

## Paralegal Studies (Legal Assistant) Program 2015-16 Program Review

Last Review: 2011-12

Current Year: 2015-16

Preparers' Names: R.J. Ruppenthal, Faculty Member

Area Dean: Lena Tran

### Summary of the Department/Program ("Program")

1. Provide a brief summary of your program. Assume the reader does not know anything about it. Your explanation should include a brief history and a discussion of any factors that have been important to the program's development. Please explain the purpose of your program, what students you serve, what services you provide, and why these services are valuable.

The paralegal job field continues to grow, particularly in Silicon Valley, though the legal services industry as a whole faces growing headwinds. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in a report updated in December 2015, employment for paralegals and legal assistants is projected to grow at a rate of 8% in the 2014-2024 period, which is "about average" compared with other occupations.<sup>1</sup> In explaining the job projections in this field, the BLS report includes the following information:

*As law firms try to increase the efficiency of legal services and reduce their costs, they are expected to hire more paralegals and legal assistants. In these cases, paralegals and legal assistants can take on a "hybrid" role within the firm, performing not only traditional paralegal duties but also some of the tasks previously assigned to legal secretaries or other legal support workers.*

*Law firms also are attempting to reduce billing costs as clients push for less expensive legal services. Due to their lower billing rates to clients, paralegals can be a less costly alternative to lawyers despite performing a wide variety of tasks once done by entry-level lawyers. This should cause an increase in demand for paralegals and legal assistants.*

The outlook for paralegal job growth is stronger in California than it is nationally, while Silicon Valley remains one of the hottest paralegal markets in the nation. According to the California Employment Development Department (EDD) Occupational Guides, the paralegal job field "is expected to grow faster than the average growth rate for all occupations. Jobs for Paralegals and Legal Assistants are expected to increase by 17.7 percent, or 5,300 jobs between 2012 and 2022."<sup>2</sup> While this growth rate is impressive, it is slower than in previous reports; the paralegal job field was previously included in the EDD's Top 100 list of fastest-growing occupations, but no longer appears there now.<sup>3</sup>

There is a particularly high demand for legal professionals in Silicon Valley, since many companies are based here and many law firms have regional offices. The BLS estimates an average salary of \$67,640 per year for paralegals and legal assistants in the San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition*, Paralegals and Legal Assistants, available at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/legal/paralegals-and-legal-assistants.htm> (visited February 10, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> California EDD Summary Occupational Guide 2015, available at <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/OccGuides/Detail.aspx?Soccode=232011&Geography=0604000085> (visited February 15, 2016)

<sup>3</sup> EDD Top 100 Fastest Growing Occupations in California, 2012-2022, available at <http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/OccGuides/FastGrowingOcc.aspx?Geography=0601000000> (visited February 12, 2016)

metropolitan area. This salary is far higher than the national average, and in fact it places this geographic area at #3 on BLS' list of paralegal salaries for all metropolitan areas in the nation.<sup>4</sup>

In 2000, in response to the growing demand for paralegals and perceived lack of training standards in the profession, California became the first state in the nation to regulate this job field. As a result of this legislation, both the "paralegal" and "legal assistant" job titles are defined under Business and Professions Code § 6450, all portions of which went into effect between 2000 and 2004. The terms "paralegal" and "legal assistant" are considered synonymous under this law. The most important change under § 6450 was the requirement that anyone using the job title "paralegal" or "legal assistant" must complete the proper education. Several educational options are provided, the simplest of which is for someone to complete at least 24 semester units of law-related courses at a regionally-accredited college or university.

Evergreen Valley College's Paralegal Studies (Legal Assistant) Program enables graduates to meet this requirement. The program offers students three educational options: the A.A. degree, A.S. degree, and Specialty Certificate in Paralegal Studies. All three options include the same major courses, which are built around the 24 core units of law-related courses required by state law. The Certificate allows students to attain an educational goal in two years or less that qualifies them for employment as a "paralegal" or "legal assistant". Those with a more academic orientation may continue on to complete their associate degrees and perhaps transfer on to a four-year school. The program encourages all students to complete college degrees, as this improves employment and promotional opportunities.

The Paralegal Studies Program's student body includes young students coming directly from high school and older students who are re-training for a second or third career. Some have lost their jobs for economic reasons or due to workplace injuries, while others have taken time off to raise children. In addition, a growing number of the program's students already work in the legal field and have been referred to the Evergreen Valley College program by their employers, many of whom pay for them to take classes and improve their legal knowledge and skills. Paralegal certification for staff members provides a net benefit for many law firms, since the United States Supreme Court held in the *Missouri v. Jenkins* case that law firms may bill professional paralegal time directly to clients. Under state law, paralegals must be well-trained in order to perform substantive legal work, and many legal employers have learned that they can leverage paralegals' time by billing them out at a higher rate than their wages.

Good news aside, the paralegal field's growth should be viewed in the context of an industry in transition. In recent years, the legal services industry has experienced a steep decline in demand, never having recovered from the recession that began in 2008. Compared with pre-recession levels, inflation-adjusted spending on law firm services has declined more than 25% in the last ten years.<sup>5</sup> Many of the nation's top law schools have had trouble filling classes and finding jobs for their graduates. Ten months after graduating, in a relatively strong domestic economy, only 60% of the Class of 2014's U.S. law school graduates had secured appropriate long-term employment.<sup>6</sup>

Experts have offered many explanations for the declining demand in legal services. Most likely, some combination of factors is to blame. Technology is driving greater efficiency in a field that had been slow to take advantage of innovation. Companies have been tighter with their legal budgets, using fewer firms than before; such consolidation concentrates the volume of work and brings down the costs. A lot of document review work is being outsourced, sometimes internationally. A portion of corporate transactional work can be done overseas at a lower cost. Clients are relying more on online

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<sup>4</sup> BLS Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2014, available at <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes232011.htm#st> (visited February 15, 2016)

<sup>5</sup> Georgetown Law Center for the Study of the Legal Profession, "2015 Report on the State of the Legal Profession", Thomson Reuters Peer Monitor, 2015, available online at <http://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/centers-institutes/legal-profession/upload/FINAL-Report-1-7-15.pdf> (visited February 18, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Harper, Steven J. "Too Many Students, Too Few Legal Jobs", New York Times, 25 August 2015, available online at [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/25/opinion/too-many-law-students-too-few-legal-jobs.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/25/opinion/too-many-law-students-too-few-legal-jobs.html?_r=0) (visited February 11, 2016).

legal services and placing arbitration clauses in their contracts. Federal and state rules of procedure have been revised to place even greater emphasis on pre-trial discovery and proper disclosures, which encourage settlement as opposed to trial litigation. And the worsening income disparity means that rich individuals still have money to spend on legal fees, but there are many more people who either cannot afford attorneys or have fewer assets that require legal transactions.

While paralegal job prospects depend upon the broader legal services industry (nearly 80% of paralegals work in private law firms), the greater use of paralegals may also be contributing to a reduced demand for attorneys. Because paralegal salaries remain lower than attorney salaries, many clients specifically request that law firms utilize trained paralegals rather than attorneys. Clients would rather pay less, which continues to fuel growth in paralegal career opportunities.

However, the ongoing push for greater efficiency in legal services, including the greater use of technology and overseas outsourcing, eventually will impact paralegals as well. Either paralegals will continue to play a part in this 'bottom line' move toward greater efficiency or else they will fall victim to it. If both trends continue, the future questions may be how much skilled legal work can be automated/outsourced at an acceptable level of quality and also whether that share of the legal work will outpace the continued increase in paralegal utilization for efficiency.

Community college enrollment generally moves in a cycle that is inverse to the local economy. Higher unemployment sends more people back to college to retrain or acquire new skills. From 2008-2010, during the height of the Great Recession and in the months that followed, Evergreen Valley College's enrollment surged along with regional unemployment. More recently, with a technology boom in Silicon Valley, Santa Clara County has led the nation with one of the best-performing economies in the United States. And during this economic boom, thousands of potential students went to work rather than to college. Evergreen Valley College suffered a -19.37% change in FTES between 2008-2009 and 2014-2015.

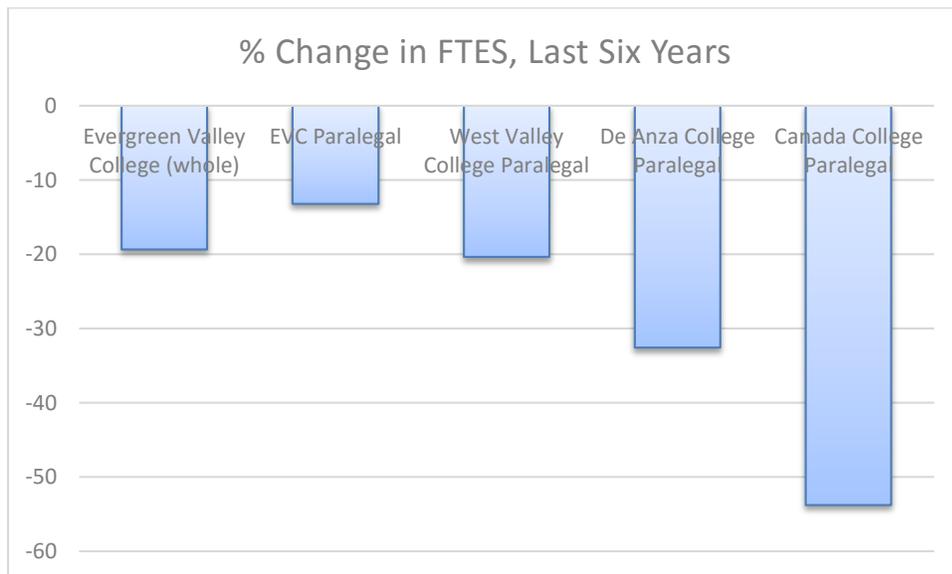
The Paralegal Studies Program's enrollment roughly tracks that of the college, sometimes outperforming it or underperforming it for a semester or two, but basically following a similar trend. As a vocational program, it is very much subject to the whims of economic cycles. The best way to measure its success in attracting new customers is to compare the EVC paralegal enrollment with that of the college itself and with other peer programs in this region. EVC Paralegal Studies Program has three main peers or "competitor programs" in the Silicon Valley market. These are the Paralegal Programs at De Anza College, West Valley College, and Canada College; they are the only other community colleges in this region with paralegal certification programs.

Here is how the Evergreen Valley College Paralegal Program compares with these others (see chart below). This chart is based upon publicly reported data from the California Community College Chancellor's Office. It shows declines in enrollment across the board between 2008-2009 and 2014-2015. 2008-2009 was Evergreen Valley College's recession-year high water mark in terms of enrollment, while 2014-2015 is the most recent academic year for which complete information is available.<sup>7</sup> Some of the other peer institutions actually had higher enrollments in other years besides 2008-2009, so comparing each one's recent enrollment with its pre-recession high would have shown an even starker downtrend. But the 2008-2009 to 2014-2015 period was used for all to enable a simple comparison.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The EVC Paralegal Program did suffer a temporary enrollment decline the following semester, in Fall 2015, when its full-time faculty member went out on sabbatical leave and the courses were not well staffed in his absence (the program offers eight class sections and two had to be cancelled). Based on initial returns, the Spring 2016 enrollment appears to have rebounded.

<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the program's full-time faculty member is rather Excel-impaired. Attorneys in the practice of law often have similar deficiencies, providing yet another argument for hiring skilled legal staff professionals.



As the chart above indicates, the EVC Paralegal Program has weathered the recent downturn better than its peers. Thanks to its focus on building practical, job-ready skills into the curriculum, students continue to find it a valuable career path. Program faculty, the advisory committee members, and the students themselves have worked hard to make this a high-quality program with a strong word-of-mouth reputation in San Jose and Santa Clara County. With colleges' enrollment declines showing recent signs of having bottomed out and with paralegal job opportunities forecasted to expand steadily, hopefully the future will be bright.

***\*Note: For the following items, you may use Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and SLO assessments to gauge effectiveness. If so, you may wish to complete Part C, below, and then return to this section.***

2. How does your program define effectiveness, and what measures have you chosen to gauge it?

The program defines effectiveness through its graduates' job readiness. When our students get hired and their employers are pleased with the skills and knowledge they bring to their new careers, the Paralegal Studies Program is doing its job successfully. The program uses a two-step approach to define its effectiveness in preparing students to work in the paralegal job field.

Step One is to maintain a cutting edge curriculum. This is accomplished with the help of the Evergreen Valley College Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee, whose members include local attorneys, law firm administrators, paralegals, and other legal professionals. The Advisory Committee helps the program stay up to date with the latest trends and requirements in the legal field. It also reviews the program's curriculum and provides feedback on any needed changes.

The Advisory Committee provides assurance that the program's graduates are receiving the knowledge needed to succeed in paralegal and legal assistant jobs in law firms, corporate legal departments, public agencies, and other organizations. Faculty members also remain current in the legal field by completing Continuing Legal Education (CLE) courses approved by the State Bar Association of California. As any changes are deemed necessary to keep the curriculum up to date, the program and its courses are revised and/or new assignments or projects are added in the classrooms. Also, Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) are updated to remain consistent with industry standards and with the curriculum.

