Instructional Annual Program Review and Planning Update Form Fall 2023

BACKGROUND:

Program review is an integral part of the campus planning process. As programs and areas monitor their progress on the current comprehensive four-year program review, changes in need and scope can be expected. This Annual PR Update form is designed to outline and request modifications to the current program review that occur between comprehensive four-year review cycles, as needed.

Examples of a requested change include new information such as action plans, outcomes modifications, personnel changes, technology needs, and capital expenditures requirements. As programs and areas monitor their progress on the previous comprehensive four-year program review, the form provides the basis to suggest a change in plans and processes to improve student success and institutional effectiveness.

DIRECTIONS:

This form shall be completed annually by **all** instructional programs.

- Instructional programs must submit their Annual Program Review Update form to their dean by 5pm on Monday, November 27, 2023.
- Deans will forward the completed form to the Program Review and Planning Committee Chairs by 5pm on Monday, December 4, 2023.
- Questions or concerns?
  - Committee contacts:
    - Co-chairs Mary Bogan (mbogan@fullcoll.edu) and Bridget Kominek (bkominek@fullcoll.edu)
    - Division representatives on the Program Review and Planning Committee
  - Office of Institutional Effectiveness

SUBMISSION:

Program: **Paralegal Studies**   Division: **BUS/CIS**   Date: **11/20/23**

[X] We have reviewed our most recent self-study and **have not identified** any significant changes that necessitate resource requests for the upcoming academic year. *(Complete part 1 only)*

[ ] We have reviewed our most recent self-study and **have identified** significant changes that necessitate additional resource requests, which are attached in our submission. *(Complete parts 1 and 2)*

Principal Author Signature: Michael Moore   Printed Name: **Michael Moore**

Date: **11/20/23**

Dean Signature: Carlos Ayon   Printed Name: Carlos Ayon

Date: 12/1/2023

Part 1: Review of Data

Institution Set Standards (ISS)

1. Use the data provided by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) to review your course completion and success rates and provide a comparison to the Institution Set Standards for course completion and success rates.

   > After August 15, you will be able to access PDF copies of your program's ISS data here: ISS_ISLO_Documents. The folder will also include instructions to access Tableau dashboards with the same information. The instruction document will also provide more context about how these standards are calculated. If you have any questions, please reach out to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at ie@fullcoll.edu.

2. If your program meets or exceeds the standard for completion and success, to what do you attribute your success? If your program does not meet this standard, please examine the possible reasons, and note any actions that should be taken, if appropriate.

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs)--Global Awareness ISLO.

1. Describe your program's participation in assessment of Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLO's). Specifically, how does your CSLO attainment, for the courses that are mapped to the Global Awareness ISLO, compare to Fullerton College's ISLO attainment?

   > After August 15, you will be able to access PDF copies of your program's ISLO data here: ISS_ISLO_Documents. The folder will also include instructions to access Tableau dashboards with the same information. Please reach out to your SLOA representative if you have questions.

2. Does the SLO data show significant achievement gaps among demographic groups in your program? If so, where are the gaps and what steps can your program take to shrink them? If not, to what do you attribute your success in minimizing the achievement gap?

Program Response

Part 1: Institution Set Standards (ISS)

The Paralegal Studies Program ("Program") exceeds the set standard for completion by over 10%, while the success standard is exceeded by about 11%. The Program is not too far from the aspirational goals.

The Program believes there are various factors that lead to this. First, almost half of the students entering the Program already possess some sort of degree [either an Associate or bachelor's degree], meaning students have already engaged in the writing, critical thinking, and comprehension skills obtained through a college education. This lends itself well to the Program given the difficult and complex nature of the legal field and the concepts covered.

For the remaining half that do not complete a degree prior to entering the Program, there are certainly some gaps to consider. For example, PLEG 101 success standard is only at 60.3%. Since PLEG 101 is the "gateway" course into the Program, many students who are beginning their college journey are trying out the course to determine if the paralegal career, or the legal field in general, is something they are truly interested in. What we are seeing in the Program are students who may not be withdrawing from the PLEG 101 course before the "W" deadline, which results in a failing grade in the course because they stop participating. This negatively impacts the success data.

Another factor that may contribute to success during the recent academic year has been the work the Program has done to improve relationships with the Tutoring Center. Tutoring for more difficult courses, such as legal writing and litigation, has increased markedly since before the pandemic. Also, we continue to recognize declining reading comprehension, general writing skills, and the ability to critically think. The Program believes this is an issue that exists before they reach paralegal courses, whether that be attributed to high school education or college education in other required disciplines.

We have been incorporating principles of writing and critical thinking more into our gateway courses (PLEG 101 and 104) so students are prepared for more advanced courses since PLEG 101 and 104 are prerequisites for many of them. This combined with promoting tutoring services each semester has improved success and completion rates. However, as mentioned above, students in PLEG 101 who are unfamiliar with the law tend to recognize that the field is not for them, especially when they realize that there is a lot of legal writing and that the law is generally difficult to comprehend. Accordingly, they make different choices as they continue to explore their career options.

Based on the above, the Program is proud of its success and completion rates but recognizes that there are still success gaps in its gateway courses. We will continue to explore ways we can support students.

Part 2: Participation in Assessment of Learning Outcomes

As required by our third-party approving entity, the American Bar Association ("ABA"), the Paralegal Studies Program engages in semesterly review of Course Student Learning Outcomes ("CSLOs"). Additionally, the Program engages in various assessment tools to assess its Program Student Learning Outcomes ("PSLOs").

Specifically, each adjunct faculty member, plus the full-time Department Coordinator, complete a review of whether students have met the CSLOs via the ELumen platform. That information is compiled into reports at the end of each academic year, where the Department Coordinator then reviews those reports and analyzes the content. That assessment is provided to the ABA faculty, the Program's advisory committee, the Division Dean, and the Vice President of Instruction. A copy of the Program's ABA Assessment Report for the 2022-23 academic year as provided via email on 11/12/23 to the constituents listed above. The assessment plan is found within the first eight pages of the 11/12/23 ABA Assessment Report. The Department Coordinator analyzes both CSLOs and PSLOs using the data received from the various tools. Then, the data and results are compiled into the academic year's assessment and shared as outlined in the prior paragraph.

As stated in prior review updates, ISLOs were not mapped to the Program's PSLOs or CSLOs. In the newest data provided for the current update, some ISLOs were mapped, but not the one that is sought for analysis. The Program is not certain why this is. Regardless, the Program must monitor data for ABA reporting purposes concerning the demographics of the Program. As was expected, the data reflects that most of the students in the Program are Hispanic. The legal field is still mostly White/Non-Hispanic, though paralegals or other related job categories are seeing many Hispanic workers, with the numbers rising. It is expected in the coming years that the number of Hispanic workers in the legal field will likely equal the White/Non-Hispanic group. The Program also reported that most of the graduates interviewed in the assessment have obtained gainful employment in the legal field as indicated in the last ABA Assessment Report.

In the 2021 Program Review, gaps were identified relating to technology and income gaps. (See 11/12/2021 Paralegal Studies Self-Study, pp. 14-15 and 24-25). The Program has identified measures to help alleviate those gaps, such as obtaining funding for technology needed in courses that require it [such as PLEG 104 and 116]. Further, the Program identified tutoring and reinforcing other support resources as ways the Program could reduce certain identified gaps. Though data has not yet been analyzed reflecting whether these have reduced the gaps [this will be done in the next Self-Study], the Program believes that, once ISLOs are mapped to the CSLOs and PSLOs, the data should reflect that we at least have comparable numbers to the institution's.