

Bergen Community College

Assessment Report for 2008-2010

Department/Program: Paralegal and Legal Nurse Consulting Programs / Legal Studies Department

Department Leader: Lawrence A. Joel

Liaison: Florence McGovern

Assessment Project Coordinator (if not the Department Leader): Lawrence A. Joel

Date Submitted: April 1, 2009

Program(s), if applicable (AAS, Interdepartmental, etc.):

AAS Paralegal Studies, Certificate Legal Nurse Consulting

Mission/Goal statement of the department or program:

PROGRAM GOALS

1. To provide students with a balanced and varied knowledge in a range of substantive legal fields and practical skills that are necessary to enter the work force as a paralegal or legal nurse consultant.
2. To train students in the application of practical skills including the techniques of legal research, practice and procedure, investigation, interviewing, drafting of documents, motions and pleadings and other practical skills needed for an array of potential positions in the public, private and corporate law sectors. Focus of 2008-2010 Assessment Plan.*
3. To promote the appreciation of and adherence to ethical practice and professional responsibility as a paralegal and legal nurse consultant.
4. To prepare students to understand the legal environment and work under the supervision of lawyers in the private and public sector.
5. To provide students with a general education that includes exposure to several major areas (Humanities, Mathematics, Social Science and Natural Science) and develops communication, quantitative and analytical skills and knowledge to advance their intellectual and personal growth.

6. To provide a program that responds to the needs of the legal community and promotes the economical and efficient delivery of legal services through paralegals and legal nurse consultants working under the supervision of attorneys.

7. To ensure that students have up-to-date skills in law office technology including the use of computers for word processors and computer assisted legal and non-legal research. - Focus of 2008-2010 Assessment Plan*

SEMESTER 1: Create the Assessment Plan

Goal or learning objective being assessed:

1. Legal Research and Writing - Students will be able to apply the professional practical skills in their technique of legal research as it pertains to legal memoranda and/or legal brief drafting.

Note: This departmental/program outcome is intended to be in compliance with ABA guidelines and corresponds with the program goals as stated and published by the BCC Paralegal & Legal Nurse Consultant Programs.

A. Means of Assessment & Sources of Data:

i. Projects – Legal research projects to include the requirement of: (a) drafting of legal memoranda; and/or (b) legal briefs.

ii. Faculty will use an agreed upon rubric for each project. A required course in the middle of the Programs shall be selected for such assessment - ie. Paralegalism and Legal Procedures which is required for the Paralegal and Legal Nurse Consultant Programs. This course also is required after basic legal research and writing skills and ethics instruction and during and/or after computer assisted legal research skills are obtained. The assessment rubric for the relevant assignments will be graded on the basis of 100 percentage points. The goal is to have 75 percent of all students achieve at least 70 percentage points or higher on the assessment according to the rubrics grading criteria (see attached).

Relevant Core Competencies: (check as many as apply)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative Reasoning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Critical Thinking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civic Responsibility | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technological and Information Fluency | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal Skills |

Means of Assessment:

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SEMESTER 2: Develop an Assessment Strategy

Criterion for success:

75% of students will earn a score of 70% or better score on applicable legal memoranda and/or brief assignments relating to the above learning objective. Assessment will be based upon a rubric establishing a perfect score as 100 percentage points.

Dean's Comments: Satisfactory as submitted for Semester 1 and 2. Department chairs will be completing semesters 3 and 4 in the new format.

Peter Dlugos' comments: Nicely articulated project! Two observations: (1) You've got three fairly distinct learning objectives here—please pick just *one* for the purposes of this project. Maybe pick the one you think students do the least well on, and test the hypothesis. (2) Do you mean a 70% score on a rubric? Rubrics typically involve a letter grade, or, more commonly, a point value of 20 or less.

VP's Comments: The setup is reasonable. The goals which are to be assessed are not specific enough. I recommend defining what is going to be specifically assessed ASAP.

SEMESTER 3: Implement Assessment Plan & Strategy

Summary and analysis of data collected:

Source: Agreed upon assignments were submitted across the disciplines in designated class to address the core competencies, mission, goals and objectives. Assignments relevant to this goal included the drafting of legal memoranda on varied substantive legal issues. The assignments relative to this goal require the student to exercise skills obtained through their education in the program which will be needed in the legal workplace environment. Fifty students submitted projects which were graded in accordance with the rubric developed by the Legal Studies faculty. The data collected indicates that the program students have achieved the criteria for success in the designated assignments as 96.0% of the students

surveyed received a score of 70 or better on both assignments. These results achieved expectations.

(The Summary should appear here. Use attachments only to provide information to support the summary.)

SEMESTER 4: Reporting and Revising

Use of results:

The programs shall continue to use projects of legal memoranda assignments to apply the professional practical skills of the Paralegal and Legal Nurse Consultant Programs. Such assignments not only refine the student's legal writing skills, but also require legal citation knowledge and provide for the enhancement of the student's legal research skills. It is the intention to expand such projects to other classes with varied substantive legal issues. The programs will seek to improve on legal writing skills and continue to emphasize these skills across the program curriculum. Course outlines shall include legal writing projects and copies of student projects shall be maintained pursuant to American Bar Association approval guidelines. It should be noted that these skills are classified as practical assignments in legal specialty courses under the ABA approval guidelines as required of the BCC legal studies programs.

Note: The use of these results is intended to be in compliance with ABA guidelines and corresponds with the program goals as stated and published by the BCC Paralegal & Legal Nurse Consultant Programs.

Dean's Comments: 

VP's Comments: