

Cerritos College CTE Program Report, Spring 2020

Program: Paralegal

Division: B/H/SS

IZI Attached is a copy of the Annual Unit Plan for: 2020-2021 Law (Paralegal)

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Date: 02/06/2020

1. Objectives: What are the objectives of the program? To what extent are these objectives being achieved? How satisfied are students with their preparation for employment? How satisfied are employers with the preparation they receive in this program? Does this program contribute to programs in other fields? What plans are in place for improving the program?

Our Paralegal Program has two tracks, meaning we have several objectives.

In regard to the first track, we offer a Paralegal Certificate to those students who already have an A.A. or higher degree. These students have various objectives, including:

1. To obtain a Paralegal Certificate from an American Bar Association [ABA] approved Program to be able to enter the work force. The employment opportunities for paralegals include: private law practice; governmental agencies such as courts; the private sector in businesses such as title or other insurance companies, in-house patent division or larger corporations, or other businesses with staff attorneys; and in the community service field such as with legal clinics and self-help centers.

2. To obtain a Paralegal Certificate for students who are returning to the work force or changing careers for one reason or the other. These students are interested in the same employment opportunities as noted, above.

3. To attend law school. The objective of these students is to use the Paralegal Certificate as a stepping stone to the career of being an attorney.

4. Finally, some Paralegal Certificate students are already employed and are using the Certificate as an opportunity to improve their work position and status as many employers grant pay raises and promotions to staff who receive a Paralegal Certificate, especially from an ABA approved program.

The second track is for students who do not have an A.A. or higher degree, to seek an A.A. degree in Paralegal Studies. The objectives of these students are:

1. Just as some students seeking Paralegal Certificates go directly into the work force, the same is true for the A.A. students as well, as receiving an A.A. degree in Paralegal Studies permits students to achieve their objective of being employed as a Paralegals.

2. To transfer to a University to seek a B.A. or B.S. degree, perhaps with an ultimate eye toward law school. Our Program provides these students a solid basis for entering law school, along

with a trade which can be used to earn income in the legal field both while in undergraduate and law schools.

In regard to student satisfaction, as an ABA approved program, we survey our Program graduates. One question is in regard to how satisfied students are that our Program prepares them for employment in a career as a paralegal. In our most recent surveys from Spring 2015 through Spring 2018 graduates, of the 84 students who responded to that survey question, 79 students (94%) rated our Program "Superior" or "Good." Based thereon, it seems that our Program prepares our students for the objectives noted above.

Also for ABA purposes, we survey employers every two years, as well. Of the employers who replied, regarding the questions of our College providing "overall job preparation, 24 of 27 employees rated our Program "Excellent" or "Good." Additional funds to employ a full-time staff person would provide the opportunity to implement a more aggressive process of seeking employer input.

Finally, another survey our Program performs for ABA purposes, asks students currently enrolled in our Program to provide an overall evaluation as to how our Program is doing. In our most recent surveys from Spring 2018 to Spring 2019, 97.88% of the surveys rated our Program either "Excellent" or "Very Good."

- 2. Market Data Need: How strong is the demand for graduates of the program?** How has demand changed in the past two years and what is the outlook for the next five years. How many jobs are available regionally in this field? Are other similar programs offered in this region and if so, what is their impact on the job market? How is the job market impacting your program?

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, employment for paralegals and legal assistants is projected to grow 12% from 2018 to 2028, which much faster than average for all occupations. The median pay for paralegals in 2018 was \$50,980, however as Cerritos College is located in a California, which according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics is where the highest paid paralegal positions are located, \$61,240 is the annual mean wage for California paralegals.

- 3. Enrollment/Retention/Placement: What are the trends in student enrollment, success and completion, and placement?** Is there an increase or decline in the last five years? What are the barriers to success and completion? What are placement rates with local employers? What do these data mean for your program?

Still another survey we perform for ABA purposes is to track graduates of our program within the first six months of graduation. Based thereon, we have certain information available to us. Our surveys breakdown the graduates' responses into the following categories: (i) employed as paralegals; (ii) employed in another capacity in the legal field; (iii) working in

another field; (iv) continued with student's education; (v) not seeking employment; and (vi) seeking employment, but yet to achieve success. In regard to determining employment statistics, the first five categories noted must be looked upon as being a "positive/neutral outcome," with only those "seeking employment" being considered, a "negative" category. Based thereon, our survey results are:

2014 - Fall: Of the 30 graduates who responded to the survey, only 1 was seeking employment.

2015 - Spring: Of the 25 graduates who responded to the survey, only 4 were seeking employment.

2015 - Summer: Of the 2 graduates who responded to the survey, none were seeking employment.

2015 - Fall: Of the 11 graduates who responded to the survey, none were seeking employment.

2016 - Spring: Of the 7 graduates who responded to the survey, only 1 was seeking employment.

2016 - Fall: Of the 1 graduate who responded to the survey, that person was seeking employment.

2017 -Spring: Of the 17 graduates who responded to the survey, only 1 was seeking employment.

For the period of time surveyed, 113 students replied and only 7 were still seeking employment six months after graduation. This is only 6%. These numbers reflect that our Paralegal Program is doing a good job of making our graduates ready for the work force.