

Paralegal

Comprehensive Academic Program Review 2006-2007

Associate in Science Degree in Paralegal



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and Effectiveness
St. Petersburg College

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2006-2007 Comprehensive Academic Program Review
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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
SPC Mission Statement	5
Introduction.....	5
Institutional Effectiveness.....	5
Educational Assessment	6
Program Review Process.....	7
Program Description.....	8
Accreditation	9
Program Performance	10
Enrollment	10
Productivity.....	11
Program Graduates	12
Grade Distributions	13
Fulltime/Adjunct Faculty Ratio	15
Program Profitability.....	16
Relative Profitability Index (RPI)	16
Academic Outcomes.....	17
Stakeholder Perceptions.....	20
Student Survey of Instruction (SSI).....	20
Technical Education Advisory Committee	23
Recent Graduate Survey Information.....	25
Employer Survey Information	26
Occupation Profile	27
Occupation Description	27
US, State, and Area Wage Information.....	27
National, State, and County Trends	28
State Graduates Outcomes.....	30





Summary	32
Recommendations/Action Plan	35
President's Cabinet Review	37
Action Plan Follow-up and Evaluation Report	38
References	40
Contact Information	40
Appendix A: Program Overview.....	41
Appendix B: Advisory Board Committee Minutes, 2006-2007	42
Appendix C: Advisory Board Committee Minutes, 2005-2006	43
Appendix D: Advisory Board Committee Minutes, 2004-2005	45





Executive Summary

Introduction

The program review process at St. Petersburg College (SPC) is a collaborative effort designed to continuously measure and improve the quality of educational services provided to the community.

Program Description

The goal of this program is to prepare students to meet the challenges as paralegals in law firms, governmental entities, and corporate legal departments. Paralegals work under the supervision of attorneys to provide non-clerical professional support in the delivery of legal services to clients and the community. Paralegals are not licensed to practice law. Graduates are prepared to assist in interview and investigation, legal research, discovery and litigation support, and design and development of new procedures. Courses provide for specialization in three areas to be selected from the following: Estate and Guardianship Administration, Corporations, Real Estate, Family Law, Civil Litigation, or Criminal Litigation. The SPC Paralegal Program is approved by the American Bar Association.

Program Performance

- *Enrollment* for 2005-2006 was lower than 2004-2005. The decrease was primarily limited to the Fall and Summer semesters.
- *Student Semester Hour (SSH) Productivity* has had a negative trend over the three semesters of the 2005-2006 academic year, but overall still remains higher than the previous year.
- The number of *program graduates* has been increasing over the last three academic years; from a ten-year low in 2002-2003 of twelve program graduates to a recent seven-year high of twenty-five program graduates.
- The majority of students in the program's *grade distribution* receive passing grades in the courses. Ninety-nine percent (99.4%) of the students experienced class room success in Fall of 2005-2006 as opposed to eighty-six percent (85.9%) in the Fall semester of the previous year.
- *Adjunct faculty* taught 62.2% of the course load for the 2005-2006 academic year as compared to 55.8% for the previous year. The highest semester for the Adjunct Equated Credit Hours (ECHs) was the Spring 2005-2006 semester in which adjunct faculty taught 71.0% of the programs course load. All semesters were outside of the College's general 65/35 Fulltime/Adjunct Faculty Ratio guideline.

Program Profitability

- The *Relative Profitability Index (RPI)* has remained relatively stable over the last few academic years for the Paralegal program, increasing slightly since a six-year low in 2002-2003 (0.36).

Academic Outcomes

- The *2004-2005 Academic Program Assessment Report* indicated that each of the program's eight major learning outcomes was evaluated during the assessment.

Paralegal
2006-2007 Comprehensive Academic Program Review
Department of Institutional Research and Effectiveness





The established standard was a mean score greater than 3.25 in each category of the evaluation relating to these outcomes. Forty-seven (47) out of the 48 items assessed had scores above the 3.25 threshold.