Step Two is the assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Since the Paralegal Studies Program's SLOs directly measure the needs of our graduates' employers, properly assessing these SLOs should answer the question of whether the program is effective. As we explain in the next section (in Part 3, below), recent assessments suggest that students are acquiring the necessary legal knowledge, demonstrating job-ready paralegal skills, and proving to us that they are prepared for meaningful legal employment upon graduation from the program. Although student evaluations

alone are not sufficient evidence of effectiveness, these confirm that their courses are being taught at a high level of quality. Taken together, this evidence demonstrates that the program is very effective.

3. Please summarize the results of any measures you have applied. What do these results mean for your program?

As of January 2016, the Paralegal Studies Program has completed the assessment cycle for all five of its Program Level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), some of them more than once. This is a momentous achievement that has taken several years to fulfill. In general, the assessments have shown what Silicon Valley legal employers have been telling us for years: that our students possess a strong knowledge of substantive law as well as job-ready paralegal skills. This program works effectively.

The program's SLOs read as follows:

1. Demonstrate a proficient knowledge of the various areas of law and their importance.
2. Describe the legal profession's basic ethical guidelines and apply them in hypothetical situations.
3. Demonstrate effective legal research skills by selecting and utilizing appropriate sources of law.
4. Prepare legal research memoranda and other documents commonly used by attorneys.
5. Use legal terminology capably in an appropriate context.

For the most part, these SLOs have been assessed in the program's last two required courses. In order to graduate from the program with a certificate and/or degree, students must complete both LA 71 (Legal Research) and LA 72 (Legal Analysis and Writing). Because both courses involve extensive, final research and writing projects, and these represent the most advanced level of work in the program, they provide ideal capstones for Program Level SLO assessment.

For example, Program SLO #3 requires that students be able to "Demonstrate effective legal research skills by selecting and utilizing appropriate sources of law". While the students are introduced to legal research skills earlier in the program and there are other courses in which they must conduct some research, the LA 71 course is more advanced. By the end of it, students must demonstrate a very high level of proficiency with this skill. And based on the assessment of SLO #3, which used an analysis of their final research projects, the vast majority of students (82.6% in Fall 2015) are proving that they can do so at a professional level.

Students also must take the LA 10 (Introduction to Law) course as part of the program. If they learn something specific in that class which is an important part of the program, then LA 10 provides another point at which we can run an SLO assessment. As an example, the program assessed SLO #2 using a quiz in the LA 10 course ("Describe the legal profession's basic ethical guidelines and apply them in hypothetical situations"). In LA 10, students learn about the profession's ethical guidelines and then must complete an Ethics Quiz in the course. Their performance on this quiz is strong evidence of their understanding of ethical guidelines.

But SLO #2 does not measure knowledge alone; it asks how well students can apply that knowledge. There are two embedded questions on the Ethics Quiz, each of which require students to apply the ethical guidelines in hypothetical situations. While they are hypothetical, these fictional situations are based on genuine dilemmas which arise on a regular basis in the practice of law. Again, students (100% of them when this was assessed in Spring 2013) are proving not only that they have acquired the necessary understanding, but are able to apply it critically in a practical situation.

Not everything goes smoothly with assessments, but we always try to learn from the experience. The most recent assessment of SLO #5 ("Use legal terminology capably in an appropriate context") was conducted in LA 10, the program's required introductory course. However, only 77.3% of students in LA 10 were using legal terminology capably at the level that was assessed. This percentage was lower than it should have been without dumbing down the assessment tool. And yet, the students were succeeding in the course and the instruction was at a proper level.

In retrospect, the problem was not with the students or the instruction, but with the choice of using LA 10 for this assessment. While the course provides a great overview of legal terminology in

the context of an introduction to the legal field, students continue learning legal terminology in many of their later courses as well. And so the better choice would have been to run an assessment in the more advanced LA 71 or LA 72 courses, by which time students should have a better understanding of both the terms and their context and use. In the next assessment cycle, one of these advanced courses will be used for the assessment.

Additional lessons from SLO assessment at the program level are discussed in Part C below.

4. Where would you like your program to be three years from now?

We would like the program to continue growing steadily, which appears to be a realistic goal. In addition, we hope to expand the curriculum and learning opportunities for students. However, as explained in the Summary section above, the legal field is undergoing tremendous changes right now related to technology, outsourcing, and other influences. In the face of this pressure, we must ensure that any program growth is managed wisely.

Wise growth must take into account at least two important considerations. First, we want our graduates to be able to find good jobs. Anything else would be a disservice. Therefore, we will only add student capacity as fast as the local job market grows. At this uncertain time in the legal industry, slow and steady growth seems most prudent. After the recent drops in the college's student enrollment, however, we should and we will recruit more students to fill the classrooms.

Second, we can grow not merely by recruiting, but by increasing the value that we offer to students. Our hybrid online courses are extremely popular and have a high success rate, so they should be expanded. Students need more training with e-Discovery software, since much of the pre-trial litigation casework has moved in that direction. We can partner with local area nonprofit organizations to provide more practical internship and clinical opportunities for our students, particularly in fields such as immigration law where there is a strong demand for legal services in the community. Additionally, we need a class covering Wills, Trusts, and Estates. With an aging population in this district, there is a strong demand for estate planning legal services. We will create this class within the next year or two.

Making these additions will improve the program's value for our paralegal students and keep it on the cutting edge. If our program continues to be perceived well in the community, then our students will keep on sharing the program through word-of-mouth. Law firms will continue to send us staff for training, whether it is for a handful of classes or for a full certificate. Word-of-mouth is the best form of marketing for us and it should enable us to continue growing wisely.

## **PART A: Overview of Program**

1. Identify your program/department's Commitments to Action (CTA's) for this year.

### **A. Student Centered:**

- The faculty will write and develop a new course this year on Wills, Trusts, and Estates.
- The program will create a new rubric for SLO assessments in the LA 72 course.

### **B. Organizational Transformation:**

- A number of older courses need revision. These revisions will be completed and submitted by the end of the year.
- The program's full-time faculty member will work closely with the Dean to mentor and transition in any new adjunct faculty members.

### **C. Community Engagement:**

- The program will continue to expand its outreach efforts to local area high schools.
- The advisory committee will network with local law firms to create a handful of new internship and job opportunities for students.

2. Please explain how your program's CTA's are aligned with the goals of the College. How does your program help the College fulfill its Mission, Strategic Initiatives, and Commitments to Action (CTA's)?

**Consistent with the Mission Statement of Evergreen Valley College, the Paralegal Studies Program helps students from diverse backgrounds realize their potential. The program's CTAs are designed to ensure student success in the classroom and in their working careers after they complete the program. By acquiring professional-level skills and knowledge, students can fulfill their academic potential and embark on rewarding careers in a growing job field. In providing ethics training and a balanced vocational educational curriculum, this program also prepares graduates to engage in the global economy as civic-minded citizens. Each of the program's CTAs (listed in Part A (1), above) is aligned with one of the college-wide initiatives and helps to promote fulfillment of both the college's broad Mission and its more targeted Strategic Initiatives. Based on any measure: enrollment, productivity, student success, graduate employment, or average salaries in the profession, the Paralegal Studies Program is one of the college's top achieving vocational CTE programs.**

3. Please state at least three recent accomplishments for your program which show how it contributes to the College's success.

- A. The program said goodbye to a longtime faculty member (Professor Lashley) who relocated to a different area and it added two new adjunct faculty members.**
- B. The program's full-time faculty member spent half of this academic year on sabbatical, completing a project involving Immigration Law. In the coming semesters, his updated knowledge of this practice field will enable the program to enhance and improve its Immigration Law course. The program also hopes to increase opportunities for students to gain practical skills by working with local nonprofit organizations in the Immigration Law field.**
- C. The program has transitioned its LA 71 (Legal Research) course into a hybrid online format in response to student requests for more scheduling flexibility. This promotes better access to education for a greater number of our students, and it ultimately helps the college remain Student-Centered.**

4. State the goals and focus of this department/program and explain how the program contributes to the mission, comprehensive academic offerings, and priorities of the College and District.

**The central goal of the Paralegal Studies Program is to prepare students to obtain professional jobs in the legal field. Every aspect of the department's work, from curriculum development to classroom teaching to the Advisory Committee to SLO Assessment, contributes to this core objective of ensuring that our students are well prepared for challenging and rewarding careers. The college's mission includes the mandate to help prepare students from diverse backgrounds to succeed academically and beyond. Career Technical Education (CTE) programs are an important career choice for many students whose aptitude and interests are best suited towards vocational education and careers. In addition, the college serves many mid-career adults, stay-at-home mothers returning to the workforce, and workers re-training after being laid off or suffering severe injuries in other job fields. The Paralegal Studies Program attracts many older and non-traditional students. The program is able to help students prepare for high-paying, professional careers in as little as 3-4 semesters (for those attending full-time). The Paralegal Program is one of Evergreen Valley College's best performing career programs, and we plan to continue providing a great career option for students in the future.**

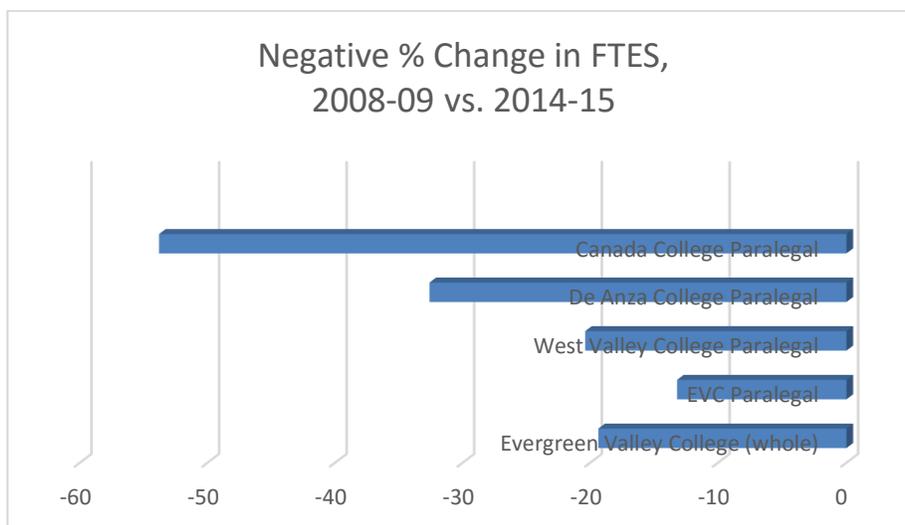
5. Identify current student demographics. If there are recent changes in student demographics, explain how the program is addressing these changes.

**Paralegal Studies students at Evergreen Valley College are a very diverse group. The analysis below includes a breakdown of student enrollment and success by various measures, including**

gender, ethnicity, and age (full data sets are located in the appendix; this section summarizes and analyzes the data). The Paralegal Studies Program always has attracted more women than men, which is the nature of this career, and it also tends to appeal to many students who are older than the college's average age. However, recent trends show that more young people are taking Paralegal courses than in the past, while there has been a slight decrease in the percentage of older students in the program.

While the period covered by this Program Review includes a number of years in which overall college and the program enrollment declined significantly, the Paralegal Studies Program generally has outpaced the college in terms of its enrollment trends during this time. Community college enrollment moves inversely to the local economy (a fact which is even more noticeable for career programs' enrollment). The current economic boom in Silicon Valley has encouraged more people to go back to work rather than go to college to learn new skills. And this has negatively affected enrollment patterns.

As the following chart shows, local community college paralegal programs have been hit hard by the recent enrollment decline. In a year-to-year comparison between the 2008-2009 and 2014-2015 Academic Years, the West Valley College Paralegal Program's enrollment is down by -20.4%. De Anza College's paralegal enrollment during this time period has declined by -32.6% and Canada College's has dropped by -53.8% during this time. The Evergreen Valley College Paralegal Program's enrollment decline of -13.2% seems rather tame by comparison, especially given that the college's overall enrollment dipped by more than -19% during this time period.



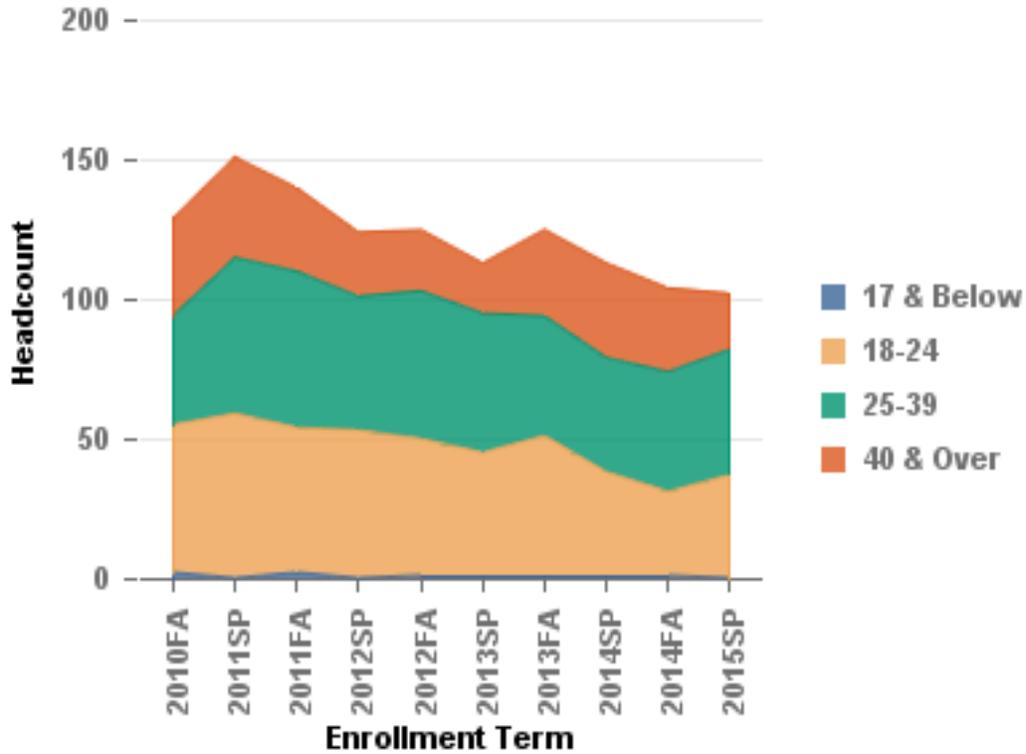
## Age

This program serves a higher age demographic than the college as a whole. The paralegal job field is attractive to students seeking a second career, stay-at-home parents returning to the work force, and people who have suffered workplace injuries and are no longer able to perform the physical labor required in their previous professions. However, for several years, fewer students over the age of 40 have enrolled in the program. This is probably due to lower unemployment and a strong economy during this time; fewer people return to school if there are plenty of jobs available for them already.

