested.) Counseling, both general and career, should be reminded about the importance of advising students to complete their English requirements before entering the program. This advice is currently in the college catalog pages for Paralegal Studies but should be re-emphasized in other places.

Q26

III.17. What mechanisms are in place to ensure regular and effective contact (see the Guide to Best Practices in Online) within online courses across the discipline or department?

There are some positive products to have come out of the COVID shutdown. One is the extensive use of Zoom. Even online instructors have used Zoom for extra office hours. It is foreseeable that Zoom will become a larger component of online classes as a way to better connect with students. This will be explored and discussed at the next discipline meeting. The recording feature of Zoom has been noted by most instructors as a valuable component and many intend to continue to use more recordings in their online classes.

All online faculty members (before SP20) made extensive use of the Discussion feature in Canvas as well as the email link in Canvas. All have participated and completed the Canvas and online training so all tools possible can be utilized.

Q27

III.18. What innovative tools and strategies are you using in your online courses to engage students and support student success?

The @One online equity training was phenomenal for experiencing tools and strategies to support student success. Many of the tools have been implemented such as introduction letters before a class starts to the use of a liquid syllabus. Strategies include more interactive, low risk work such as word gardens, and more instructor notes placed in Canvas.

One instructor has already implemented a liquid syllabus in their Canvas class. Others have revamped their syllabi and other critical documents to give more supportive and caring messages. These have been shared program-wide and, the prior director, is working with individual instructors to assist in this process.

Page 10: IV. Degree and Certificate Programs

Q28

Yes

IV.1. Does your program offer any degree/certificate programs?

Page 11: IV. Degree and Certificate Programs continued

Q29

IV.2. Please upload for each degree and certificate indicating how many awards were conferred in the past five years

degrees awarded.docx (11.9KB)

Q30

IV.3. Please indicate when each degree and certificate was last reviewed and updated (semester):

The degree was last updated in Fall of 2020 after the final elective in the specialization track was approved by the curriculum committee.

Q31

IV.4. How are these degrees/certificates meeting the needs of students, and/or articulation with four-year institutions?

The first PARA graduate to enter PLNU finished their BA degree and entered law school. The PLNU transfer agreement with PARA was negotiated over a period of two years. These articulation agreements are required by the ABA for community colleges offering only AS degrees.

The program is currently working with National University to create a transfer path for PARA students.

The State of California has very specific requirements for a person to call themselves a paralegal.

CHAPTER 5.6. Paralegals [6450 - 6456]

(Chapter 5.6 added by Stats. 2000, Ch. 439, Sec. 1.)

(c) A paralegal shall possess at least one of the following:

- (1) A certificate of completion of a paralegal program approved by the American Bar Association.
- (2) A certificate of completion of a paralegal program at, or a degree from, a post secondary institution that requires the successful completion of a minimum of 24 semester, or equivalent, units in law-related courses and that has been accredited by a national or regional accrediting organization or approved by the Bureau for Private Post secondary and Vocational Education.

Q32

IV.5. Are there any changes planned if the degree/certificates are not meeting these needs?

The degree is meeting the needs of the student, employers, and the requirements of the State of California.

Q33

Yes

IV.6. Can students complete the degree/certificate requirements within a two-year period? **requirement of Title 5, California Code of Regulations and Accreditation Standard II.A.

Page 12: IV. Degree and Certificate Programs continued

Q34

IV.7. How are you currently assessing your PLOs?

Program-level SLOs are mapped to course SLOs; therefore, all PLOs are assessed through the course SLO assessment process. All courses are assessed in the fall semester following the three-year cycle in the BOT SLO assessment plan. If a course is only taught in the spring, it is assessed that semester. The results are discussed at the discipline meeting the following semester. The creation of the Legal Specialization Tracks has made tracking the SLOs a challenge but assessment is occurring.

Q35

Yes

IV.8. Are the PLOs in the catalog an accurate reflection of the department or discipline's current learning objectives?

Q36

Yes

IV.9. Are the PLOs mapped to the course SLOs?

Page 13: IV. Degree and Certificate Programs continued

Q37

IV.10. How is your program helping students explore careers in your program area?

The program has revised its webpage on the department website to include more information on careers, the specialization tracks, and student testimonials.

The Cuyamaca Association of Paralegal Students (CAPS) continues to hold virtual meetings and events despite the COVID limitations. The association has always held meetings with invited guests such as legal recruiters, legal temporary hiring agencies, guest speakers who are practicing attorneys, and speakers from the San Diego Association of Paralegals.

