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Paralegal Studies Student Survey: Spring 2022

College of the Canyons

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Institutional Research, Planning, and
Institutional Effectiveness

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Introduction and Methods

At the request of the Paralegal Studies department, the Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office conducted a survey to gather data from students enrolled in Paralegal Studies classes in Spring 2022. The purpose of this survey was to assess satisfaction with various aspects of the Paralegal Studies program in order to help direct program planning. These data will also be used for reporting requirements for the American Bar Association (ABA).

Surveys were initially distributed through Survey Monkey on April 11, 2022; with reminders sent on April 18, 2022 and May 2, 2022. To improve the response rate, surveys were also distributed through Survey Monkey link by Paralegal Studies faculty members to their students between May 3, 2022 and May 11, 2022. Of the 151 students who were invited to participate in the survey, completed surveys were received from 96 students, resulting in a response rate of 64 %. Thirty-three respondents replied to the initial email link (34%) and sixty-three respondents replied to the faculty provided link (66%).

Research Results

Awareness of the Paralegal Studies Program

Respondents were asked to indicate how they heard about the Paralegal Studies program. More than half of the respondents (53%) indicated that they heard about the program through the College of the Canyons website, followed by web research and counselors (15%, each), recommended by a friend (8%), and from a website other than the COC website (4%).

Five percent of the respondents (5 respondents) indicated that they heard about the Paralegal Studies program through “other” sources; specifically, through the Bar Association (1 respondent), COC Catalog (1 respondent), California Community College’s website (1 respondent), COC Pathway to Law School Program (1 respondent), and the through a Paralegal at a law office (1 respondent).

Course Length Preference

The majority of respondents indicated that they prefer to take 16-week courses (72%), followed by 8-week courses (47%) and 5-week courses (9%).

Satisfaction with Course Modality

The majority of respondents indicated that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their current course modality (see Table 1). Less than 10% of the respondents indicated that they were “dissatisfied” or “very dissatisfied” with their current course modality.

Table 1. Satisfaction with Course Modalities offered in Paralegal Studies

	Very Satisfied/ Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied/ Very Dissatisfied
OnlineLive (Zoom only) n=79	89%	4%	7%
OnlineLive (Zoom) and Online (Canvas) n=84	88%	5%	7%
Online (Canvas) n=87	86%	6%	8%

Recommended Sequence of Courses

The majority of respondents (69%) indicated that they are aware of the recommended sequence of courses in Paralegal Studies. Of the respondents that are aware of the recommended sequence of courses (N=66), the majority (71%) indicated that they follow the recommended sequence of courses. Of the respondents that follow the recommended sequence of courses (N=47), the majority (81%) indicated that they find the sequence of Paralegal Studies courses “helpful or “very helpful”, while 2% indicated a “neutral” response and 17# indicated that the sequence of Paralegal Studies courses are “somewhat helpful”. No respondents indicated that the sequence of the Paralegal Studies courses are “not at all helpful”.

Satisfaction with Various Aspects of the Paralegal Program

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with various aspects of the Paralegal Studies program. More than 80% of the respondents indicated that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the course content, website information, faculty (overall), textbooks, help when needed, and initial contact with the program (see Table 2). The area with the lowest satisfaction was dining facilities (12% were very dissatisfied/dissatisfied), also had the highest percentage of respondents indicating a “neutral” response (32%).

Table 2. Respondents’ Satisfaction with Various Aspects of the Paralegal Program

	Very Satisfied/ Satisfied	Neutral	Very Dissatisfied/ Dissatisfied
Course content	88%	8%	3%
Initial contact with the program	86%	11%	4%
Website information	86%	7%	7%
Department Chair	85%	11%	5%
Faculty, overall	85%	9%	6%
Help when I need it	85%	8%	7%
Textbooks	85%	13%	2%
Classrooms	78%	18%	4%
Contact with registration	78%	16%	6%
Library staff	76%	15%	9%
Westlaw	76%	17%	7%
Library resources	74%	20%	6%
Placement/internship services	70%	23%	7%
Dining facilities	56%	32%	12%

Note: Analysis does not include respondents that indicated “N/A”.