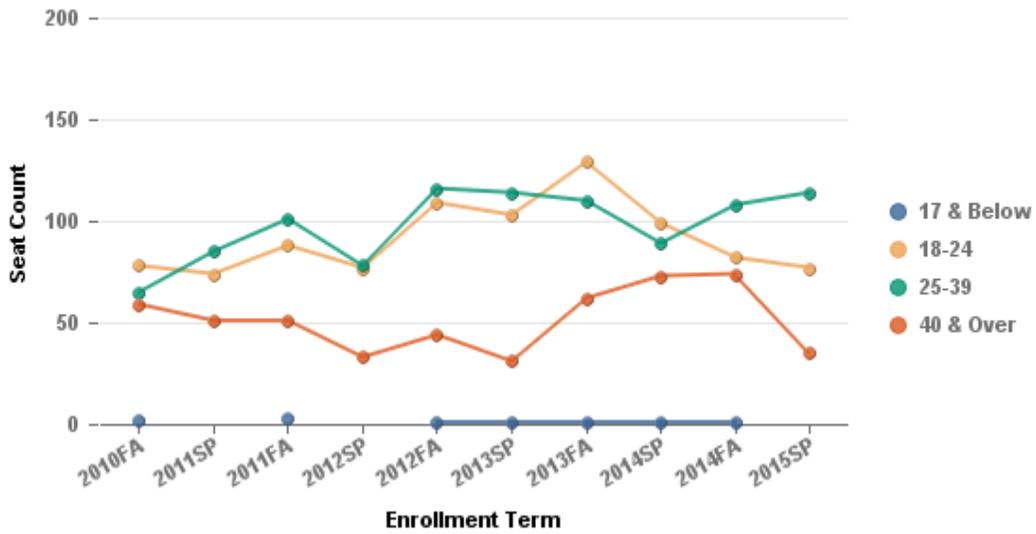
The third chart below takes a snapshot of students by age in Fall 2014, comparing Evergreen Valley College (all students) with the Paralegal Program students. Clearly, the average age of the Paralegal Program's students remains far higher than the college's average student age. One important result of this older age demographic is that about 2/3 of our paralegal students take at

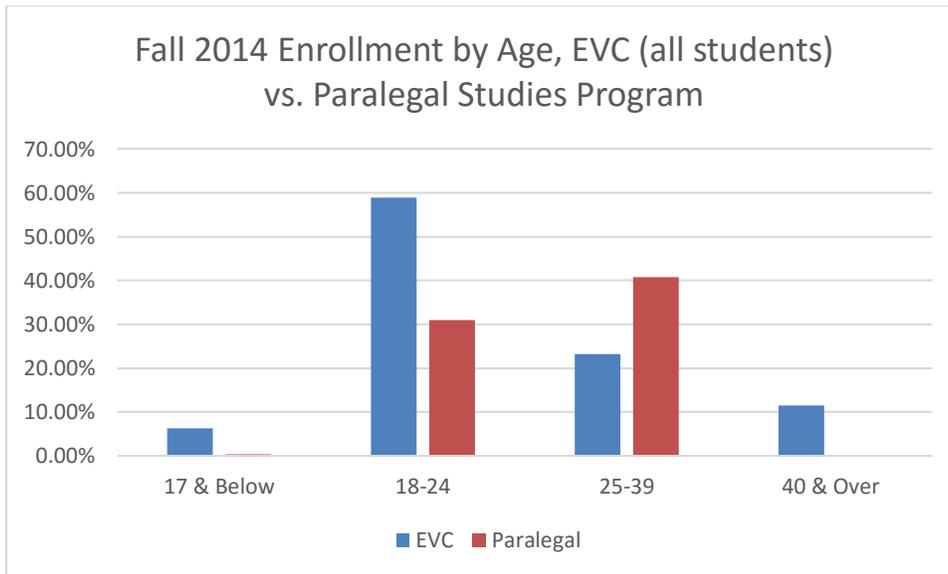
least some evening classes, while only about 1/2 of all Evergreen Valley College students take evening classes.

### Headcount by Age



### Seat Count by Age

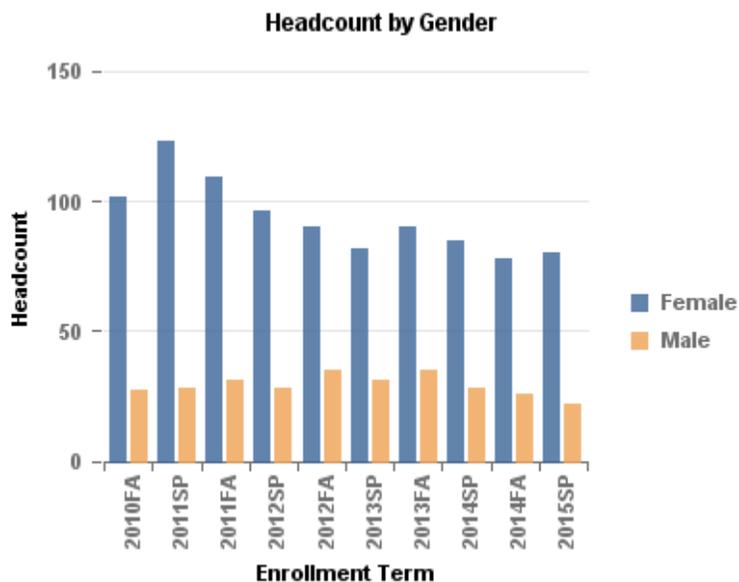




## Gender

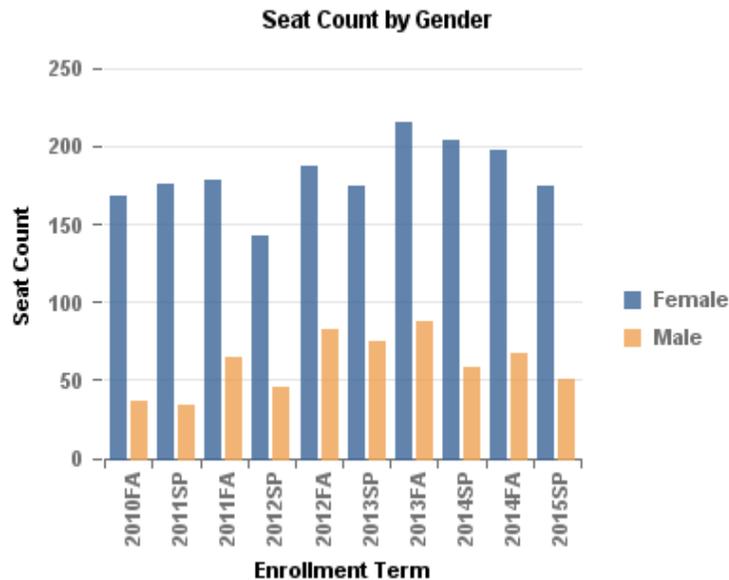
The Paralegal Studies Program serves more women than men. Historically, most law office jobs have been held by women. Nationally, as recently as 2003, only 11% of paralegal jobs were held by men, and paralegal program enrollments were overwhelmingly female also.<sup>9</sup>

In recent decades, the rising salaries and professionalization of the paralegal field have attracted an increasing number of men to the field as well. Nationally, the numbers climbed until the profession was split at about 80% women to 20% men; that 80-20 split was achieved in 2010 and has stayed relatively stable since then.<sup>10</sup> Today, the female-to-male ratio in the EVC Paralegal Studies Program stands at about 75% female to 25% male, a split which has remained constant for the last several years. This can be compared to the college's overall gender balance, which breaks down to about 54% female and 46% male.



<sup>9</sup> 2011-12 Evergreen Valley College Paralegal Studies Program Review.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*



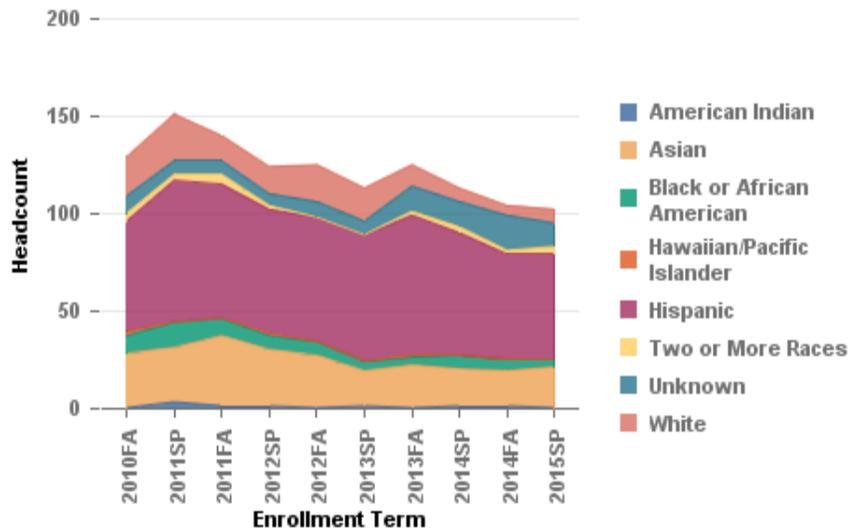
## Ethnicity

The Paralegal Studies Program’s student body is extremely diverse and the relative proportions of students by ethnicity have remained relatively constant in recent years. Even so, there are some important differences in the ethnicity picture between the paralegal student population and the college’s overall student population. The Paralegal Studies Program continues a long term trend of serving a significantly larger share of Hispanic students than the college as a whole. The program also enrolls a larger than average share of African American students. However, when measured against the overall college population, Asian students make up a lower percentage of Paralegal Studies students in nearly every Asian American subgroup. All three of these observations represent long term trends; they were noted and analyzed in the Paralegal Studies Program’s previous Program Review and continue to hold true.

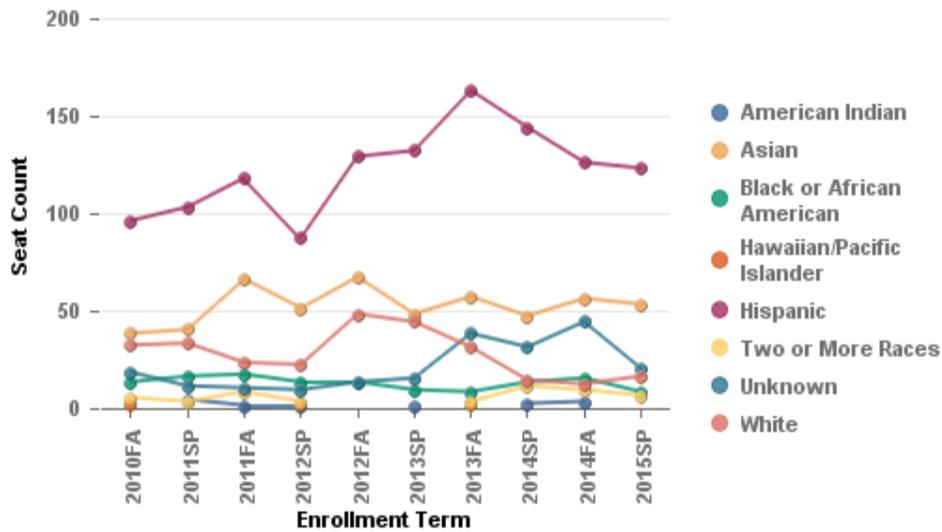
While the program has not conducted research to determine the reasons for its unique demographic profile, there is one theory for the fact that the enrollment breakdown is different from the college’s overall ethnic balance. Most incoming students understand that the legal field requires a high level of spoken and written communication skills. For first-generation immigrants and even those growing up in non-English speaking households, it may be difficult to master the language at such a high level of fluency and comfort. Perhaps Vietnamese-American and other Asian students participate in the program at lower rates because much of the Asian immigration in this community college district has come more recently than that of other groups, such as Mexican-Americans. There has been a large Latino/a population in east San Jose for many decades, whereas the waves of Asian immigration began and accelerated later.

As a result, particularly in a program that serves many older students, there may not be as many Asian American students who are attracted to a field that demands strong verbal and communication skills. Why does the program then have a higher proportion of Hispanic students? Asian and Hispanic students represent, by far, the college’s two largest enrollment groups. So if the Paralegal Studies Program’s share of one group is lower, then by extension the other group will appear to be represented in higher proportion. Perhaps more Hispanic students are naturally attracted to the legal field anyway, but that conclusion would be speculative.

