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Paralegal Studies Student Survey: Spring 2021

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 2021. 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 distributed through by the Department Chair of the Paralegal Studies Department on April 20, 2021. Of the 311 students who were invited to participate in the survey, completed surveys were received from 117 students, resulting in a response rate of 38 percent.

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 (58 percent) indicated that they heard about the program through the College of the Canyons website, followed by web research (17 percent), recommended by a friend (12 percent), from a program graduate (3 percent), and from a website other than the COC website (1 percent).

Nine percent of the respondents (11 respondents) indicated that they heard about the Paralegal Studies program through “other” sources; specifically, through a Counselor (8 respondents), COC bulletin board (1 respondent), COC event (1 respondent), and the Pathway to Law program (1 respondent).

Recommended Sequence of Courses

The majority of respondents (78 percent) 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, the majority (79 percent) indicated that they follow the recommended sequence of courses. Of the respondents that followed the recommended sequence of courses, the majority (75 percent) indicated that they find the sequence of Paralegal Studies courses “helpful or “very helpful”, while 14 percent indicated a “neutral” response and 11 percent indicated that the sequence of Paralegal Studies courses are “somewhat 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. As indicated in Table 1, more than 80 percent of the respondents indicated that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the faculty (overall), course content, website information, department chair, help when they

need it, initial contact with the program, and the classrooms. Although the area with the lowest satisfaction was dining facilities, a high percentage of respondents indicated a “neutral” response (26 percent).

Table 1. Respondents’ Satisfaction with Various Aspects of the Paralegal Program

	Very Satisfied/ Satisfied	Neutral	Very Dissatisfied/ Dissatisfied
Faculty, overall	92%	4%	5%
Course content	91%	7%	3%
Website information	90%	7%	3%
Department Chair	88%	9%	4%
Help when I need it	88%	9%	3%
Initial contact with the program	88%	8%	4%
Classrooms	87%	8%	5%
Contact with registration	80%	16%	4%
Westlaw	80%	16%	5%
Library staff	79%	19%	2%
Textbooks	78%	12%	10%
Library resources	77%	16%	7%
Placement/internship services	73%	22%	5%
Dining facilities	63%	26%	11%

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

As indicated in Table 2, responses from Spring 2021 differed from results from Spring 2019. Specifically, the percentage of respondents that indicated that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the following aspects of the Paralegal program increased more than 5 percentage points in Spring 2019:

- Dining facilities (increased 13 percentage points in Spring 2021)
- Website information (increased 12 percentage points in Spring 2021)
- Contact with registration (increased 10 percentage points in Spring 2021)
- Initial contact with the program (increased 9 percentage points in Spring 2021)
- Library resources (increased 9 percentage points in Spring 2019)
- Library staff (increased 6 percentage points in Spring 2019)

Table 2. Respondents' that are "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with Various Aspects of the Paralegal Program (as Compared to Spring 2018)

	Spring 2019	Spring 2021
Faculty, overall	89%	92%
Course content	88%	91%
Website information	78%	90%
Department Chair	86%	88%
Help when I need it	86%	88%
Initial contact with the program	79%	88%
Classrooms	90%	87%
Contact with registration	70%	80%
Westlaw	77%	80%
Library staff	73%	79%
Textbooks	75%	78%
Library resources	70%	79%
Placement/internship services	70%	73%
Dining facilities	50%	63%

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

Alumni Association

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (63 percent) indicated that if the Paralegal Studies program started an alumni association they would plan to become a member after graduating from the program, while 33 percent of the respondents are not sure yet and 4 percent of the respondents would not plan to become a member of the alumni association.

Employment Information

Current Employment

Respondents were asked to provide their current employment status. Of the respondents that provided their employment status, 42 percent indicated that they are employed full-time, 36 percent indicated that they are unemployed, and 22 percent 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 (80 percent) indicated that they are not currently employed in the legal field, while 20 percent 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, the majority of respondents (92 percent) indicated that they are not currently working as a paralegal and only seeking a degree, while 8 percent 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. Forty-one respondents provided comments and suggestions; specifically, 29 respondents provided positive comments including appreciation for faculty (12 respondents) and for the program being online (6 respondents). Five respondents provided comments regarding understanding the class/program sequence and four respondents indicated frustration/concern with textbooks.

Demographics

Sex

The majority of respondents (89 percent) indicated that they are female, while 10 percent of the respondents indicated that they are male and one percent indicated that they decline to answer.

Ethnicity

Thirty-five percent of the respondents indicated that their ethnicity is White Non-Hispanic, followed by Hispanic/Latinx (34 percent), multi-ethnicity (9 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander (6 percent), African American/Black (5 percent), American Indian/Alaskan Native (1 percent), and Filipinx (1 percent). Three percent of the respondents (4 respondents) indicated “other” ethnicities; specifically, Middle Eastern (4 respondents). Five percent of the respondents declined to state their ethnicity.

Education

More than one-third of the respondents (38 percent) indicated that they have some college, followed by a Bachelor’s degree (30 percent), Associate’s degree (17 percent), Master’s degree (6 percent), and non-ABA certificate (3 percent). Four respondents indicated that they have a high school diploma, 2 respondents are currently enrolled in high school and one respondent indicated that they are currently in college.

Current Unit Load

Over half of the respondents (56 percent) indicated that they are currently enrolled as part-time students, while 44 percent 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 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:
 - Placement/internship services
 - Dining facilities
- Consider options for creating an alumni association.

For more detailed information on this research brief, stop by the Institutional Research office located in BONH-224, or call Alicia LeValley, Assistant Research Analyst at 661.362.3140 or Daylene Meuschke, Associate Vice President of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness at 661.362.5329.