Two classes – PARA 100, Introduction to Paralegal Studies, and BUS 125, Business Law are designed to help students understand the profession and their interests within it. PARA 100 gives an overview of the judicial system and the role of the paralegal in it. The course also spends time teaching the skills needed for success in the profession and the job opportunities in it. BUS 125 gives a more in-depth overview of the law with an emphasis on Contracts. This class exposes PARA students to different areas of the law with the hope that they will find an interest and pursue that within the Specialty Tracks.

It is difficult to judge demand. No PARA class has been cancelled and only one Business Law class was cancelled SP20. Students continue to enroll at around the same rate. There may be a tiny drop off in enrollment as Southwest College's paralegal program was approved by the ABA in 2019.

Q38

IV.11. What do the latest labor market data reveal about the careers (including those for transfer students) for which your program prepares students? Labor market data may be sourced from the Program Review Data webpage and California Employment Development Department. You can also contact the Institutional Effectiveness, Success, and Equity Office to access additional labor market information related to your program.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, California employed 35,040 paralegals in May, 2019 at an annual mean wage of \$61,810. The field is expected to grow by 10% (much faster than average) in the next 9 years. USBLS also lists the San Diego-Carlsbad area's rates of employment as of May, 2019 from 380 to 29,030 jobs depending on where in the area the employers are located.

The California Employment Development Department estimates a 12.8% job growth by 2026 for paralegals in San Diego County. 35% of employers require 1-12 months of experience which confirms the importance of the PARA Internship course, which is an elective.

Q39

IV.12. What are the labor market implications for the program's curriculum (degrees, certificates, courses)?

The program's curriculum is exactly right. Not only is the subject matter content of each required course that which is used by all attorneys, the Specialization Tracks should make a student graduate with little to no experience more marketable in a specialized law firm.

Q40

Respondent skipped this question

If your program has labor market data to include in your program review, please use the upload button below to attach the file.

Page 14: IV. Degree and Certificate Programs continued

Q41

IV.13. Please describe your program's strengths:

- A. Faculty – the part time faculty who teach have been with the program from 1992 to 2018. This makes for an incredibly stable core but also “new blood” for vitality.
 - B. ABA approval – Most employers look for either a BA or graduation from an ABA approved program.
-

Q42

IV.14. Please describe your program's challenges:

- A. Lack of full time faculty – the ABA requires full time faculty to direct the program. Before the ABA gave its initial approval, the college had to commit to hiring such a faculty member. Besides the ABA requirements, the amount of time required to administer the program and make necessary adaptations to meet job market needs is significant.
 - B. Inability to meet the evolving technology requirements in modern law offices and the Courts.
 - C. Southwest College's Paralegal program was approved by the ABA in 2019. Over the years, a few of their students had transferred to Cuyamaca in order to graduate from an ABA Approved program. This will no longer happen.
-

Q43

IV.15. Please describe external influences that affect your program (both positively and negatively):

The ABA is a blessing and a curse. The amount of data to be collected is significant. The reporting is similar to an accreditation report. But graduation from an ABA approved program is critical for a student who wishes to work in the profession and has no prior legal experience. The ABA's requirements are generally over and above what is required for this CPR, which means this and the re-approval report covers all necessary information for a complete review of the program.

The rapid expanded use of technology given the mandated lockdowns and social distancing has exceeded the ability of the program to keep up. In order to help students graduating in SP20 and FA20, the program director offered a free 2 year membership in the National Legal Technology Society to any student graduating or who wishes to start learning legal software programs as long as they have completed 2 classes in the major. However, these memberships were acquired through a Strong Workforce grant and the future of that is not guaranteed. The program will have to explore how to meet the technology requirements of Paralegal employers.

Q44

IV.16. Given these factors, what opportunities exist for the program to advance student success and equity in the next 4 years?

Three faculty members completed the @One Equity training as well as the Strong Workforce Institute training on Equity. One of these three, Joan Rettinger, also completed the EMTLI curriculum. One faculty member is signed up for the @One in February 2021. It is a goal that the balance of the PARA faculty, 4, complete some equity training.

The program entered into a subscription agreement with Continuing Education of the Bar (CEB) for 5 classes thus eliminating the need for textbooks. Another class has curated articles put into Canvas by the instructors. Two Business Law instructors use OpenStax books. The result is a tremendous financial savings for PARA students. (And for BUS 125, BUS students also get a savings!)