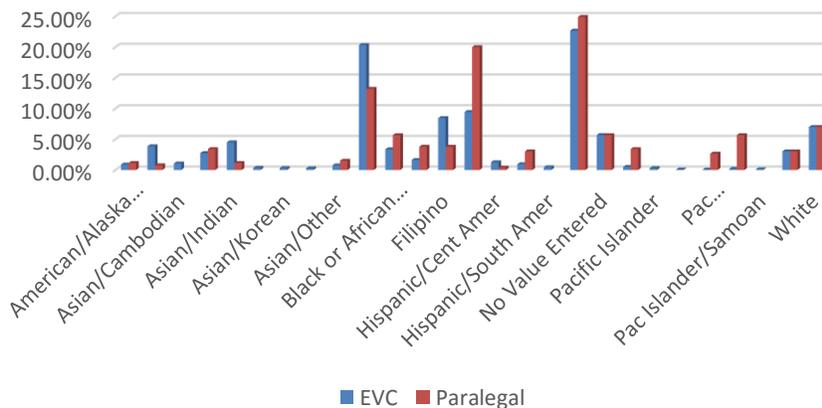
**Headcount by Ethnicity**



**Seat Count by Ethnicity**

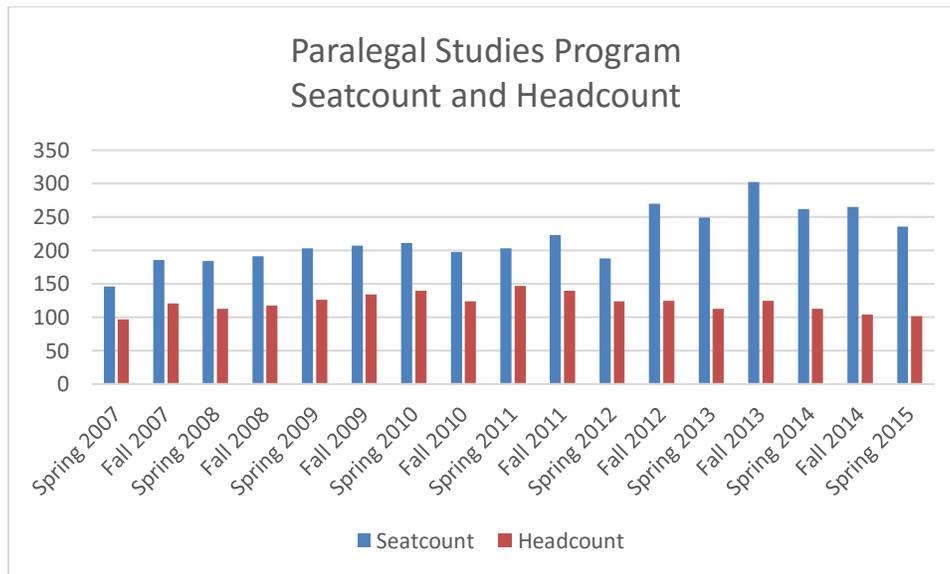


**Fall 2014 Enrollment by Ethnicity, EVC (all students) versus Paralegal Studies Program**



6. Identify enrollment patterns of the department/program in the last 6 years and provide an analysis of any notable trends or patterns.

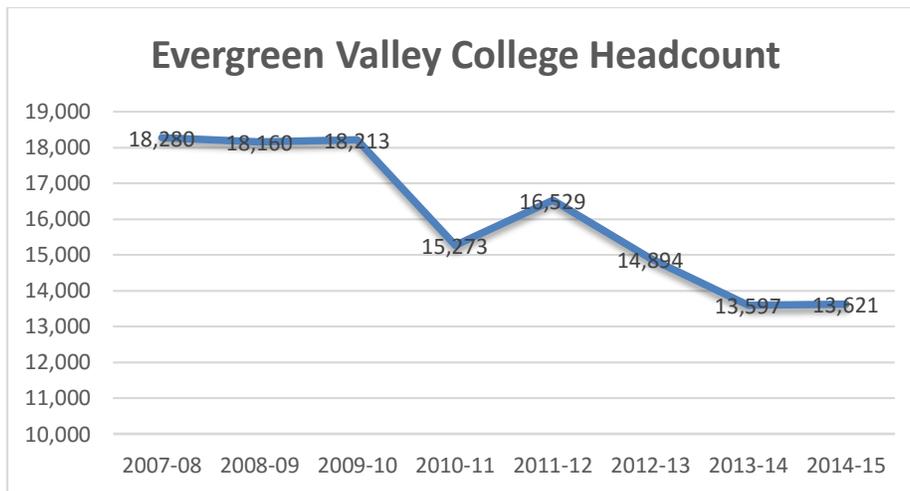
During the recent drop in college enrollment, the Paralegal Studies Program also experienced a heavy drop in enrollment (headcount). Fewer students have been coming back to school as the regional economy has boomed. However, the program has performed very well in seatcount. The following chart shows that while headcount has been much lower, Paralegal Studies seatcount numbers since 2012-2013 have exceeded anything seen previously.



The decrease in headcount is mostly due to the economy. The trend lines here are nearly identical with those of Evergreen Valley College as a whole. As the chart below shows, other Silicon Valley community college paralegal programs have suffered even sharper declines than this one's (-20.4% at West Valley College, -32.6% at De Anza College, and -53.8% at Canada College, compared with -13.2% at Evergreen Valley College; please see chart in the Student Demographics section above). Having fewer students is a disappointment to our program and we feel that we can do a better job with recruitment. However, the employment picture in Silicon Valley indicates that a huge quantity of people have returned to jobs over the last few years. In this context, the college's decrease in enrollment seems quite explainable.

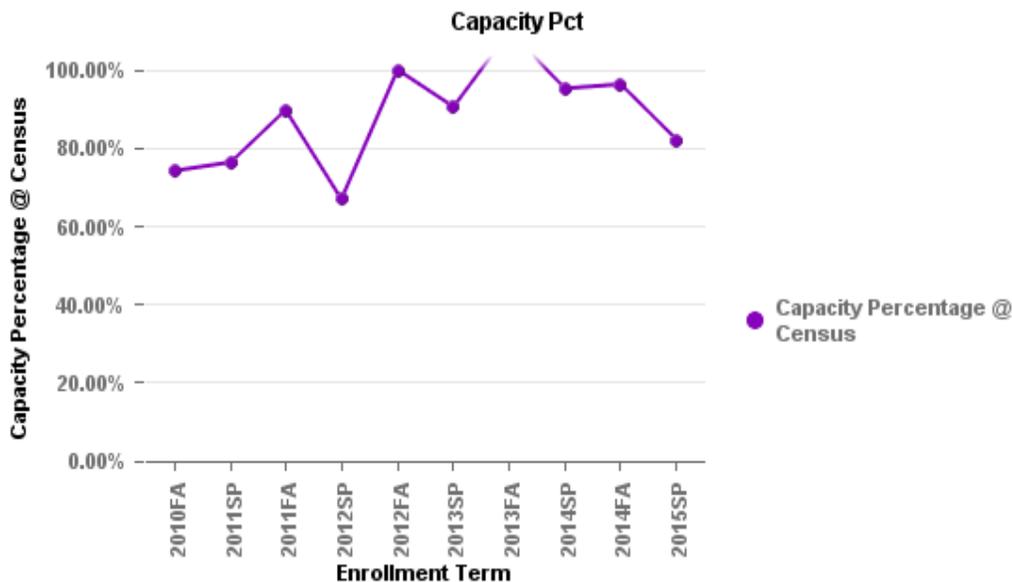
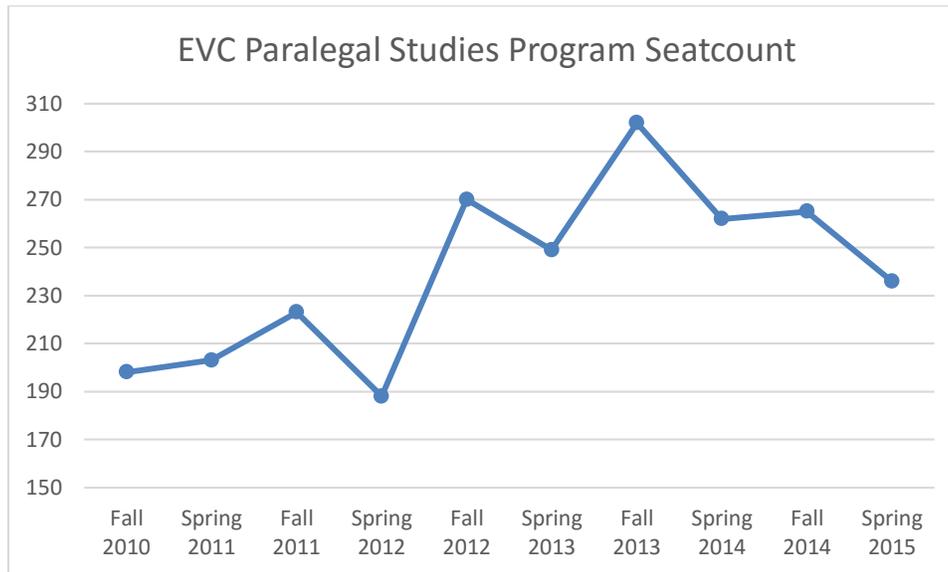
The following table from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) shows the employment trend in the San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA metropolitan area.<sup>11</sup> Compare it with the second chart below, which shows Evergreen Valley College's enrollment trend over the same time period, 2007-2015.

<sup>11</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, "State and Area Employment, Hours, and Earnings," San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA, Total Nonfarm Employees, 2007-2015. Data extracted on February 19, 2016, retrieved from [http://data.bls.gov/timeseries/SMU0641940000000001?data\\_tool=XGtable](http://data.bls.gov/timeseries/SMU0641940000000001?data_tool=XGtable).



If the economy and employment picture appears to mostly explain the lower headcount enrollment, then what explains the Paralegal Studies Program’s sharp increase in seatcount? (The chart below shows this separated out from headcount. For a longer term view, please see the chart on headcount and seatcount that appeared previously in this section.) In Fall 2011, after many years of consistency, the Paralegal Studies seatcount suddenly jumped from 203 to 223. But in Spring 2013, it fell off, regressing to 188.

Then, inexplicably, seatcount jumped *dramatically* from 188 to 270 in just one semester. And in every semester since, the Paralegal Studies Program’s seatcount has held an extremely high range from 236 to 302, even in the face of a decline in the number of individual students enrolled. The Capacity Percentage at Census chart (second chart below) shows the same dramatic change, a sharp increase until the headcount enrollment drop started to eat away at this percentage.



What caused this unprecedented increase in seatcount? Essentially, it meant that existing students were enrolling in more Paralegal Studies courses. The program was improving its productivity even while fewer new students were joining the program.

There may be a simple explanation for this mammoth increase in seatcount. In 2010, a hybrid online course (a section of the required introductory course) was added to the Paralegal Studies Program. In Fall 2011, a second course section (an elective course) was offered also. So in Fall 2011, for the first time, students had a total of two hybrid courses in one semester. Seatcount jumped that semester, but then it regressed in Spring 2012 when the program did not offer any elective courses in hybrid format.

In Fall 2013, for the first time, there were three hybrid courses available to students, an introductory course section and two elective courses. Seatcount suddenly jumped from 188 to 270. And as hybrid online courses have been offered regularly in every semester since then (with the exception of Fall 2015, which will be explained further below), the seatcount number each semester has held to a very high range. This is especially impressive, given that lower enrollments have created downward pressure, yet the Capacity Percentage at Census still remained above 80% through Spring 2015.

Fully online courses may not be appropriate for the Paralegal Studies Program. The legal field is a people business. Students must learn not only the raw legal skills, but also the interaction and teamwork that is so essential to the law office practice. We need the students to be in class.

Hybrid online courses, unlike 100% online courses, keep students in class for a good portion of the semester. The remainder of the time, students are given very specific, targeted interactive work to complete online. In a program where there are so many older students, so many parents, and so many working people who come back to school, hybrid courses provide essential scheduling flexibility and control. They allow students to take more classes than they could have managed otherwise with their busy schedules. And there has been no ill effect from implementing hybrid courses in this program. Student success will be covered in a subsequent section, but it is worth noting here that in every semester since additional hybrid courses were added to the Paralegal Studies Program, course completion and success have either remained steady or *improved* in the semesters since.

Fall 2015 enrollment numbers are not included yet in most of the data sets. 2014-15 is the most recent academic year for which complete information is available at the time of writing this Program Review report. However, the Fall 2015 numbers will be an outlier, since the Paralegal Studies Program suffered a big decline in enrollment. Therefore, the program faculty members wish to explain here why the Fall 2015 numbers will come in much lower.

In Spring 2015, the program's full-time faculty member's application for sabbatical leave on an Immigration Law Project was approved for the Fall 2015 semester. In addition, a longtime adjunct faculty member announced that she had to leave the program to relocate to another area, and that Spring 2015 would be her final semester. It was clear that the program would need to bring in not one, but from 2-3 new adjunct instructors to cover the Fall 2015 courses in the absence of this adjunct instructor and in the temporary sabbatical absence of the full-time faculty member.

