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Paralegal Studies Student Survey: Spring 2024

College of the Canyons

Santa Clarita Community College District
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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 during Spring 2024. 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 May 6, 2024 with a reminder sent on May 13, 2024. To improve the response rate, surveys were also distributed through Survey Monkey link by Paralegal Studies faculty members to their students between May 6, 2024 and May 30, 2024. Of the 206 students who were invited to participate in the survey, 69 students completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 34% as compared to 67 students (46% response rate) in Spring 2023. Among those who responded in Spring 2024, 32 (46%) respondents replied using the initial email link and 37 (54%) respondents replied to the faculty provided link.

Research Results

Awareness of the Paralegal Studies Program

Respondents were asked to indicate how they heard about the Paralegal Studies program. Forty-three percent of the respondents indicated that they heard about the program through the College of the Canyons website, followed by web research (28%), counselors (10%), recommended by a friend (6%), and from a program graduate and someone at work (1%, each).

Ten percent of the respondents (7 students) indicated that they heard about the Paralegal Studies program through “other” sources; specifically, through the ABA website/certification (2 students), family members (2 students), personal research (2 students), and the Cal-Law Scholars Program (1 student).

Course Length Preference

More than half of the respondents indicated that they prefer to take 16-week courses (57%), followed by 8-week courses (36%) and 5-week courses (7%).

Satisfaction with Course Modality

The majority of respondents indicated that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their current course modality (see Table 1).

Table 1. Satisfaction with Course Modalities offered in Paralegal Studies

	Very Satisfied/ Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied/ Very Dissatisfied
Online (Canvas) N=60	95%	3%	2%
Online Live (Zoom) and OnlineLive (Canvas) N=64	91%	6%	3%
OnlineLive (Zoom only) N=55	91%	5%	4%
Hyflex N=35	83%	14%	3%

Recommended Sequence of Courses

The majority of respondents (87%) 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=60), the majority (78%) indicated that they follow the recommended sequence of courses. Of the respondents that follow the recommended sequence of courses (N=46), the majority (70%) indicated that they find the sequence of Paralegal Studies courses “helpful or “very helpful”, while 9% indicated that the sequence of Paralegal Studies courses are “somewhat helpful” and 22% indicated a “neutral” response. 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 75% of the respondents indicated that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with all surveyed aspects of the Paralegal program (see Table 2).

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

	Very Satisfied/ Satisfied	Neutral	Very Dissatisfied/ Dissatisfied
Department Chair (N=51)	96%	2%	2%
Course content (N=66)	95%	3%	2%
Initial contact with the program (N=64)	95%	3%	2%
Contact with registration (N=64)	91%	6%	3%
Website information (N=64)	91%	6%	3%
Faculty, overall (N=66)	89%	9%	2%
Westlaw (N=51)	89%	11%	0%
Help when I need it (N=64)	88%	11%	2%
Library resources (N=45)	87%	11%	2%
Textbooks (N=66)	83%	12%	5%
Library staff (N=38)	82%	18%	0%
Placement/internship services (N=45)	78%	20%	2%

Note: Table excludes respondents that indicated "N/A" to satisfaction questions

As indicated in Table 2, responses from Spring 2024 differed from results from Spring 2023. Specifically, the percentage of respondents that are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the following aspects of the Paralegal program decreased by more than 5 percentage points in Spring 2024:

- Placement/internship services (decreased 11 percentage points in Spring 2024)
- Faculty, overall (decreased 8 percentage points in Spring 2024)
- Library staff (decreased 6 percentage points in Spring 2024)

Table 3. Respondents' that are "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with Various Aspects of the Paralegal Program in 2024 as compared to 2023

	Spring 2023	Spring 2024
Department Chair	93%	96%
Course content	97%	95%
Initial contact with the program	97%	95%
Contact with registration	90%	91%
Website information	94%	91%
Faculty, overall	97%	89%
Westlaw	88%	89%
Help when I need it	92%	88%
Library resources	88%	87%
Textbooks	86%	83%
Library staff	88%	82%
Placement/internship services	89%	78%

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

Alumni Association

More than two-thirds of the respondents (68%) indicated that if the Paralegal Studies program started an alumni association they would plan to become a member after graduating from the program, while 24% of the respondents are not sure yet and 8% 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=69), 51% indicated that they are employed full-time, 29% indicated that they are employed part-time, and 20% indicated that they are unemployed.

Employment in the Legal Field

Of the respondents indicating that they are currently employed (N=55), more than half of the respondents (55%) indicated that they are not currently employed in the legal field, while 45% 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=25), just over half of the respondents (52%) indicated that they are not currently working as a paralegal, while 48% indicated that they are currently working as a paralegal and only seeking a degree.

Additional Comments

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments or suggestions they may have for the Paralegal program. Twenty-four respondents provided comments and suggestions; specifically, respondents provided positive comments including appreciation for the faculty and the program (13 students). Other comments included the need for additional classes/instructors (6 students), frustration with faculty/teaching methods (3 students), requests for assistance with internships (2 students), and requests for extended/expanded access to Westlaw (2 students). Please see Appendix A for detailed comments.

Demographics

Race/Ethnicity. Of the 66 total respondents, forty-one percent indicated that their ethnicity is Latinx, followed by White Non-Hispanic (27%), multi-ethnicity (9%), African American/Black (8%), Filipinx (3%), Asian (2%) and Middle Eastern (1%). Nine percent of the respondents declined to state their ethnicity.