The library in the PARA classroom was expanded so that students would have access to books even after the LRC closed in the evening.

Part-time office hours and the use of embedded tutors has been expanded and can continue as long as the CE division has Strong Workforce funds.

The program has "Cliff" type notes for many of the legal classes that were available on a check out basis. This has ceased due to COVID but were very helpful to students especially in the legal research and writing classes. The program along with the Department Chair are working to find a way to make those available to students now rather than wait until the college resumes on campus classes.

Page 15: V. Previous Goals

Q45

Previous Goal 1:

Retain ABA Approval

Q46

Goal Status

In Progress - Please describe the goal and action steps in the 4-Year Goals section (Section VI)

Page 16: V. Previous Goals continued

Q47

Please describe the results or explain the reason for the deletion/completion of the goal:

Respondent skipped this question

Page 17: V. Previous Goals continued

Q48

Would you like to submit another previous goal?

No

Page 18: V. Previous Goals continued

Q49

Respondent skipped this question

Previous Goal 2:

Q50

Respondent skipped this question

Goal Status

Page 19: V. Previous Goals continued

Q51

Respondent skipped this question

Please describe the results or explain the reason for the deletion/completion of the goal:

Page 20: V. Previous Goals continued

Q52

Respondent skipped this question

Would you like to submit another previous goal?

Page 21: V. Previous Goals continued

Q53

Respondent skipped this question

Previous Goal 3:

Q54

Respondent skipped this question

Goal Status

Page 22: V. Previous Goals continued

Q55

Respondent skipped this question

Please describe the results or explain the reason for the deletion/completion of the goal:

Page 23: V. Previous Goals continued

Q56

Respondent skipped this question

Would you like to submit another previous goal?

Page 24: V. Previous Goals continued

Q57

Respondent skipped this question

Previous Goal 4:

Q58

Respondent skipped this question

Goal Status

Page 25: V. Previous Goals continued

Q59

Respondent skipped this question

Please describe the results or explain the reason for the deletion/completion of the goal:

Page 26: VI. 4-Year Goals

Q60

Goal 1:

Prepare for the ABA Re-Approval Report, Subsequent Site Visit, In Order to Retain ABA Approval

Q61

Guided Student Pathways

Which College Strategic Goal does this department goal most directly support? (Check only one)

Q62

Please describe how this goal advances the college strategic goal(s) identified above:

The requirements for ABA approval actually encompass the elements of Guided Student Pathways.

Clarify the Path: The program constantly updates its webpage so students, new or returning, have the latest information. The program director relays information about any curricular changes to Counseling.

Enter the Path: The program director advises students on a one on one basis to help them understand what is expected of paralegals in the profession, expectations of PARA students, expectations of PARA faculty, and how to plan their PARA courses after they have the Educational Plan.

Stay on the Path: The program has several tools it uses to help students move forward. Tutors, both from the ARC and Writing Center, are "employed" and made available to students especially embedded tutors. The student organization, Cuyamaca Association for Paralegal Students (CAPS), also holds regular meetings to keep students involved with each other as well as to hear various presentations. All-Hands meetings involving students, faculty and the advisory committee members are held in the Fall semester.

Ensure learning: The program had developed a capstone portfolio project to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses as well as give them a tool to help in landing a job. This has been put on hold due to the COVID logistics of checking each student's portfolio. Staff from the career center and legal recruiters are brought into classes or CAPS meetings for sharing with students what employers are looking for in entry level paralegals.

These are only a few of the support efforts of the Paralegal Studies Program for Guided Pathways. All are reported to the ABA in the Interim Reports and the Re-Approval Reports.

The program also supports Organizational Health through its efforts to retain ABA approval. Here is a good summary of the value of this approval (MTI College)

"About the American Bar Association

The American Bar Association (ABA) has played an integral role in the development of the legal profession. The association's goals are to serve members by providing benefits, programs and services to promote professional growth and quality of life, to improve the profession of law, to enhance diversity in the legal field, and to advance the rule of law.

The ABA recognizes the vital role paralegals play in the legal field, and their approval program is designed to ensure that educational institutions meet the necessary guidelines for preparing paralegals to perform their work in a way that improves the delivery of legal services in the American justice system.

ABA Approval Criteria

In order to qualify for American Bar Association approval, paralegal education programs must meet a strict set of guidelines.

A

pproved education programs must be planned in cooperation with paralegal organizations and with potential employers and other experts in the paralegal discipline.