The remaining faculty members met to discuss the situation and consider how best to smooth the transition for the program and for its students. The program always maintains a "back bench" of teaching candidates through its Advisory Committee, attorneys and legal professionals who serve on the Committee and often are invited to guest lecture in existing classes. In discussing possible candidates, the program's full-time and remaining adjunct faculty member agreed that there were two candidates who distinguished themselves as having the experience, dedication, and classroom popularity that would ensure that students would register for Paralegal Studies courses in Fall 2015.

Early in Spring 2015, the program's full-time faculty member met with the area Dean, presenting the resumes of these attorneys as recommended candidates to teach Fall 2015 courses. Both candidates had served on the program's Advisory Committee, were experienced teachers or presenters based on their outside work, had guest lectured extensively in existing Evergreen Valley College paralegal courses, and had received very positive feedback from students. Both of them would have added to the college's and the program's diversity, being members of ethnic groups that had not been strongly represented among the college's faculty in the past.

In meeting with the Dean and in e-mails to her, the full-time faculty member stressed the importance of getting started early with the interview and hiring process so that whomever was hired to teach the Fall 2015 courses could be introduced as guests in the current courses and promoted to the students during the Spring 2015 semester. He also requested that if one of these attorneys was hired to teach the Legal Writing course, which is a particularly difficult course for any instructor, the Fall 2015 faculty member would need to be identified early to enable him to help train the new instructor with some mentoring in his Spring 2015 course. If any of the Fall 2015 courses were to be offered in a hybrid format, the faculty member also noted that new instructors would need timely knowledge of which courses they were teaching in order to enable them to become trained on the Moodle online course management system. He was told by the Dean to trust her to handle the adjunct hiring process and to give her the space to do so.

Ultimately, one of the program faculty's recommended candidates was hired and the other was not. Near the end of the Spring 2015 semester, this new adjunct instructor-to-be was the only person who had been promised a Fall 2015 course, and he still had not been told which course it would be, or whether he would be teaching one or two of the Fall courses. The Dean apparently interviewed other candidates as well, but did not invite program faculty to take part in any interviews of potential adjunct faculty members. The program faculty were not informed as to the identities of anyone being interviewed or the progress in that regard, despite repeated requests. Because there was no communication with faculty or students on this matter, and the Dean again asked for space

and trust to handle the matter herself, it was nearly impossible for the program faculty members to give students any assurances about who would be teaching their Fall 2015 subjects.

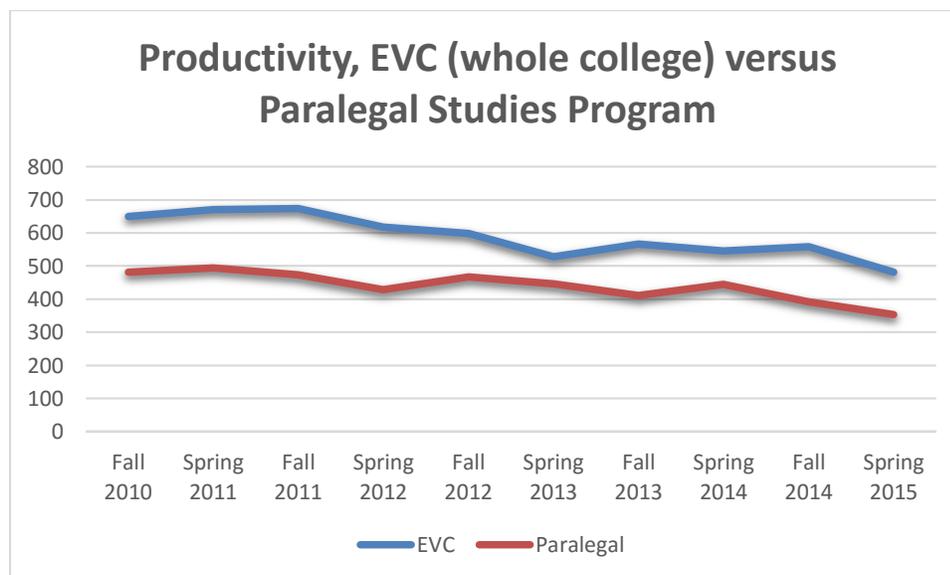
Ultimately, one of the courses was given to a new adjunct faculty member who was hired by the Dean over the summer without any program faculty members being present, involved, or even informed. Other courses were given to a long time college faculty member who regularly teaches in the Business Department, but who had not taught a paralegal course in more than ten years. Students were not given any notice of who would be teaching their courses.

This rough transition translated to very poor enrollment for Fall 2015. This is a small program that offers only 7-8 course sections a semester. Two Fall 2015 sections had to be cancelled due to lack of enrollment, representing one quarter of the program's offerings. Most devastating was the cancellation of one of the two introductory course sections. This essentially meant that the program would have far fewer incoming students to take future electives, depressing enrollment for the next 3-5 semesters.

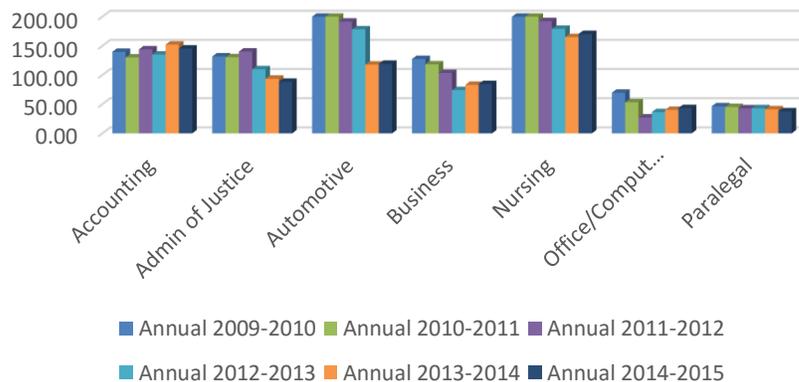
While Spring 2016 enrollment has rebounded, there will be a very small cohort of continuing students (who were new in Fall 2015) moving through the program. This smaller number of continuing students ensures that elective courses and the advanced required courses will have lower enrollments for the next few semesters. Fortunately, the program's incoming enrollment appeared to rebound well in Spring 2016. Hopefully, this trend will continue in the coming terms.

#### 7. Identify department/program productivity (WSCH/FTEF).

The Paralegal Studies Program is one of the more productive career programs at Evergreen, Valley College. The following chart shows how the program's productivity trend matches that of the college. Both have decreased in recent semesters along with the lower numbers of incoming students. Compared with other career-related programs at the college, the Paralegal Studies Program has been fairly productive, and consistently so. (Because WSCH/FTEF productivity data on other programs was not obtainable, the second chart below shows FTES trends over time. Assuming a consistent number of class sections were offered, the productivity trends would look fairly similar for these career programs.) The Paralegal Studies Program hopes to improve both enrollment and productivity in the coming semesters.



## FTES Trends for Selected EVC Career-Related Programs, 2009-10 to 2014-15



8. Identify student success rate and patterns within the department/program paying particular attention to our college's target groups.

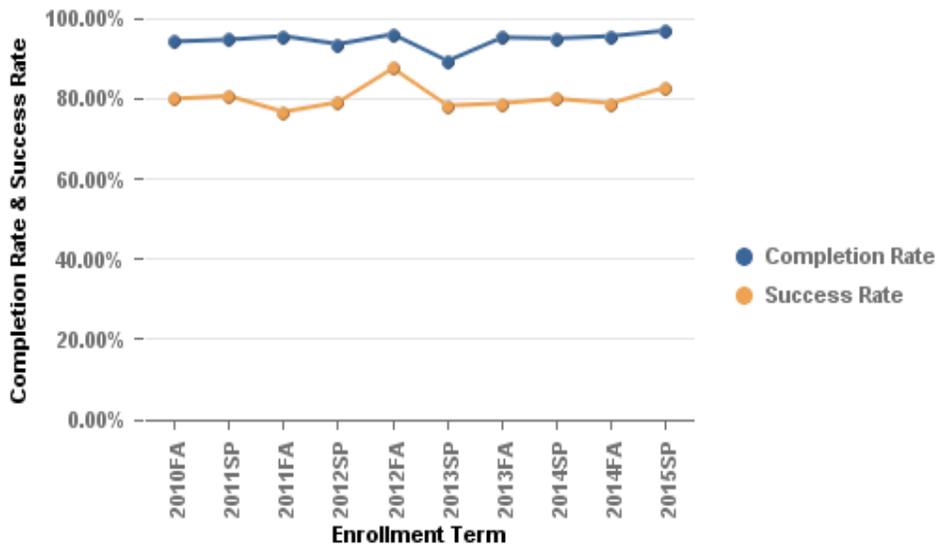
**The Paralegal Studies Program's Course Completion and Success Rates remain high. While the high quality of instruction deserves some credit, the truth is that paralegal students are very self-selecting. The program naturally attracts students who are motivated to pursue this career path. A breakdown of completion and success rates by ethnicity does not show any clear patterns. Historically, all groups have succeeded at similar levels in this program, and that still appears to be the case.**

Please note that in the Course Completion and Success Rate charts below, there are a few wild swings of particular lines. The two wildest of these show American Indian students and students of two or more races. From 2010-2014, the program has had from 1-4 American Indian students enrolled in its courses. In this same period, the program had as many as 11 and as few as 0 students identifying themselves as being members of two or more races. These statistical samples are much too small to yield any actual data upon which to base meaningful conclusions.

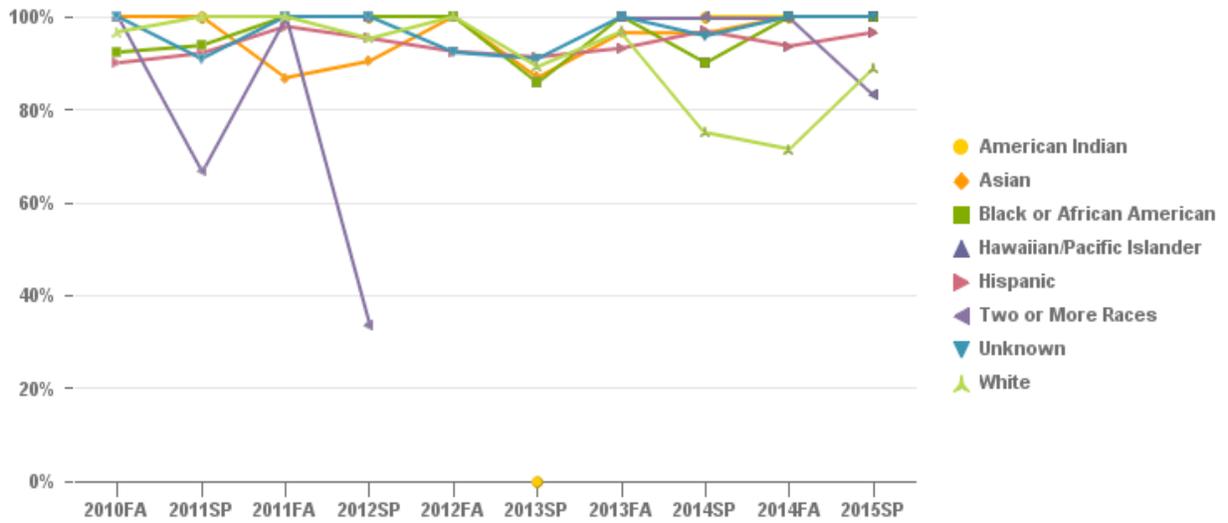
Similarly, Fall 2014 showed a sudden dip in success rates for two groups: White and Black/African American students. By the next semester, both groups' success rates had returned to the mean, which put them back where they had been before: in the same high range of success as other student groups. And so, that particular semester seems to have been an outlier. This is not uncommon when a small program attempts to analyze its enrollment and success using so many categories of ethnicity. Many of these classifications contain very small numbers of students. Therefore, a change of even one or two students can create statistical noise.

The good news is that all groups continue to succeed at high rates. The final chart below shows that the Paralegal Studies Program continues to outperform the general college population in terms of student success. Again, this is partly due to the quality of instruction, but it owes much more to the quality of students who are attracted to career programs.

