

Start of the Academic Year 2012-2013

New Cycle Program Learning Outcomes Plan Template

Please use this form as you begin your planning cycle for the up-coming Academic Year. You will want to connect this work to the plan from the prior year and the long-term plan for your program. Please only fill out the sections relevant to your program. You do not have to fill out all sections of this form.

*Please return by **October 1st** to Jessica King: jking84@valenciacollege.edu*

Please send questions to Laura Blasi, Director, Institutional Assessment lblasi@valenciacollege.edu

How this relates to your Program Improvement Plan: This “new cycle template” is where you and your colleagues describe the next phase of your plan to be accomplished in the 2012-2013 Academic Year. Use this template to describe what you plan to do to implement the plan for improvements (identified in spring of 2012) over this upcoming year and write out the next program outcome you and your colleagues will assess and your plan for accomplishing this over the next year.

Academic Program / Discipline Area (for General Education) or Co-Curricular Program Area:

1. What is your program name? Paralegal Studies
2. Does this academic year’s improvement plan (2012-2013) build on your work from last year (2011-2012)? If so, how... (1-2 sentences)

Yes. We continue to use the completed student portfolios for assessment purposes. We have made program changes based upon the input from our last assessment.

Planning Team Leader(s) ¹	Campus	E-mail Address	Phone Extension	Mail Code
Wendy Toscano	East	wtoscano@valenciacollege.edu	2529	3-25
Planning Team Members ²	Campus	E-mail Address	Phone Extension	Mail Code
Cathy Mestre	East	cmestre@valenciacollege.edu	2514	3-25
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¹ Planning Team Leaders assume the responsibility for coordinating activities associated with the expectations for the design, approval and implementation of Assessment Plans.

² Planning Team membership, whenever possible, should reflect the *Principles for selection of members for assessment plan work teams*. For faculty teams the principles include: College-wide representation where possible; Full-time faculty from the respective program / discipline (tenured, tenure track, and non-tenure earning 4 / 8 / 10 month faculty); Adjunct faculty when an adequate number of full-time faculty do not teach in the program / discipline; Faculty from both disciplines or programs when an outcome is assessed in two programs or a program other than the primary discipline. For plans developed in Student Affairs planning teams should include the following: College-wide representation where possible; Staff from the targeted program area; Part-time Student Affairs professionals when an adequate number of full-time staff do not work in the targeted program area; Faculty / staff from other program / discipline areas working on the same or similar outcomes; Student representation when possible.

Learning Outcomes and Performance Indicators

Academic Program / Discipline Area (for General Education) or Co-Curricular Program Area: Paralegal Studies	
Major finding from last year and related change, if any: See attached.	
Services needed as a result of the finding (Student Learning Support, Faculty Development, etc.): N/A	
Targeted Program Learning Outcome(s) (PLOs) for this year: Same as last year	Targeted Course(s), Co-Curricular Program or Student Activity associated with the Academic Program: PLA 2192 – Legal Research III - Capstone
Is this a different outcome from the one reported last year? (yes /no) No.	
Does this assessment for this year apply to more than one PLO? (yes /no) Yes.	
National Standard(s): N/A <small>(This could be specific to your field or focused on overall undergraduate competencies from a national organization. Contact Laura Blasi for examples / ideas. lblasi@valenciacollege.edu)</small>	Targeted Outcome(s) within the Course(s), Co-Curricular Program or Student Activity identified above: See attached.
Performance Indicators for the Program Learning Outcome(s) selected: Student Portfolios	Performance Indicators for Outcome(s) within the Course(s), Co-Curricular Program or Student Activity selected: Portfolio review.
Prediction (Given what you know about your students, how you expect them to perform? What do you expect to see? You will be able to compare your beliefs to the results that you receive at the end of this assessment cycle) I expect them to include the appropriate documentation in their portfolios to support the PLO's.	