Schools are required to conduct needs assessments and feasibility studies, not only when starting a paralegal program, but also when adding new program options. Participant schools are required to truthfully represent academic goals, program options and services.

To earn ABA approval, a paralegal curriculum must help students develop professional competence, and the school's instructional methodology must ensure interaction between students and faculty, offer meaningful and prompt feedback, and provide practical assignments designed to develop real-world skills.

The curriculum must also respond to the changing requirements of the legal community and must regularly be evaluated and improved to make sure those evolving needs are being addressed.

What ABA Approval Means for Students

Obtaining ABA approval is no small feat, and students can generally rely on this endorsement as a hallmark of quality in a paralegal educational institution.

ABA-approved schools employ highly qualified professors with field-tested experience and offer a comprehensive curriculum that imparts the skills needed to succeed as a paralegal.

ABA-approved schools also offer career assistance, which can give recent graduates a valuable head start toward obtaining desirable positions. Plus, many potential employers prize graduates of ABA-approved schools because these candidates are reliably competent and well-versed in law.”

Q63

Please indicate how this goal was informed by SLO assessment results, PLO assessment results, student achievement data, or other qualitative or quantitative data (from any source):

This goal was informed by the labor market data, members of the Advisory Committee and the results of various Employer Focus Groups. The required Graduate Surveys also indicate the value to the graduate applying for a job to come from an ABA approved program.

Q64

Action Steps for the Next Year: If you are requesting resources in order to achieve this goal, please list them below as action steps and specific the type of request (e.g., submit technology request for new laptop computers).

The next Re-Approval Report to the ABA will be due in April, 2022. The program can start working on the report as soon as the ABA gives it direction, generally in Fall.

Q65

How will this goal be evaluated?

The ABA will send a site team to visit the program for Re-Approval. If the ABA House of Delegates approves the recommendation of the site team and reapproves the program, that will be the evaluation.

Q66

Yes

Would you like to propose a new, 4-year goal?

Page 27: VI. 4-Year Goals continued

Q67

Goal 2:

Identify funds and faculty to strengthen Equity training

Q68

Student Validation & Engagement

Which College Strategic Goal does this department goal most directly support? (Check only one)

Q69

Please describe how this goal advances the college strategic goal(s) identified above:

Student Validation & Engagement has as one of its activities "Providing robust professional development opportunities focused on culturally competent curriculum and cultural awareness". This program goal seeks to meet this college goal by giving faculty the opportunities to learn about aspects of equity and how to incorporate activities into their courses that advance equity.

The data (PR, SWI, EMTLI) show that the program has some equity gaps. Lessening or eliminating these equity gaps, especially in the Hispanic/Latino/a demographic, is beneficial for the students, staff, faculty, and thus the organization.

Q70

Please indicate how this goal was informed by SLO assessment results, PLO assessment results, student achievement data, or other qualitative or quantitative data (from any source):

This goal was informed by the faculty who have completed the various types of Equity training, incorporated tools and techniques into their courses, and surveyed the results. It is all qualitative data.

The data from PR, the SWI, and the EMTLI show that there are some equity gaps in this program in terms of retention and success. This has already been discussed. This is one proposed solution.

The program also looks to the ABA for positions on various issues. The ABA's Diversity Committee takes the lead on equity issues relating to the legal workplace as well as providing training. An example:

August 27, 2020 Articles

Summer Spotlight on Diversity and Inclusion: Heather Lonian

The chair of Stone Pigman's diversity committee has spoken to several prominent media outlets in the New Orleans area about promoting antiracism and inclusivity in the workplace.

By Fritz Metzinger

(Stone Pigman is a large law firm)

This is in line with the college's equity goals and its current anti-racism efforts. The program will continue to engage in activities and training that support the college's policies.

Q71

Action Steps for the Next Year: If you are requesting resources in order to achieve this goal, please list them below as action steps and specific the type of request (e.g., submit technology request for new laptop computers).

After identification comes implementation. With no FT faculty in the program, it will be incumbent on the department chair and interim program director to work on identification and implementation, both of which may require more time than what a PT faculty member as interim director would have.

Q72

How will this goal be evaluated?

This goal is not about implementation but about identification. In a subsequent program review, if the training can be implemented, then the data should show if it is successful. But this is not the goal for this year as there is no FT faculty to take on both the program management and implementing new actions.

Q73

Yes

Would you like to propose a new, 4-year goal?