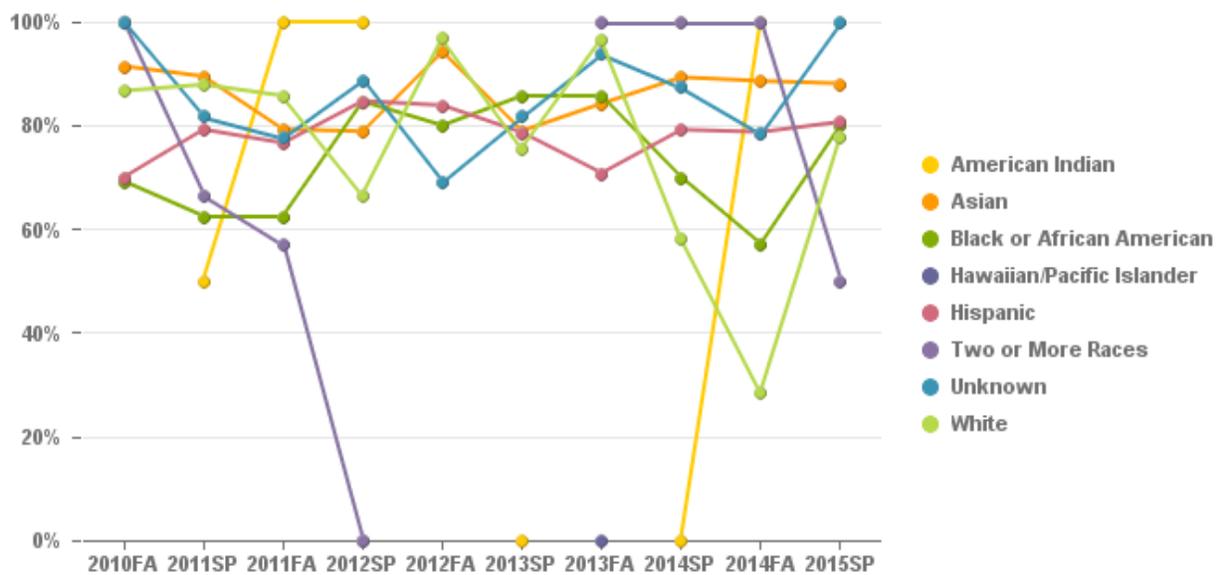
### Course Completion and Success

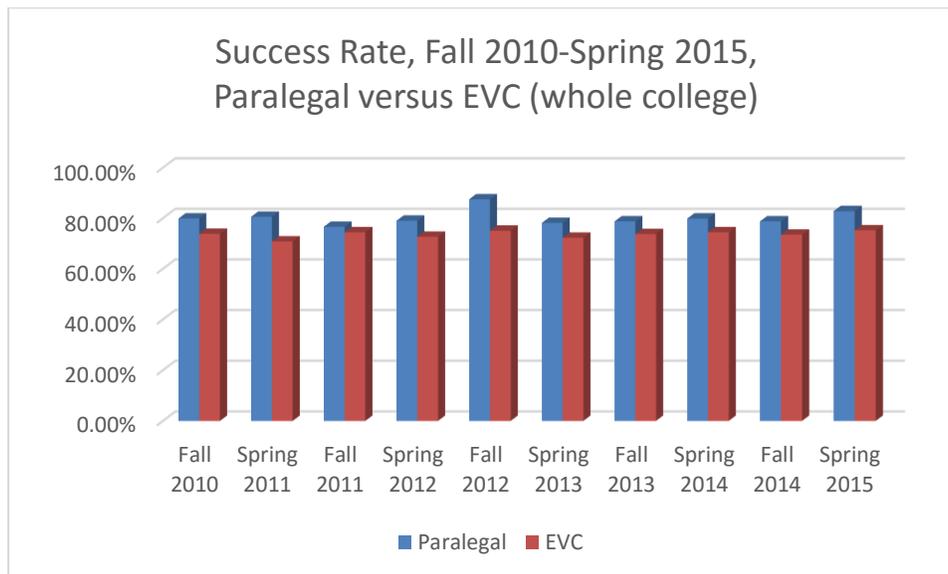


### Course Completion Rate



### Course Success Rate





Going forward, the program plans to improve its success rates. While these are fairly high and quite consistent, it is important to enable as many students as possible to succeed. The program will set a minimum floor of 68% for its Success Rate. This is a conservative estimate, since some semester-to-semester fluctuations are possible. With some new faculty members involved and such a small number of course sections being offered, some fluctuations are possible, but 68% is a realistic floor. In the near future, the program looks forward to setting achievement goals as well, aiming to improve success rates both in the individual classes and for the program overall.

9. If the program utilizes advisory boards and/or professional organizations, describe their roles.

The Evergreen Valley College Paralegal Studies Program has an active Advisory Committee made up of attorneys, law firm administrators, paralegals and legal assistants, program alumni, and students. Members of the Advisory Committee have served as past presidents and officers of the Santa Clara County Legal Professionals Association and the Silicon Valley Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators (legal administrators often are the people who hire paralegals). Some have taught at law schools as well. All are respected members of the legal field in San Jose and Silicon Valley.

The Advisory Committee meets to discuss matters of importance to the Paralegal Studies Program, offering advice and feedback on curriculum changes, trends in the legal field, and internships and job placement for students and graduates. By regularly reviewing the program's curriculum and student success, the Advisory Committee provides an important source of evaluation and assurance that the program is meeting its goals at a high level of quality. Between meetings, members of this committee stay active in helping the program by guest lecturing in classes, helping to organize workshops for students, and developing internship and job opportunities for students and graduates.

## **PART B: Curriculum**

1. Identify all courses offered in the program and describe how the courses offered in the program meet the needs of the students and the relevant discipline(s).

The Paralegal Studies (Legal Assistant) department offers 17 courses designed to support its three certificate and degree programs: the Paralegal Studies Certificate, Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree and Associate in Science (A.S.) degree. To enable graduates to comply with the California law regulating paralegals, the Certificate and the two degrees each require students to complete 24 units

within the major. The curriculum is updated regularly to ensure that it is appropriate for the industry and compliant with college needs.

The Paralegal Studies Certificate is comprised of the 24 core units of law-related courses required by the state. The A.A. and A.S. degrees have the same major requirements in addition to the college's general education requirements for each degree. The program's major requirements for both the Certificate and degrees appear as follows:

Major Requirements

LA 010 Introduction to Law	3.0
LA 071 Legal Research	3.0
LA 072 Legal Analysis and Writing	3.0
Legal Specialty Courses from below	15.0
Total:	<b>24.0</b>

Legal Specialty Courses

LA 011 Overview of Contracts, Property, and Tort Law	3.0
LA 014 Civil Litigation	3.0
LA 016 Introduction to California Courts	3.0
LA 030 Bankruptcy	3.0
LA 033 Tort and Personal Injury	3.0
LA 036 Real Estate and Property Law	3.0
LA 038 Family Law	3.0
LA 040 Criminal Law	3.0
LA 042 Laws of Corporations, Partnerships and Sole Proprietorships	3.0
LA 044 Intellectual Property Law	3.0
LA 046 Immigration Law	3.0
LA 050 Constitutional Law	3.0

The program has three required courses: the LA 10 introductory course and the two-course Legal Research and Legal Analysis & Writing sequence of LA 71 and 72. Beyond these required courses, students may choose to acquire more specialized knowledge in any of our Legal Specialty (elective) courses. To complete the major, students also must take five Legal Specialty courses of three units apiece to reach the 15-unit total needed from this list. For example, students interested in working in a law office serving individual clients may select the courses in Criminal Law, Family Law, and Tort and Personal Injury Law, while students who focus on a business-related career may choose to study Real Estate and Property Law, Corporations, and Intellectual Property Law. Litigation-related subjects are considered so integral to most paralegal jobs that the Civil Litigation and California Courts courses are offered as frequently as possible.

Course descriptions are as follows (from the college catalog):

Course descriptions:

**LA-010 - Introduction to Law, Legal Research, the Constitution, and Ethics**  
**Units: 3**

This course provides an introduction to law, legal research, constitutional law, and legal ethics while helping students build the foundational skills necessary to succeed in legal specialty courses and in professional careers. The course includes an overview of constitutional law and court systems, a survey of legal ethics, an introduction to legal research methods, and an examination of current careers for legal professionals. Course objectives include the development of a working knowledge of the legal system, acquisition of basic legal research skills, and an understanding of current ethical guidelines in the law.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L  
*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None  
CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None  
Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS  
Repeatable: No

### **LA-011 - Overview of Contracts, Property, and Tort Law**

#### **Units: 3**

This course provides an essential overview of the three main areas of civil law: contracts, property, and tort law. Students will learn the legal requirements of valid contracts and the functions of commonly used provisions as they gain experience drafting and customizing various contracts. Students will also receive an introduction to property law, including the basic concepts involved in the ownership and use of personal property and real property. The class will also cover the fundamentals of tort law, including intentional torts, negligence, strict liability torts, and the policies and procedures of a personal injury law office.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: 0 Grading: L  
*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None  
CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None  
Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS  
Repeatable: No

### **LA-014 - Civil Litigation**

#### **Units: 3**

This course provides students with an understanding of the fundamental principles and preparation of civil cases for trial. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to draft pleadings, motions and other documents required in a civil action, and will understand trial and appeal procedures.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L  
*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None  
Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010 with C or better or 6 months full-time experience as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal, or Legal Assistant.  
CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None  
Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS  
Repeatable: No

### **LA-016 - Introduction to California Courts**

#### **Units: 3**

This course serves as an introduction to the various courts of law in the California state court system; including the Supreme Court, the Courts of Appeal, the Superior Courts, and the many specialized courts of limited jurisdiction. The course covers the location of courts, local court rules and statewide rules of court procedure. It will also detail the rules and procedures utilized in many of the specialized courts, such as Family Court, Juvenile Court and small Claims Court.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: 0 Grading: L  
*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None  
CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS  
Repeatable: No

### **LA-030 - Bankruptcy**

#### **Units: 3**

This course provides an overview of conditions and laws of bankruptcy and its alternatives. It prepares the student to research and prepare legal documents for handling Chapter 7, 11, and Chapter 13 bankruptcy cases, whether representing the debtor or creditor or serving as a court appointed trustee.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010 with C or better, or 6 months full-time experience as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal, or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

### **LA-033 - Tort and Personal Injury Law**

#### **Units: 3**

This course prepares the student to assist attorneys and corporations in tort and personal injury law. The primary legal principles of tort and the various means of establishing insurance plans are covered. The student will be trained in the use of specific forms and procedures utilized in tort and personal injury work. Course content includes intentional torts, negligence, causation, proximate cause, strict liabilities, employer's liability, nuisance, misrepresentation, and product liability.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010 with C or better, or 6 months full-time experience as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal, or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

### **LA-036 - Real Estate and Property Law**

#### **Units: 3**

This course covers real property law, purchase and sales agreements, mortgages, leases, easements, deeds, closing and recordings of documents, and title searches. Emphasis will be placed upon interpreting the law, drafting and recording documents related to real property law.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

### **LA-038 - Family Law**

#### **Units: 3**

This course covers the substantive law in the area traditionally known as "family law" or "domestic relations." Subjects covered will include dissolution of marriage, adoptions, guardianship, child/spousal/family support, child custody, and paternity. The class will train the student in the skills necessary for working as a legal

assistant in the area of family law. Content will include the use of judicial counsel forms, the preparation of pleadings, drafting of declaration, preparation of Income and Expense declarations, the drafting of property settlement agreements, and the use of interviewing checklists.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010 with C or better, or 6 months full-time experience as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal, or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

### **LA-040 - Criminal Law**

#### **Units: 3**

This course provides the student with a comprehensive understanding of the provisions of criminal law and procedure. Content will include the criminal court system and how it functions; the criminal justice system from arrest to trial and sentencing; elements of and defenses to all major crimes; and an overview of the criminal procedure.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or 010 with C or better, or six months full-time-experience as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

### **LA-042 - Laws of Corporations,**

#### **Partnerships, and Sole**

#### **Proprietorships**

#### **Units: 3**

This course provides students with a general understanding of the various legal structures of businesses and the laws governing business transactions. Students will learn the basic law of contract, partnerships, corporations, and the Uniform Commercial Code. Emphasis will be on drafting documents appropriate to various business transactions.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010, with C or better, or six months full-time experience as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

### **LA-044 - Intellectual Property Law**

#### **Units: 3**

This course will provide occupational competency for students in the expanding field of patents, copyrights, and trademarks. Course content will include patents,

trade protection, semiconductor chip protection, Section 43(a) false advertising, unfair competition, publicity rights, and idea submission. For each major specialty area, coverage will also include: The nature of the protected right; what is protected; the requirements for protection; who may be protected; the duration of protection ownership; transfer of ownership; infringement; and remedies.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 008 or LA 010, with C or better, or six months full-time experience as a Legal Secretary, Paralegal or Legal Assistant.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

### **LA-046 - Basic Immigration Law**

#### **Units: 3**

This course covers basic immigration law for the paralegal. This is a hands-on approach to identification of people eligible to immigrate, types of visas, citizenship eligibility and application, and special conditions: topics include I.N.S. structure, procedures, and filings; factual, country, and legal research; and immigration case management and technology.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: O

*Advisory Level:* Read: 2 Write: 2 Math: None

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

### **LA-050 - Constitutional Law**

#### **Units: 3**

This course is designed to present a basic understanding of the U. S. Constitution, from its development to present-day applications. Topics covered include: the formation of the 3 branches of government, state's rights and responsibilities, and the rights afforded individual citizens such as freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and the right to privacy. The course also covers the rights of persons accused of a crime, which are guaranteed by the Constitution and subsequent statutes.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: 0 Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

CAN: CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

### **LA-071 - Legal Research and Writing-A (pending curriculum revision will re-title it as "Legal Research")**

#### **Units: 3**

This course provides the student with a working knowledge of the essential techniques used to research legal issues. The proper use of many law library references are covered including federal and state statutes and codes, Shepard's citations, the West digest and key number systems, legal periodicals, treatises, and the legislative history of statutes and regulations at the federal, state and local

levels. Students will also learn how to locate, analyze and brief federal and state case decisions at the county law library.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 010, with grade of C or better. And, BIS 091 or CIT 010, with grade of C or better, or concurrent enrollment in BIS 091 or CIT 010.

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

### **LA-072 - Legal Analysis and Writing**

#### **Units: 3**

This course provides students with advanced skills training in legal analysis, legal writing, and the use of electronic legal research using databases like WESTLAW and LEXIS. Students will be presented with complex legal problems and will learn how to analyze them using the IRAC method (Issue, Rule, Analysis, Conclusion). Students will learn to present their legal analyses in professional quality written documents, including trial court pleadings, research memoranda, motions, client opinion letters, demand letters, and more.

