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Paralegal Studies Student Survey: Spring 2023

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 2023. 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 10, 2023 with a reminder sent on May 23, 2023. To improve the response rate, surveys were also distributed through Survey Monkey link by Paralegal Studies faculty members to their students between May 9, 2023 and May 26, 2023. Of the 147 students who were invited to participate in the survey, completed surveys were received from 67 students, resulting in a response rate of 46%. Among those who responded, thirteen respondents replied to the initial email link (19%) and fifty-four respondents replied to the faculty provided link (81%).

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 (18%), counselors and recommended by a friend (8%, each), from a website other than the COC website (5%), and from a program graduate (2%).

Eight percent of the respondents (5 students) indicated that they heard about the Paralegal Studies program through “other” sources; specifically, through an instructor (3 students), COC catalog (1 student), and the COC LAPA seminar (1 student).

Course Length Preference

The majority of respondents indicated that they prefer to take 16-week courses (67%), followed by 8-week courses (29%) and 5-week courses (4%).

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
OnlineLive (Zoom) and Online (Canvas) n=65	92%	5%	3%
Online (Canvas) n=65	89%	6%	5%
OnlineLive (Zoom only) n=59	88%	7%	5%

Recommended Sequence of Courses

The majority of respondents (84%) 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=56), the majority (82%) indicated that they follow the recommended sequence of courses. Of the respondents that follow the recommended sequence of courses (N=45), the majority (89%) indicated that they find the sequence of Paralegal Studies courses “helpful or “very helpful”, while 7% indicated that the sequence of Paralegal Studies courses are “somewhat helpful” and 4% 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 85% 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
Course content (N=63)	97%	2%	2%
Faculty, overall (N=63)	97%	2%	2%
Initial contact with the program (N=62)	97%	2%	2%

**Table 3. Respondents’ Satisfaction with Various Aspects of the Paralegal Program
 (continued)**

	Very Satisfied/ Satisfied	Neutral	Very Dissatisfied/ Dissatisfied
Website information (N=62)	94%	5%	2%
Department Chair (N=56)	93%	5%	2%
Help when I need it (N=62)	92%	5%	3%
Contact with registration (N=61)	90%	8%	2%
Placement/internship services (N=47)	89%	9%	2%
Library resources (N=50)	88%	12%	0%
Library staff (N=40)	88%	13%	0%
Westlaw (N=51)	88%	12%	0%
Textbooks (N=63)	86%	11%	3%

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

As indicated in Table 2, responses from Spring 2023 differed from results from Spring 2022 which had a total of 96 respondents. Specifically, the percentage of respondents that are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the following aspects of the Paralegal program increased by more than 5 percentage points in Spring 2023:

- Placement/internship services (increased 19 percentage points)
- Library resources (increased 14 percentage points)
- Westlaw (increased 12 percentage points)
- Contact with registration (increased 12 percentage points)
- Faculty, overall (increased 12 percentage points in Spring 2023)
- Library staff (increased 12 percentage points in Spring 2023)
- Initial contact with the program (increased 11 percentage points in Spring 2023)
- Course content (increased 9 percentage points in Spring 2023)
- Department chair (increased 8 percentage points in Spring 2023)
- Website information (increased 8 percentage points in Spring 2023)
- Help when I need it (increased 7 percentage points in Spring 2023)

Table 4. Respondents’ that are “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with Various Aspects of the Paralegal Program in 2023 as compared to 2022

	Spring 2022	Spring 2023
Course content	88%	97%
Faculty, overall	85%	97%
Initial contact with the program	86%	97%
Website information	86%	94%
Department Chair	85%	93%
Help when I need it	85%	92%
Contact with registration	78%	90%
Placement/internship services	70%	89%
Library resources	74%	88%
Library staff	76%	88%
Westlaw	75%	88%
Textbooks	85%	86%

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

Alumni Association

Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (63%) indicated that if the Paralegal Studies program started an alumni association they would plan to become a member after graduating from the program, while 30% 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=64), 48% indicated that they are employed full-time, 27% indicated that they are unemployed, and 25% 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 (75%) indicated that they are not currently employed in the legal field, while 25% 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=16), more than half of the respondents (56% – 9 respondents) indicated that they are currently working as a paralegal and only seeking a degree, while 44% (7 respondents) indicated that they are not currently working as a paralegal.

Additional Comments

Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments or suggestions they may have for the Paralegal program. Seventeen respondents provided comments and suggestions; specifically, respondents provided positive comments including appreciation for the faculty and the program (11 respondents). Other comments included frustration with faculty/teaching methods (3 respondents), requests for better communication from faculty (2 respondents), and requests for additional classes/additional times (2 respondents). Please see Appendix A for detailed comments.

Demographics

Race/Ethnicity. Of the 67 total respondents, thirty-five percent of the respondents indicated that their ethnicity is White Non-Hispanic, followed by Latinx/Hispanic (34%), African American/Black and multi-ethnicity (8%, each), Asian (6%), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (2%). Eight percent of the respondents declined to state their ethnicity.

Education. Thirty percent indicated that they have some college or AA/AS degree (respectively), followed by a Bachelor's degree (26%), Master's degree (9%), and non-ABA certificate (2%). Two respondents indicated that they have a high school diploma.

Current Enrollment. Over half of the respondents (58%) indicated that they are currently enrolled as part-time students, while 42% 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 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.

Appendix A: Text of Open-ended Questions

Question #1: How did you hear about our Paralegal Studies program? (other)

Response
COC Catalog
Instructor
Seminar at COC

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

Response
- more classes available at different times. - keep having zoom classes
A second professor to teach Family Law.
I am really enjoying the program and look forward to getting my Certification. My only comment is I wish there more instruction to the legal library and Westlaw website. The Professors are amazing!
I have had [faculty member] for three separate classes, and [they are] a true gift to the Paralegal Program at COC.
I love the program and staff. They are very supportive. I am so happy to be a part of COC
I wish there was a way to revisit the skills we learn in each course so that we continue to use them, and not forget how to do certain things.
It would be helpful if the program offered some more 100% online courses thereby providing (working scholars) a little more flexibility during the work week.
ITS THE BEST! GOOD JOB TO YOU ALL :) P.S [Faculty member] HAS BEEN THE BEST TEACHER EVER! LOVE [them].
[Faculty member] is incredibly helpful, warm, knowledgeable, and supportive.
Most faculty are great. There are a few that need some guidance and one that I would never take again ([faculty member]).
Some courses seemed way more difficult and demanding than others but were weighted the same. The amount of time I spent in Legal Analysis vs. spent on work for the legal research class for example, both are worth 3 units.
Some professors should work on answering emails more faster

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

Response
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.