Common Assessment – What assessment method (written assignment, speech, test, etc.) will you use to assess student ability related to the program / course outcome(s) selected:
Student Portfolios

Description of the Proposed Common Assessment – Common assessments should be designed to ensure a balance between (1) the need for a consistency within the program in order to ensure comparable student artifacts and (2) the need for reasonable flexibility in order to encourage faculty judgment in the design and delivery of learning activities:
All Capstone courses complete the same portfolio project.

What is the approximate number of students that you expect to assess? (Please indicate “Do not know at this time” if that is the case)
There will be approximately 65 portfolios prepared. Students then volunteer to have their portfolios copied and reviewed by the assessment subcommittee.

Implementation Process

Planning for Communication and the Collection of Student Artifacts / Data

1. **When will faculty seek or receive feedback on the design of the assessment, the rubrics, etc.?**
Wendy Toscano and Carin Gordon speak frequently about the Capstone class.

2. **How will student artifacts or data associated with student performance be collected?**
Wendy and/or Carin collect the portfolios prior to the end of each semester.

3. **If student artifacts are to be collected based on a sample of students, what characteristics should the sample include?**
Students submit their portfolios to be copied on a voluntary basis.

4. **What information needs to be communicated to students concerning the assessment process?**
The students are told beginning at the Introductory level (PLA 1003) and reminded throughout the program of the need to collect practical assignments for their portfolio.

5. **How will information about faculty / staff participation in the assessment project be communicated?**
See no. 1 above.

6. **Who will be responsible for coordinating the collection of student artifacts / data?**
Wendy Toscano

7. At what point in the academic year / semester will the student artifacts/ data be collected?
See no. 2 above.

Evaluation of Student Artifacts and Analysis of Results: Understanding and Acting on the Impact of the Program (Program Level Assessment)

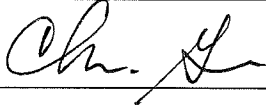
<p>8. When will student artifacts be assessed / evaluated? A subcommittee of the Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee will be formed to conduct a review of the portfolios. This will most likely take place right after the spring 2012 Advisory Committee meeting.</p>
<p>9. What is the expectation (if any) for student reflection / self-assessment (etc.) as part of this assessment? N/A</p>
<p>10. Which faculty or staff from the program/discipline will evaluate student artifacts? Full-time faculty will participate in the subcommittee review of portfolios.</p>
<p>11. What training / preparation / information will faculty or staff need in order adequately assess / evaluate the student artifacts collected? The subcommittee will be given an overview of the portfolio process as well as the targeted PLOs.</p>
<p>12. When will the results / data associated with the assessment plan be analyzed? The feedback from the subcommittee will be sought during the review process and compiled into a summary.</p>
<p>13. What training / preparation / information will faculty or staff need in order to analyze the results data associated with this assessment plan? * N/A</p>
<p>14. Does this assessment relate to your assessment from last year (if so how...)? How is this assessment connected to your improvement plan? This is the same manner of assessment that we had so much success with last time.</p>
<p>15. What additional sources of data might allow faculty / staff to better understand and act on the results of this assessment plan? N/A</p>
<p>16. In order to ensure curricular and programmatic alignment, who else should be included in this conversation (e.g., General Education faculty)? N/A</p>

Approval / Implementation Process

Activities Associated with the Approval / Implementation of Assessment Plans	Person Responsible	Target Completion Date	Actual Completion Date
Collection of Portfolios	Wendy Toscano	Each semester	
Advisory Committee – subcommittee review	Wendy Toscano	Spring 2013	
<p>For thought (you do not need to answer...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Will current voter eligibility lists for the curriculum be used for any voting?</i> • <i>Will you have a group enroll in a related assessment methods workshop for credit or schedule your own sometime during the term? (See: http://valenciacollege.edu/faculty/development/coursesearch.cfm)</i> • <i>For A.S. programs – how does the 10/30/12 Viability meeting fit with your work?</i> 			

Dean / Director Support

The Dean(s) / Directors (for Librarians, Counselors) responsible for supporting and promoting the work necessary for the implementation of the Assessment Plan need to indicate their support for the plan.