Lecture Hours: 3 Lab Hours: None Grading: L

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Prerequisite: LA 010, with C or better

CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS

Repeatable: No

### **LA-138 - Work Experience**

#### **Units: 1 - 8**

Occupational Work Experience is designed for students who work or volunteer in a field related to their career major. Students are required to provide evidence that they are enrolled in a career program (e.g., education plan or coursework in a career/occupational subject area). Students can earn one unit of credit for each 60 hours of unpaid volunteer time or 75 hours of paid work during the semester. Students can repeat Career/Occupational Work Experience, combined with General Work Experience, or alone, up to a maximum of 16 units. Internship/job placement is not guaranteed.

Lecture Hours: None Lab Hours: 1.81 Grading: O

*Advisory Level:* Read: 3 Write: 3 Math: None

Corequisite: Be employed or a volunteer at an approved work-site for the minimum number of hours per unit as stipulated for paid and unpaid status.

Transfer Status: CSU Degree Applicable: AA/AS CSU GE: None District GE: None IGETC: None

2. State how the program has remained current in the discipline(s).

**The program has a strong Advisory Committee, which includes attorneys, legal administrators, paralegals and legal assistants from law offices throughout Silicon Valley. This Advisory Committee ensures that the program curriculum remains current in the field, providing regular feedback and advice on trends and needs in the legal field. In addition, program faculty members complete regular Continuing Legal Education (CLE) courses that are approved by the State Bar of California. Finally,**

**maintaining a close relationship with local organizations in the legal field helps the program draw upon the current expertise of industry professionals as guest lecturers and workshop presenters.**

3. All course outlines in this program should be reviewed and revised every six years. If this has not occurred, please list the courses and present a plan for completing the process, including timelines and dates for each course.

**LA 36, LA 46, and LA 71 recently were flagged as needing routine revisions. These courses have been revised by the faculty member and submitted for curriculum review.**

4. Identify and describe innovative strategies or pedagogy your department/program developed/offered to maximize student learning and success. How did they impact student learning and success?

**The hybrid online courses continue to be a very successful addition. Students are succeeding in these courses and they appreciate the flexibility that the hybrid schedule affords them. With more hybrid courses, it should be possible for students to complete the entire Paralegal Studies Program through this innovative, flexible, and engaging format.**

**Another recent change has come in the LA 71 (Legal Research) course. A great transformation is occurring in the legal field, and this course sits right in the middle of it. While the profession has used online tools for many years, all law schools and paralegal education programs have taught this in conjunction with library-based legal research using hard copy versions of legal sources.**

**Attorneys have continued to value paralegals who can conduct library research. This is partly because the best quality online tools (such as the Lexis and Westlaw legal research databases) are extremely expensive to use. And the free or cheap online research tools have been limited in their effectiveness.**

**But all of these tools (free, cheap, or expensive) are becoming higher quality. And nearly every large law firm and corporate legal department has eliminated its law library, choosing to rely instead on online databases. Even Google got into the game with its Google Scholar legal research function; this tool is as good as any free or cheap resource on the Internet for conducting case research, but it is unclear how much Google plans to invest in adding other needed features and keeping its sources updated.**

**A few years ago, Thomson Reuters released a new version of its Westlaw database that took the legal world by storm. Lexis soon followed with a comparable version. Westlaw's change was so successful that the company announced plans last year to completely eliminate its older database and use only the newer version. The Paralegal Studies Program had anticipated this change and was already training students in how to use the new system alongside the classic version.**

**The new versions of these databases come with two big changes: an *incredibly* smart algorithm to rank results (a feature which is generations beyond what these databases were using before) and a very simple user interface. The interfaces on these new versions resemble a simple search engine, like Google or Yahoo. It's legal research for dummies. What used to require weeks' worth of training in the LA 71 Legal Research course and in law school and paralegal education program all around the country now has become so simple to use that it has eliminated a chunk of LA 71's training.**

**And so the program sensed two potential opportunities. The first was that it finally became possible to offer LA 71 as a hybrid course. For the last several years, even after its LA 72 (Legal Analysis and Writing) companion course was taught in hybrid format, LA 71 was a traditional holdout. There was just so much material that demanded students be present in the classroom for the whole semester.**

**But today, with the de-emphasis of the library material (which we still teach, but only for fluency rather than accuracy) and then with the simplification of the online databases, the course became possible to offer partly online. The elimination of some material has allowed the program to teach the course with a greater emphasis on deep research and analysis skills, modifying the Midterm**

Project to involve less total time on research and more time on analyzing and using the results of that research. In Spring 2016, LA 71 is being taught for the first time in a hybrid format.

The second potential opportunity has not yet been realized. Program faculty recognize that the program would be much more marketable if it was possible for students to complete it in two semesters on a full-time basis. Presently, it takes three semesters to complete. By shuffling some of the material, moving a portion of the research material to the introductory LA 71 course, and taking advantage of the streamlined nature of the legal research training, would it be possible to combine three courses (LA 10, 71, and 72) into just a two-course sequence?

On paper, the program could come very close to making this possible, though it would involve a small sacrifice in terms of less writing work and of course less time with library research sources. The two-semester ideal was close enough to being possible that faculty took this issue to the program's Advisory Committee and asked the Advisory Committee members to go through these courses' curriculum with a fine-toothed comb. The faculty wanted the Advisory Committee members' opinion on whether the transformation to a required two-course sequence (rather than three) would be possible and how well it would sell in the legal community.

Consensus was that this change would help to market the program to students and it probably would draw more enrollment. Faculty asked the Advisory Committee's attorneys if a two-semester program would appear to be of a lower quality for any students graduating from this program and seeking jobs. The Committee's best guess was no; it would not damage the program's perception in the legal community. The Committee did not like sacrificing any writing practice in the move from three courses to two courses, but understood that this change would serve the purpose of creating a more efficient program.

However, the final issue was a deal breaker. The attorneys on the program's Advisory Committee were not willing to sacrifice any more of the hard copy, library-based legal research. They still want paralegals who are able to perform full-scale legal research in a law library, not just online. And they believe there are enough attorneys who agree with this need that it could be detrimental to the program and its graduates to cut out any more of the hard copy research training. And so the program continues to require a three-semester course sequence.

Most members of the Advisory Committee acknowledge that will be a matter of time before this change is made, because it will be a matter of time until attorneys become fully comfortable with the newer versions of the legal research databases. More attorneys will enter the workforce who are comfortable using purely electronic research tools and not library volumes. But the legal field has not reached that point yet, according to the Advisory Committee. And until it does, the Paralegal Studies Program will continue training its students in blend of traditional and ultra-modern research techniques, giving them the best skill set possible to make them employable upon graduation.

5. Discuss plans for future curricular development and/or program (degrees & certificates included) modification. Use a Curriculum Mapping form as needed.

The program plans to develop a new course in the subject area of Wills, Trusts, and Estate Planning. Most Probate and Estate Planning law is practiced in smaller law firms, where paralegals often have an important role to play in meeting with clients. There is a growing demand for legal services in this field of law, especially given the aging demographics of the region's population. To paraphrase Benjamin Franklin, nothing in the world is as certain as death and taxes.

In addition, the program will continue to convert existing courses into the hybrid online format. This has proven to be successful from both an enrollment and a student success viewpoint. If there are courses for which the primary instructor feels the hybrid format is not appropriate, a greater use of web enhancement will be encouraged.

The program will continue following legal research trends in the profession and discussing how best to respond to ongoing changes. In the previous discussion (see above), we explained that the program may be able to convert from a three semester to a two-semester program if faculty determine that the required LA 10, LA 71, and LA 72 courses can be streamlined into two courses without making serious sacrifices. In terms of the development of technology and of attorney's needs

for paralegals with certain research knowledge, the program is not yet at a point of being able to streamline the courses into a two semester offering, but that point may come in the near future if the faculty and Advisory Committee deem it the most prudent choice.

6. Describe how your program is articulated with the High School Districts, CCOC (if applicable), and/or other four year institutions. (Include articulation agreements, common course numbering etc.)

None of the four-year colleges or universities in this region have upper-division paralegal majors, though some of our program's students have transferred to the University of California, Santa Cruz for its Legal Studies major. While many of our graduates use the Paralegal Studies A.A. or A.S. as a means of transferring to a four-year school, they must choose another major when they get there. At San Jose State University, for example, the closest subject is Criminal Justice. The Paralegal Studies Program's full-time faculty member is active in discussions with the state Academic Senate's C-ID group to create more standard course descriptions and model curricula for paralegal programs at the state level, so that four-year institutions can have a fully understanding of the courses that their incoming transfer students have taken.

In addition, California law requires that paralegals and legal assistants must complete a minimum number of units in related courses at a regionally-accredited post-secondary institution. For this reason, the program must offer these units and is not able to accept high school or CCOC classes for articulation. The program continues to improve its outreach to local area high schools and to develop good relationships with high school counselors.

7. If external accreditation or certification is required, please state the certifying agency and status of the program.

The Evergreen Valley College Paralegal Studies Program is structured to enable graduates to comply with California Business and Professions Code Section 6450, which regulates training and education requirements for paralegals and legal assistants. Though it regulates the job titles, this law does not impose any examination or licensing requirements. The main burden is placed upon attorneys to ensure that any paralegal they hire is compliant with the state law.

Separately, there are certain courses in the program which use curriculum that is approved by outside organizations. The program's Immigration Law course, for instance, appears on the federal government's website and is approved by certain immigration services organizations. These organizations provide their own certification for employees to enable them to provide immigration services to members of the community. Because this course is an approved offering, these organizations then send their employees to Evergreen Valley College to be trained.

### **PART C: Student Outcomes**

1. On the program level, defined as a course of study leading to a degree or certificate, list the Program Learning Outcomes (PLO), if applicable. Please note, you may be completing this program review as a department or discipline and do not offer any degrees or certificates. In this instance, please disregard this question.

The Paralegal Studies (Legal Assistant) Program offers three terminal achievements: the Certificate, A.A., and A.S. degrees. All of these were revised in 2011. Each one includes Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), which will be assessed on a regular basis to promote a better understanding of how best to promote student success. These SLOs, which are the same for each achievement, are listed below:

#### **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for Paralegal Studies Certificate, A.A., and A.S. degrees:**

At the completion of the program, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a proficient knowledge of the various areas of law and their importance
2. Describe the legal profession's basic ethical guidelines and apply them in hypothetical situations
3. Demonstrate effective legal research skills by selecting and utilizing appropriate sources of law
4. Prepare legal research memoranda and other documents commonly used by attorneys
5. Use legal terminology capably in an appropriate context

2. List or describe all assessment mechanisms you are using to evaluate course and/or program student learning outcomes. Please provide a link to all the course and/or program SLO assessment matrices.

The Paralegal Studies Program prepares students with job-ready skills that they can begin using upon graduation. The program-level SLOs measure the extent to which students possess the requisite skills, knowledge, and readiness to begin working in an entry-level paralegal or legal assistant job. Program-level outcomes are assessed in three required classes: LA 10 (Introduction to Law), LA 71 (Legal Research) and LA 72 (Legal Analysis and Writing). SLOs #1 and #2 are knowledge-based outcomes. These two outcomes are assessed in LA 10 following the course's coverage of the material on legal ethics and various areas of law. Students demonstrate proficient knowledge of these areas by completing quizzes and assignments. The results of these evaluations indicate the extent to which the program is meeting its outcomes #1 and #2.

SLOs #3, #4, and #5 measure advanced skills. Since LA 71 and LA 72 are the last two courses students must complete before graduating, they provide the program with a conclusive opportunity to assess students' skills with an eye toward their readiness to work in an entry-level paralegal or legal assistant job. (Please see attached assessment rubric entitled *2010-11 Paralegal Studies SLO Assessment*, which demonstrates a recent assessment of SLO #3.) While these assessments measure students' readiness for jobs, they are really measuring how well the Paralegal Studies Program is doing its job in educating, training, and preparing students.

Each course includes a final project known as a Memorandum of Law. It is the pinnacle of legal writing, requiring the preparer to demonstrate effective legal research, analysis, and writing techniques. These memoranda are used as the basis for many legal documents, including certain court briefs, motions, and appeals. SLO #4 squarely evaluates whether students are able to complete these projects at a high level of quality. SLO #3 (legal research skills) and SLO #5 (legal terminology) can both be evaluated also on the basis of the students' final projects. However, since students are able to take the LA 71 and LA 72 courses in either order, some LA 72 students have not yet learned the full-scale legal research skills that are taught in LA 71. As a result, SLO #3 is assessed by means of the LA 71 final writing project, in which students must demonstrate strong legal research skills. SLOs #4 and #5 are assessed by means of the LA 72 final writing project.

All SLO assessment matrices for the course and program level are available from the college's SLO page.

3. Since your last program review, summarize SLO assessment results at the course and program level (if applicable).

SLO assessment at the course level is discussed in the Summary section above. At the program level, outcomes assessment has led to some important lessons as well. For example, the most recent assessment of Program Learning Outcome #1 ("Demonstrate a proficient knowledge of the various areas of law and their importance") came back with very positive results, but it opened up a discussion of the course in which that assessment was run.

The course, LA 72 (Legal Analysis and Writing), informally covers a number of different areas of law in the context of teaching writing skills. Yet the course curriculum does not formally include material on various areas of law. And so, we have decided to revise this course to make sure this content is explicitly included, which will create a more faithful match for this Program SLO.