Page 28: VI. 4-Year Goals continued

Q74

Goal 3:

Hire FT PARA Faculty to replace sole FT Faculty (Sessom) who retired 12/2020

Q75

Organizational Health

Which College Strategic Goal does this department goal most directly support? (Check only one)

Q76

Please describe how this goal advances the college strategic goal(s) identified above:

This report has discussed the importance of ABA approval to the students and legal community. The ABA requires that the director of the program be full time. Of the 5 ABA approved paralegal programs in San Diego County, none have PT faculty or a non-PARA faculty or Dean serve as their program directors. A preliminary search of the ABA directory for approved schools (260 nationwide) shows all directed by full-time faculty.

This hiring would allow the program to have an excellent chance of retaining ABA approval which means that graduates have a better opportunity to acquire employment.

Q77

Please indicate how this goal was informed by SLO assessment results, PLO assessment results, student achievement data, or other qualitative or quantitative data (from any source):

This CPR details many things about this program, both the good and the bad. One could say that the equity efforts made over many years is paying off (number of non-traditional students as an example). Most of the PARA faculty have taken various types of equity training and this will continue. But the progress to date, was with full time faculty as the program director.

Here is what the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE) says about the director position:

“Program Director

Quality paralegal education programs provide adequate release time, funding for professional development opportunities, and administrative support for the program director to develop, monitor, and accomplish the goals and objectives of the program, as well as assess the program’s effectiveness in achieving these goals and objectives. The director is primarily responsible for the paralegal program. A program director is a legal professional or other similarly-qualified person appropriately credentialed and in good standing in his or her profession, with knowledge, involvement and understanding of the paralegal profession and paralegal education.”

Here is what the ABA says about the program director:

G-402 A full-time member of the faculty or the administration of the institution must be responsible for the direction of the program.

“A. The institution must ensure that the total time and effort devoted to program leadership are adequate to accomplish the following functions that relate to Guideline requirements:

1. Defining major program objectives;
2. Representing the program throughout the administrative and academic structure of the institution;
3. Determining the financial needs and formulating the program budget;
4. Attracting, selecting, and retaining qualified faculty and encouraging faculty professional development;
5. Advising program students;
6. Assuring the proper organization and operation of the advisory committee;
7. Maintaining liaison with the legal, paralegal, and paralegal education communities;
8. Identifying and responding to the occupational and educational needs of the community;
9. Arranging and monitoring internships, if offered;
10. Handling career efforts or coordinating efforts with the central career office;
11. Evaluating the adequacy of the library/information resources;
12. Coordinating the educational program; and
13. Evaluating the overall program, including regular assessment of the extent to which a program is meeting its stated goals and objectives as required in G-301.E.

B. These functions may be divided among two or more persons as appropriate to the institutional setting and the program enrollment.”

On a short term basis, the interim Director (part time instructor), the department chair, and the division dean will serve to satisfy G-402. However, neither the chair nor the dean have the background to handle the duties with the exception of #3. The Interim Director is employed full time in her own law practice as well as teaching in the program.

When the program had its first team site visit for the initial approval, a conditional of approval was that the college hire FT faculty to serve as program director. It is not expected that this position will change.

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Q78

Action Steps for the Next Year: If you are requesting resources in order to achieve this goal, please list them below as action steps and specify the type of request (e.g., submit technology request for new laptop computers).

Request for Full Time Faculty will be prepared and submitted.

Q79

How will this goal be evaluated?

This goal will be evaluated when a Full Time instructor is hired for the Paralegal Studies Program.

Q80

No

Would you like to propose a new, 4-year goal?

Q81 Respondent skipped this question

Goal 4:

Q82 Respondent skipped this question

Which College Strategic Goal does this department goal most directly support? (Check only one)

Q83 Respondent skipped this question

Please describe how this goal advances the college strategic goal(s) identified above:

Q84 Respondent skipped this question

Please indicate how this goal was informed by SLO assessment results, PLO assessment results, student achievement data, or other qualitative or quantitative data (from any source):

Q85 Respondent skipped this question

Action Steps for the Next Year: If you are requesting resources in order to achieve this goal, please list them below as action steps and specify the type of request (e.g., submit technology request for new laptop computers).

Q86 Respondent skipped this question

How will this goal be evaluated?

Page 30: VII. Resources Needed to Fully Achieve Goal(s)

Q87 Faculty Resource Needs

What resources is your program requesting this year to achieve the program's goals? (Check all that apply)

Page 32: Final Check

Q88 Respondent skipped this question

Are you ready to submit your program review? If you would like to go back and review a section, select a section and click "Next."