CARIN M. GORDON Dean / Director East / Winter Park Campus	Signature 
Dean / Director Osceola / Lake Nona Campus N/A	Signature
Dean / Director West Campus	Signature

PARALEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

The Paralegal Studies Program conducted an assessment of its program outcomes through a review of students' portfolios on October 14, 2011. The reviewers concluded that the Program is accomplishing its stated outcomes.

Attending

Attending the assessment review were four industry members—two attorneys and two paralegals who are members of the Advisory Committee and volunteered to do the review. Also attending were three paralegal faculty, along with a College facilitator.

The Process

Each person reviewed two randomly selected portfolios. Students in each Capstone course were asked to volunteer for their portfolio to be copied for this assessment. Portfolios had been collected from students in PLA 2192 from the prior two years. Each reviewer completed a form indicating whether they believed that program outcomes were met. Reviewers had an opportunity to discuss the portfolios among themselves and to make recommendations for the program.

The Portfolio

Paralegal Studies students in PLA 2192 Legal Research & Theory III: Capstone produce a portfolio of their practical skill application assignments completed throughout the program. The portfolio assignment was originally conceived as a means to showcase a student's work when he or she goes on a job interview. The portfolio is also the appropriate vehicle to assess program outcomes.

Students are required to include, at a minimum, practical skill application assignments from at least four paralegal subject areas, one of which represents one of the specialization courses. In addition, the portfolio includes an assignment reflecting group work, a detailed table of contents, paralegal-related certificates awarded, and the student's resume. Each student selects assignments from his or her paralegal courses to include.

The assignments in the portfolio will have already been graded in the respective courses in which the work is completed, including assignments completed in the Capstone course. Students can choose to revise their work.

The portfolio is graded based upon inclusion of all required component coursework and organization. The program provides students with a binder and tabs.

Program Outcomes

Transactional Specialization

At the completion of this program, students should be able to:

1. Research and analyze a legal issue under the supervision of a member of the Bar.
2. Draft certain legal documents used in litigation and transactional matters, including wills and trust documents, under the supervision of a member of the Bar.
3. Apply the appropriate ethics rules to hypothetical ethical scenarios which may arise in the legal setting under the supervision of a member of the Bar.
4. Describe practices and traits required to work effectively in a group or individually under the supervision of a member of the Bar.

Litigation Specialization

At the completion of this program, students should be able to:

1. Research and analyze a legal issue under the supervision of a member of the Bar.
2. Draft certain legal documents used in litigation and transactional matters, including bankruptcy and debtor-creditor filings, under the supervision of a member of the Bar.
3. Apply the appropriate ethics rules to hypothetical ethical scenarios which may arise in the legal setting under the supervision of a member of the Bar.
4. Describe practices and traits required to work effectively in a group or individually under the supervision of a member of the Bar.

Recommendations

The reviewers recommended the following:

- Review the legal software taught to ensure it is meeting community needs
- Require a specific ethics assignment in the portfolio
- Include an e-mail assignment in the portfolio
- Include a technology-based assignment in the portfolio
- Include correspondence written from the paralegal's perspective
- Clearly identify group assignments and include the group reflections

Comments

The reviewers' comments were as follows:

- The portfolios were overall very good.

- The memoranda, format and focus was impressive.
- The portfolios reflected a level of work demanded in practice.
- The work required prepares them for the real world.
- The grading across assignments was consistent.
- The quality of work demanded of the students from course to course was consistent.
- The volume of work was impressive.
- It is clear that there is a structure to the program.
- The level of corrections by faculty on assignments is impressive.
- The work clearly showed formative feedback to students.
- It is good to see that writing is emphasized.
- Shows their education has meaningful benchmarks, that it is not just training.
- The portfolios included sample pleadings drafted for several different counties and circuits.
- The portfolios contained the same type of assignments as were required when the reviewer completed the Program years ago.