In time, as the program becomes more experienced with SLO assessment, it will result in more examples of program improvement as well. SLOs are continuously revisited and revised by program faculty with the advice and consent of the Advisory Committee.

As long as the SLOs represent current industry skills and demand, then the program can gauge its effectiveness by assessing them on the back end. On the front end of the program, students and employers know the program is effective when graduates get good jobs and are well prepared for them. In that way, the program can evaluate and ensure its ongoing success via SLO assessment.

4. What plans for improvement have been implemented to your courses or program as a result of SLO assessment?

Please see the Summary Section above and responses to the two previous sections for a discussion of how SLO assessment is being used to improve the program. In time, the program hopes to improve outcomes assessment in two ways: First, course-level SLOs will be linked more effectively with program-level SLOs, simplifying the process of assessment. Once this is done, it will be simpler to calendar many of the assessments as well. Second, the program hopes to add additional assessment tools. Multiple measures of assessment will provide an added dimension of understanding into student success and how the program can continue to help students succeed.

5. As a result of SLO assessment data, will you be requesting additional resources for your program or courses (i.e. additional faculty, equipment request, program personnel...)?

**The program makes no additional requests at this time.**

## **PART D: Faculty and Staff**

1. List current faculty and staff members in the program, areas of expertise, and how positions contribute to the program success.

### **Full-Time Faculty**

**Rama (R.J.) Ruppenthal is a licensed attorney in California. He has been a full-time faculty member at Evergreen Valley College since 2005. Previously, he worked in the legal field in Wisconsin and San Francisco after completing an internship at the Supreme Court of Wisconsin. Professor Ruppenthal has a Bachelor's degree from the University of California, Davis, a vocational EFL/ESL teaching certificate from Cambridge University, and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School. He worked as a teaching assistant in law school and also taught at Saint Mary's College of California and at Sejong University in Seoul, Korea. His articles on law and sustainable gardening (a personal interest) have been published in the *Wisconsin International Law Journal*, *Legal Assistant Today* magazine, and *Urban Farm* magazine.**

**Henry Gee is a longtime faculty member at Evergreen Valley College. Though he occasionally teaches a course in this program, Professor Gee's primary assignment is in the Business Department, so he is not counted as a full-time faculty member within Paralegal Studies. Professor Gee holds a J.D. from Santa Clara University, an M.B.A. from Pepperdine University, and a B.S. from Purdue University. He is a member of the State Bar of California. His experience includes working for IBM as a Computer Programmer and teaching courses at San Jose State University. Professor Gee has taught at Evergreen Valley College since 1985, except for a four year period during which he served the college as Vice President of Administrative Services.**

### **Part-Time Faculty**

**Lynda Chavez is Director of Administration at the Bechtel Family Law Group. She has many years of experience working as a Paralegal, Legal Secretary, and Office Administrator. Mrs. Chavez has served as past president of local chapters of both the Association of Legal Administrators and the Legal Professionals Association. She has been instrumental in helping many students secure internships and jobs, anchoring the program's civil litigation and family law offerings, and teaching a regular section of the introductory course.**

**Ronald Cabanayan is a San Jose attorney who focuses on DUI and criminal defense, personal injury, and immigration matters, as well as estate planning, real property, and bankruptcy law. Ronald is admitted to practice in all California courts, including Federal Court, Northern District of California, and US Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of California. Ronald obtained a B.S. in Business/Marketing from University of Phoenix and his J.D. from Lincoln Law School of San Jose. He served in the California Army National Guard and the US Navy Reserve where he retired after 26 years of combined service. Ronald is currently sitting as the vice chair for the Appeals Hearing Board for the City of San Jose and he teaches at Lincoln Law School of San Jose.**

**Duyen Nguyen is an attorney in San Jose. He holds a Masters degree from Saigon University and a J.D. from Lincoln Law School. He has worked as a professor in both Vietnam and the United States, where he also teaches at Lincoln Law School. He formerly worked for the County of Santa Clara in the Social Services area. He regularly writes legal articles in a number of publications that serve the local Vietnamese-American community.**

2. List major professional development activities completed by faculty and staff in this department/program in the last six years and state proposed development and reasoning by faculty in this program.

**Recent professional development activities for the program's full-time faculty member are discussed in Part B, Item 2, above. Professor Chavez has been past president of local chapters of both the Association of Legal Administrators and the Legal Professionals Association, maintaining a very active involvement with both organizations. All faculty members participate in regular Continuing Legal Education (CLE) and other professional training courses within their disciplines.**

3. Identify current schedule for tenure review, regular faculty evaluation, adjunct faculty evaluation, and classified staff evaluation.

**Currently, the program has no tenure-track faculty, so there is no active tenure review process. In regard to regular faculty evaluations, both the program's full-time tenured faculty member and its adjunct faculty members are evaluated regularly per the college's schedule and standards. There are no permanent classified staff members in the department.**

4. Describe the departmental orientation process (or mentoring) for new full-time and adjunct faculty and staff (please include student workers such as tutors and aides).

**When a new faculty member is hired, existing faculty help provide support and mentoring as needed. The college also provides orientations to incoming full-time and adjunct faculty members.**

## **PART E: Facilities, Equipment, Materials and Maintenance**

1. Identify and discuss the facilities, equipment, equipment maintenance, and materials allocated to the program. Identify and explain additional facility needs and rationale.

**The Paralegal Studies Program has modest needs. In terms of facilities and equipment, the program utilizes regular campus classrooms, requiring no additional accommodations. Most campus classrooms now have instructor computers and data projectors, a technological improvement that has helped support the program's development of hybrid online courses. The LA 71 (Legal Research) and**

LA 72 (Legal Analysis and Writing) courses have been able to make use of computer lab rooms in the Library and Educational Technology Center, allowing students access to online legal research tools during the class sessions.

The program requires extensive legal research materials in order to train future paralegals and provide them with entry-level professional job skills. The library maintains several stacks' worth of bound volumes to meet the program's needs. Each semester, students in the LA 10 (Introduction to Law) and LA 71 (Legal Research) classes are provided with training on how to use the hard copy legal resources. The largest sets of legal materials maintained in the library's collection are the California Code (state statutory law, also containing the state's Constitution), West's California Reporter (case law from state courts), West's California Digest (a case finding resource), Shepard's Citations (a reference to update case law and statutes), Witkin's Summary of California Law (popular legal treatise), and West's Encyclopedia of American Law (general legal encyclopedia). Due to budget constraints in the library and program budgets, very few of these resources are being updated with ongoing subscriptions. Rather, the books are used to train students to become fluent in legal research skills.

Once students understand how the print volumes are organized and are accustomed to conducting proper searches, then the program trains students in proper electronic legal research techniques. Online sources are more up-to-date, and thus more reliable sources of law, but students who understand how the print volumes are organized will be far more efficient online legal researchers. In addition, most specialized legal research databases are expensive and charge users a search fee, so a skilled legal researcher can save his/her client a great deal of money by exercising the type of discipline that they can learn only in the library. The library volumes help build fluency, while the online sources provide accuracy.

The program's need for access to online legal research databases is more fully discussed below.

2. Describe the use and currency of technology used to enhance the department/program. Identify projected needs and rationale.

The program's major expense (aside from teaching salaries) is its subscription to the WESTLAW legal research database. This subscription covers individual access for all students in the LA 71 (Legal Research) course and continues to be used by students in the LA 72 (Legal Analysis and Writing) course. This subscription is essential for students to learn modern legal research skills and it helps the program's graduates get jobs, many of which list WESTLAW and LEXIS research skills as entry-level job requirements. The library maintains a subscription to LEXIS/NEXIS Academic Universe for the whole college, and the program uses this, but students in job environments are expected to have a stronger mastery of online legal research databases than this academic version of LEXIS can deliver. Therefore, the program uses a fuller version WESTLAW to provide students with this exposure and skill development. The WESTLAW subscription cost normally is covered by the college's Perkins/VTEA funding. In the future, if this funding source is not available, the college will need to absorb that annual cost in order for the program's students to be qualified for entry-level legal professional positions upon graduation.

3. If applicable, describe the support the program receives from industry. If the support is not adequate, what is necessary to improve that support?

The program's Advisory Committee enjoys strong industry representation. A number of prominent attorneys, law firm administrators, paralegals and legal assistants, and representatives from Silicon Valley legal organizations serve on the Advisory Committee. Members of the Advisory Committee also provide assistance to students in the form of opportunities for internships, jobs, and scholarships from affiliated organizations. The program's use of this committee is more fully described in Part A, Item 9, above. While the program does not receive direct funding from industry, this

possibility could be pursued if the college or district were to provide greater foundational support to assist departments in soliciting donations or endowment funding.

## **PART F: Future Needs**

### 1. Current Budget

A. Identify the budget currently allocated for the department/program through the division budget (fund 10). Discuss its adequacy in meeting your program's needs.

**The program is allocated \$229,954 through Fund 10. This amount is used for instructional salaries. The amount probably appears higher usual this year because a senior full-time faculty member, Henry Gee, recently taught a number of the Paralegal Studies courses.**

B. Identify any external (fund 17) funding the department/program receives, and describe its primary use.

**Through Perkins/VTEA, the program will receive about \$6,881 in the current year. Perkins funds cover the program's subscription to the WESTLAW database. This is an advanced-level online legal research database on which students are trained in the LA 71 (Legal Research) course. This expense is necessary to enable students to graduate with industry-standard skills in legal research. However, the ongoing stability of this funding source is questionable, so the college may need to pay this expense separately in coming years.**

C. Explain any grants or other external funding sources (partnerships) for which your program is benefiting from.

**The only such item was described above as part of Fund 17.**

2. Explain any grants or other external funding sources for which your program would be a good candidate. Do you have plans to apply for such sources?

**This program is very fortunate to have the additional funding source described above. Currently, as a small program, the faculty and Advisory Committee would not be able to administer any additional grants. Hopefully, in the future, we will identify additional capacity for such initiatives and use them to continue building the program.**

3. Please describe any unmet needs for your program and how you plan to address them. Are any additional resources needed to accomplish your program's CTAs?

**The program's CTA's do not depend upon any additional funding. However, the WESTLAW database subscription is essential for our graduates to get jobs, and this also depends upon federal funding. In absence of this funding source, the college may need to absorb this cost. Otherwise, the program would need to cease these activities and graduates would find it much more difficult to find jobs.**

**Presently, the program does not have any unmet needs. However, faculty members sense that the college is on the threshold of moving towards increased expectations of accountability in relation to SLO assessment and graduation success rates. This program, like others on this campus, lacks the staffing or financial support to conduct any meaningful data collection related to student success or program success. Ideally, student surveys, placement surveys, graduate surveys, and employer surveys (in addition to course-level and program-level SLO assessments) should be conducted regularly so that the results of these evaluations can be used for program improvement. Program faculty members do not have the resources or time to conduct these evaluations, analyze data, and keep this evidence organized. If performance expectations increase in these areas, then the college will need to provide the requisite staffing and financial support to the affected academic programs.**

4. What faculty positions will be needed in the next six years in order to maintain or build the department? Please explain. What staff positions will be needed in the next six years in order to maintain or build the department? Please explain.

**The program does not need additional faculty or staff members. However, there have been numerous issues at the Business & Workforce Division level related to course scheduling in recent semesters. Program faculty members suggest that they should be allowed to create the program's schedule or, in the alternative, that the Division Dean involve them in all conversations related to course scheduling. If faculty are allowed to oversee scheduling for their own departments, then this should be a simple matter and one which does not need to incur added expense. But it is possible that the division will need an additional staff member or faculty reassigned time in order to handle future course scheduling across multiple departments, including this one.**

5. Does your program require any additional facilities, equipment, and/or supplies over the next six years (above and beyond the program's current budget)?

**If the Perkins/VTEA funding disappears, the college may need to absorb the cost of the WESTLAW legal research database. Aside from this possibility, Paralegal Studies is not requesting any additional resources. The program wishes to encourage the college to provide better support for online and hybrid courses. Students in online and hybrid courses can only succeed with appropriate infrastructure and support services. Effective training orientations, computer-equipped smart classrooms, flexible counseling and student services, and deployment of additional technology solutions will encourage more faculty to teach online and hybrid courses.**

## **PART G: Additional Information**

Please provide any other pertinent information about the program that these questions did not give you an opportunity to address.

**The Paralegal Studies (Legal Assistant) Program offers a successful career option for many students. The program's certificate and degrees prepare students for professional-level jobs in a career field that continues to grow around us in Silicon Valley. The program is helping the college fulfill its Mission and Strategic Initiatives, working closely with a strong Advisory Committee, and using SLO assessment to provide quality assurance. Though enrollment and productivity have suffered in recent years, this decline has mirrored that of the whole college during a period of higher regional employment, and the Evergreen Valley College Paralegal Studies Program has suffered much less of a decline than its peer programs at the competitor institutions of West Valley, De Anza, and Canada Colleges. The college should continue to support and grow this valuable program.**

## **PART I: Resource Allocation Table**

Program Reviews provide a valuable source of information for the College as it makes decisions on resource allocation, both in terms of funding and cuts. The following information, in table format, will be used by the College Budget Committee to help inform EVC's Budget and Planning Process.

<u>Item Title/Response</u>	
Productivity (WSCH/FTEF):	372
Student Success Rate:	81%
Number of class sections offered:	7-8 per semester
Changes in enrollment:	-8%
Current Budget:	\$229,954
External funding:	\$6,881 (Perkins/VTEA)
Future Needs/Additional Costs:	None projected