As indicated in Table 2, responses from Spring 2022 differed from results from Spring 2021. Specifically, the percentage of respondents that are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with textbooks *increased* by 7 percentage points in Spring 2022. The percentage of respondents that indicated that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” decreased by more than 5 percentage points in Spring 2022 for the following aspects of the Paralegal program:

- Classrooms (decreased 9 percentage points in Spring 2022)
- Dining facilities (decreased 7 percentage points in Spring 2022)
- Faculty, overall (decreased 7 percentage points in Spring 2022)

Table 3. Respondents’ that are “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with Various Aspects of the Paralegal Program in 2022 as compared to 2021

	Spring 2021	Spring 2022
Course content	91%	88%
Initial contact with the program	88%	86%
Website information	90%	86%
Department Chair	88%	85%
Faculty, overall	92%	85%
Help when I need it	88%	85%
Textbooks	78%	85%
Classrooms	87%	78%
Contact with registration	80%	78%
Library staff	79%	76%
Westlaw	80%	75%
Library resources	79%	74%
Placement/internship services	73%	70%
Dining facilities	63%	56%

Note: Analysis does not include respondents that indicated “N/A”

Alumni Association

More than half of the respondents (54%) indicated that if the Paralegal Studies program started an alumni association they would plan to become a member after graduating from the program, while 42% of the respondents are not sure yet and 4% of the respondents would not plan to become a member of the alumni association.

Employment Information

Current Employment

Of the respondents that provided their current employment status (N=95), 36% indicated that they are employed full-time, 33% indicated that they are unemployed, and 31% indicated that they are employed part-time.

Employment in the Legal Field

Of the respondents indicating that they are currently employed, the majority of respondents (78%) indicated that they are not currently employed in the legal field, while 22% of the respondents indicated that they are currently employed in the legal field.

Working as a Paralegal

Of the respondents indicating that they are currently employed and working in the legal field (N=15), the majority of respondents (77% – 11 respondents) indicated that they are not currently working as a paralegal and only seeking a degree, while 22% (3 respondents) indicated that they are currently working as a paralegal.

Additional Comments

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments or suggestions they may have for the Paralegal program. Twenty-three respondents provided comments and suggestions; specifically, 17 respondents provided positive comments including appreciation for faculty (8 respondents) and appreciation for the online option of the program (4 respondents). Three respondents indicated that the workload is intense and two respondents indicated concern with specific courses/instructors.

Demographics

Race/Ethnicity. Thirty-five percent of the respondents indicated that their ethnicity is Hispanic/Latinx, followed by White (32%), multi-ethnicity (8%), Asian/Pacific Islander (7%), African American/Black (4%), and Filipinx (1%). Two percent of the respondents (2 respondents) indicated “other” ethnicities; specifically, Armenian. Eleven percent of the respondents declined to state their ethnicity.

Education. More than one-third of the respondents (42%) indicated that they have some college, followed by a Bachelor’s degree (26%), Associate’s degree (18%), Master’s degree (7%), and non-ABA certificate (2%). Three respondents indicated that they have a high school diploma, 1 respondent has a vocational license and one respondent has a Juris Doctor.

Current Enrollment. Over half of the respondents (53%) indicated that they are currently enrolled as full-time students, while 47% of the respondents indicated that they are enrolled part-time.

Recommendations

Upon review of the results, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Consider implications of results on how students learned about the program for future marketing and outreach.
- Explore factors contributing to a decrease in satisfaction with the following aspects of the Paralegal program:
 - Classrooms
 - Dining facilities
 - Faculty
- Consider options for creating an alumni association.

For questions, or more detailed information on this research brief, contact Alicia LeValley, Assistant Research Analyst at alicia.levelley@canyons.edu or Preeta Saxena, Ph.D., Director Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at preeta.saxena@canyons.edu.