



2024-2025

ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Legal Studies

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MISSION AND INTRODUCTION	2
INTRODUCTION	2
PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT	2
ALIGNMENT TO INSTITUTION MISSION	2
STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT AND CURRICULUM	2
PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES	2
CURRICULUM MAP	3
MEASURES AND RESULTS	3
PARTICIPATION IN ASSESSMENT	4
ACTION ITEMS AND USE OF RESULTS	4
GEN ED	4
NSSE FOCUSED ACTIVITIES	5
CONCENTRATIONS	5
CONCENTRATION INFORMATION	5
FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS, ACTIVITIES AND SCHOLARSHIP	6
SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH	6
FACULTY AWARDS AND HONORS	6
TEACHING SUPPORT AND MONITORING TEACHING QUALITY	6
PROGRAM DATA: STUDENT EXPERIENCE	6
ENROLLMENT AND RECRUITMENT	6
RETENTION	7
CURRICULUM/COURSE RETENTION AND SUCCESS	7
COMPLETION	7
COURSE EVALUATION DATA	8
STUDENT ADVISING	8
STUDENT AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS	8
PROGRAM ANALYSIS	8
SWOT ANALYSIS	8
INDUSTRY AND PROGRAM TRENDS	8
SENIOR EXIT SURVEYS	9
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REPORTS	9

2024-2025 Assessment Narrative on Findings

Legal Studies (BA)

Mission and Introduction

Introduction

1. Provide an overview of the program and the context of where it's housed within the institution (what department, etc.).

Narrative:

The online Legal Studies program was formerly a paralegal program. The program still maintains a substantial number of paralegal based programs with a few additional prelaw focused courses. The paralegal focused courses are what are called "legal specialty" courses which means they contain document drafting exercises. There are 39 required courses. The program is housed in the new College of Humanities.

Program Mission Statement

1. What changes has the program made to the mission statement over the course of this cycle? Why were these changes made? Are any revisions planned?

Narrative:

The online Legal Studies program combines legal skills with substantive legal theory to prepare students for immediate employment in the legal field as a legal assistant or other legal staff position as well as preparing for law school or other law-related advanced study.

Alignment to Institution Mission

1. How does the mission of the program align with the mission of the institution?

Narrative:

The mission statement of the Legal Studies program aligns with the institution mission statement by focusing on professions-oriented education and preparing learners for success.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment and Curriculum

Program Student Learning Outcomes

1. Describe how these outcomes pertain to the program's mission. Have any changes been made to these outcomes over the course of this cycle? Why or why not?

2. Describe the extent to which students in the program have met these outcomes.

Narrative:

[Legal Studies \(BA\) 2024-2025 Curriculum and Assessment Findings 2024-2025](#)

The outcomes reflect that the program changed from 8-week classes to 5-week classes in the middle of the AY. That is the primary change.

LGS1. Students will demonstrate through experiential learning as well as written communication, a basic understanding of the law and legal process.

This outcome relates to the program mission by measuring students' ability to communicate through written communication and to understand legal process.

LGS 2. Students will demonstrate an awareness of ethical, moral and social issues that contain legal implications.

This outcome relates to the program mission by requiring students to understand and demonstrate legal implications.

Student assessment indicates students have met these outcomes, especially as demonstrated in the Virtual Law Office capstone.

Evidence:

- [Legal Studies \(BA\) 2024-2025 Curriculum and Assessment Findings 2024-2025](#)
- [Paralegal Studies Annual Assessment 2023_2024](#)

Curriculum Map

1. Describe the course pathway students take to achieve this program degree. Highlighting any key or core courses, have any changes been made to this pathway or degree requirements over the course of this cycle? Why or why not?

Narrative:

In addition to the change of courses from 8 week to 5 week, a number of courses were dropped from the curriculum, and several new courses were added. Students can start the program in any semester and complete the 2 prerequisite courses, PLS 110 and PRL 304. It is recommended that students also take PRL 306 prior to completing other coursework although it is not required. Students can then complete the remaining courses in any order with the exception that they must complete all courses prior to taking PRL 475 which is the capstone course.

Measures and Results

1. Discuss the measures you've selected or developed to measure this outcome. Why were these measures chosen? Were any measures or assessment instruments changed over the course of this cycle? Why or why not? Will different measures be chosen the next time this outcome is assessed?

2. Summarize and discuss the results of the program's measures over the course of this cycle. Have the results demonstrated improvement or mastery of this outcome? Why or why not?

Narrative:

The Virtual Law Office portfolio was selected a measurement for both outcomes because it contains a sample from each of the legal specialty classes the students completed and therefore provides a macro view of the student's progress and mastery of the material. No changes were made to the measures for this cycle, but changes are anticipated for the next cycle.

The results have demonstrated mastery of the course objectives.

[Legal Studies \(BA\) 2024-2025 Curriculum and Assessment Findings 2024-2025](#)

Evidence:

- [Legal Studies \(BA\) 2024-2025 Curriculum and Assessment Findings 2024-2025](#)

Participation in Assessment

1. How do program faculty participate in assessment? What is the process? Have any changes been made to encourage participation over the course of this cycle?

Narrative:

There is one full-time faculty who also serves as the Program Manager. At this time, the Program Manager conducts the program assessment. No changes have been made over the course of the cycle.

Action Items and Use of Results

1. Summarize or highlight action items taken as a result of program's assessment results. How have the results driven improvement over the course of this cycle?

Narrative:

No action items have been taken due to the change in format from 8 weeks to 5 weeks. This change necessitated a significant change in the content of each course. At the conclusion of this cycle, it is possible that some action items may result.