Education. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they have some college, followed by a Bachelor's degree (29%), AA/AS degree (19%), and Master's degree (10%). Three percent of the respondents indicated that they are currently enrolled in high school.

Current Enrollment. Just over half of the respondents (52%) indicated that they are currently enrolled as part-time students, while 48% of the respondents indicated that they are enrolled full-time.

Recommendations

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

- Consider adding a follow-up question on the reason why some students do not follow the recommended sequence of courses.
- Consider implications of results on how students learned about the program for future marketing and outreach.
- Consider ways to expand satisfaction with placement/internship services.
- 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.levolley@canyons.edu or Preeta Saxena, Ph.D., Director Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at preeta.saxena@canyons.edu.

Appendix A: Text of Open-ended Questions

Question #15: Please provide any additional comments or suggestions you may have regarding the Paralegal program.

Responses
[Faculty members] are the best instructors!
[Faculty member] is incredibly helpful and I always know I can ask [the faculty member] questions when feeling uncertain.
Family Law 150 course with [faculty member] was a class I would not recommend to anyone that wants to learn. Class had no structure, no feedback & trouble communicating with professor
Great program!
I am enjoying the program a lot and I really like the professors I've had so far.
-I kind of feel like there needs to be 2 Legal Writing classes: both taken a semester apart at minimum. I think that would help make sure we know what we're doing. -The Legal Research course deals with WestLaw, but we lose access to it after the class ends. The Library Databases gives us access to NexisUni, but we aren't taught how to use it.

Question #15: Please provide any additional comments or suggestions you may have regarding the Paralegal program. *Continued*

Responses
I really enjoy that it is online because I do not live in the area. I also like that because it is online, it is very accommodating to my life schedule. I would like more help finding internships or job placements outside of Los Angeles [sic] area. There are some but not as many to [sic] far north, for example Santa Barbara County or in Stanislaus County.
I would like more time in Class to review the Chapters. It would be nice to have the option to have a study group with the Professor maybe once a week to ask questions. But in order for it to be fruitful, there would need to be a minimum number of people or the Professor would not conduct a study group.
I would like to see more available counselors to guide you through the program like what classes to take and what else I would need.
If possible, implementing legal internships for students who specifically attend COC would be very helpful.
It seems to be a struggle to get into classes. Having a greater availability or reducing classes to 8 weeks, allowing for more class availability per semester, would be extremely beneficial in keeping students on track to graduate in 2 years. As it stands, I may have to prolong graduation because of class availability.
It would be helpful to have more classes (or available seats in classes) needed in interim semesters such as Winter and Summer that is needed in the recommended structure of courses and their specific order intended courses for this degree are set in. Classes fill extremely quickly and unfortunately makes it hard to follow in the order and sequence they should be taken.
My professors have been amazing, and they care about students success. But particularly adjunct faculty should be monitored as there might be some that aren't able to keep up with organization and grading in their courses. Most faculty are wonderful at COC!
n/as
Overall, I am very satisfied with the program. [Faculty members] are wonderful! However, a second Family Law professor would be great.
Please have more than a single professor teach [specific] classes so that students have more options when registering for paralegal courses, especially required ones. I am not satisfied with either the teaching or organization of the current instructor and this will negatively affect my ability to complete my paralegal certificate at COC.
-providing of morning classes would be great addition to the program. -a selection of classes -a wider range of professors -tutor assistance for paralegal program.

Question #15: Please provide any additional comments or suggestions you may have regarding the Paralegal program. *Continued*

Responses
Students could benefit greatly from expanded access to Westlaw. Now, we only have access for the legal research class. It would help us greatly to have another term (at least) in which we could get used to using Westlaw.
The fact that College of the Canyons offers to sponsor the students so that they may attend paralegal conferences, such as the ones offered by the LAPA organization, are very helpful and appreciated.
The Paralegal program at COC is amazing. For the most part, the professors are all amazing and genuinely care about their students. Additionally, they are all highly qualified and knowledgeable in their fields.
The professors and the dean are incredibly helpful; there are no words to describe their assistance.
The program is solid. Very informative and very supportive staff. Professors are very helpful.
This course was so helpful not only for my knowledge but getting contacts to get me employed in town.
This program has been absolutely amazing. Because it's on zoom I can attend and finish my degree, whereas driving to class multiple times a week while working wouldn't be possible. All my teachers have been beyond amazing. I hope for other people like me you continue to keep offering zoom classes.
would like to have more selection of instructors for the courses offered
The Legal Analysis and Writing course conducted by [faculty member] is difficult to follow. There is so much homework. It detracts from my ability to do complete other assignments from different courses in the program. The Professor can not keep up with grading all the assignments. Many months go by before homework is graded. Memos have not been graded even though they make up 60% of a student's grade.
The professors are extremely helpful and knowledgeable.
There's not enough words to describe how grateful I feel about this program, all professors, and staff from College of the Canyons have been nothing but helpful, and can push a student to strive for success. I have recommended the program to many friends and family members and have actually enrolled into the program.
This program is great and so are all the faculty. I have recommended this course to many people
wonderful program and grateful for the zoom courses. Due to working full time and commuting 2 hours each day this is the only way I can fulfill my coursework. Thank you.