Evidence:

- [Legal Studies \(BA\) 2024-2025 Curriculum and Assessment Findings 2024-2025](#)

Gen Ed

1. What courses in your program are tied to general education requirements at the institution? How many students from outside the department are taking courses in the program to fulfill gen ed requirements?

Graduate Programs please note NA in this section as it does not apply to your program.

Narrative:

There are two courses in this program that are also general education courses:

PLS 110 American Legal System

PLS 210 Law, Ethics, and Morality

It is not possible to determine the number of nonmajors taking these 2 classes, as these courses are open to on-ground students, online students and are taken by students in the legal studies AA program. In addition, the Program Manager is not provided with information on the identity of students in the Legal Studies program on a regular basis.

NSSE Focused Activities

In the Spring of 2024, the faculty voted on the following NSSE objectives for focus.

2B - Connected your learning to societal problems or issues.

2F - Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept.

9A - Identified Key information from reading assignments.

6A - Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs statistics, ...)

How has your program incorporated these learning objectives into the program curriculum?

Graduate Programs please note NA in this section as it does not apply to your program.

Narrative:

2B - Connected your learning to societal problems or issues.

Many of the assignments in this major relate learning to societal problems and issues because law is focused on identifying and solving such problems. One example is from PRL 315 in which students discuss the application of law to children.

2F - Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept.

PRL 315 also has multiple assignments that required students to research their own state's law regarding various family law issues and then discuss the differences in forums with their classmates.

9A - Identified Key information from reading assignments.

Students in PRL 440 Constitutional Law were required to identify legal principles and legal reasoning in readings that presented the competing purposes of Constitutions

6A - Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs statistics, ...)

Concentrations**Concentration Information**

Please list the concentrations that relate to your program. If you do not have any Concentrations, please note N/A in the text box.

Narrative:

Not applicable

Faculty Qualifications, Activities and Scholarship

Scholarship and Research

1. Summarize and highlight key scholarship and research activities conducted by faculty over the course of the review cycle.

Narrative:

The majority of faculty are adjuncts and there is no information on and scholarship or research they may have done.

Faculty Awards and Honors

1. Discuss and highlight awards and honors received by faculty over the course of the cycle.

Narrative:

None

Teaching Support and Monitoring Teaching Quality

1. How are faculty being supported to ensure high quality teaching and learning?

Narrative:

Adjunct faculty are required to complete professional development. The Program Manager corresponds by email with each adjunct prior to the beginning of a course to explain the teaching requirements, offer on-going assistance, and encourage the faculty to report any issues with the course structure or content or other matters.

Program Data: Student Experience

Enrollment and Recruitment

1. What are the trends with enrollment in this program over the course of the review cycle? How does this compare to institutional trends or similar programs on campus?

2. Describe recruitment efforts or goals such as increased enrollment or diversity. Have these initiatives been successful?

Narrative:

1. According to several career databases, law-related degrees remain in demand. Enrollment should continue to remain steady or increase. It is unknown how this compares with other programs on campus.

2. There are little or no target recruitment activities for this program.

Evidence:

- [Legal Studies enrollment data](#)

Retention

1. Has student retention remained in an acceptable range over the course of the review cycle?
2. Discuss strategies or actions that the program is doing to impact student retention within the program?

Narrative:

1. Student retention has improved since the program was restructured from Paralegal Studies to Legal Studies.
2. No action is taken to improve student retention.

Curriculum/Course Retention and Success

1. Describe enrollment trends in the courses within the program.
2. Reflect on the success of the students within the courses over the course of the cycle. Highlight some completion or DFW rates in the core courses. Were these in line with expectations?
3. Assess student performance and success in online vs. on-campus courses.

Narrative:

1. There are no discernable enrollment trends within the courses in the program.
2. The students have had a high level of success in courses within the program, and this is in line with expectations, as these are primarily adults working in law-related fields.
3. Not really applicable as this is an online only program and is not comparable with the on ground Political/Legal Studies on-ground major.

Completion

1. How many students are graduating from the program? Have the completion rates been in line with expectations?
2. Describe findings resulting from exit surveys or program alumni surveys that were conducted over the course of the cycle.

Narrative:

1. No data is currently available for this assessment due to the change in the program.
2. There are no exit surveys.

Course Evaluation Data

1. What were some positive and negative feedback received from students who completed the courses? Highlight any trends or insights that came from course evaluations over the course of the cycle.

Narrative:

The evaluation data in the attached indicates that students were generally satisfied with the courses.

Evidence:

- [PRL EOC](#)

Student Advising

1. What advising mechanism is in place for the student?

Narrative:

Advising is not provided by the program. The Program Manager is occasionally consulted by the online advisor.

Student Awards and Achievements

1. Highlight the accomplishments and external honors received by students in the program over the course of this cycle.

Narrative:

None known.

Program Analysis

SWOT Analysis

1. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Narrative:

Strengths: Highly qualified adjunct faculty; well-structured curriculum; rotation schedule

Weaknesses: 5 Week format; minimum class size; adjunct pool

Opportunities: High demand field could have increased enrollment with appropriate recruitment and marketing

Threats: Competition from other programs; loss of qualified adjuncts due to pay

Industry and Program Trends

Senior Exit Surveys

1. What were some positive and negative feedback received from students as they complete their degrees? Highlight any trends or insights that came from exit surveys over the course of the cycle.

Narrative:

No Senior Exit Surveys are provided.

Recommendations from Previous Annual Assessment Reports

1. Summarize Action Items, goals from the program that were listed in the previous Annual Assessment report, describe how/if those recommendations were applied this year.

Narrative:

None are applicable as the program was significantly altered by the change to 5-week format.