- The *2004-2005 Academic Program Assessment Follow-up Report* was completed in October of 2006. This report indicated that all thirteen action items had been successfully completed.

Stakeholder Perceptions

- All the individual average content area scores for the *Student Survey of Instruction (SSI)* were above the traditional threshold (an average of 5.0) used by the College for evaluating seven-point satisfaction scales. These results suggest general overall satisfaction with the courses within the Paralegal program; specifically, as they relate to faculty/student interaction, course organization, course presentation, and evaluation methodologies.
- A Paralegal *advisory committee* meeting was held on October 19, 2006. The meeting consisted of comments from the Provost; a discussion of the SACS accreditation process and upcoming SACS site visit; the Florida Common Course Numbering System and what that means in terms of transferability; the proposed Rule 20; and a list of recommendations and new course review.
- *Recent Graduate Surveys* were provided to the 2004-2005 graduates of the Paralegal program. Forty-seven (47.4 %) of the 19 graduates responded to the survey. Four of the respondents provided permission to contact their employers. Notable results include:
 - 88.9% of recent graduate survey respondents were employed fulltime.
 - 77.8% of recent graduate survey respondents had a current position related to their studies.
 - 33.3% of recent graduate survey respondents thought that SPC did 'Exceptionally well' preparing them for their current position, 55.6% thought that SPC did 'Very well' and the remaining 11.1% thought that SPC did 'Adequately' preparing them for their current position.
 - 100.0% of recent graduate survey respondents employed in a field related to their studies believed that their studies at SPC prepared them for their chosen career.
 - For hourly employees, 20% of recent graduate survey respondents earned \$19.50 or more per hour, while the remaining 80.0% earned between \$10.00 - \$16.49 per hour.
 - For salary employees, 100.0% of recent graduate survey respondents earned between \$30,000 - \$39,000 per year.
 - 50.0% of recent graduate respondent who are continuing their education are doing so in the upper division Paralegal Studies program.
 - 100.0% of recent graduate survey respondents would recommend the Paralegal program to another.
- Fifty percent (50.0%) of the four employers surveyed responded to the *Employer survey*. Notable results include:
 - 50.0% of employers responding to the survey had graduate employees who earned between \$16.50 - \$19.49 or more per hour, while the remaining 50.0% earned between \$10.00 - \$12.00 per hour.





- Chooses ethical courses of action, participates as a team player, and works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds had the highest mean values (7.0), while possesses effective computer skills (5.0), and uses written communication skills effectively (4.5) had the lowest.

Occupation Profile

- *2005 median yearly income* for Paralegals was \$41,200 in the United States, \$40,700 in the State of Florida, and \$39,700 in the Tampa-St. Petersburg metropolitan area.
- *Employment trend information* suggests a significant average annual increase (30% - 37%) in employment for the profession over the next 5 - 7 years for the country and state. For Pinellas County, the employment projection for paralegals and legal assistants is at 31.8% with an average of 4.0% change in job openings per year over the next seven years.

State Graduates Outcomes

- *State Graduates Outcomes* data indicates that almost three hundred and fifty (345) students completed a state Paralegal program in 2003-2004, of those approximately three hundred (299) had some matching state data. Eighty-five percent (225) of those state graduates were employed at least a full quarter. SPC's Paralegal program exceeded the state total for graduates with at least a full quarter of employment (100%).

Summary

- The paralegal career is at a crossroads. Pending before the Florida Supreme Court is a proposal for voluntary regulation which emphasizes formalized learning. St. Petersburg College remains the only ABA approved four-year program in the state regularly offering classes. It is the only public ABA approved four-year program. Our students are consistently sought by the local legal community. Both Hillsborough and Pinellas firms regularly contact the program looking for current students and graduates to employ.
- SPC students contribute to the local community by working with Gulfcoast Legal Services, Community Law, and the Clearwater Bar's outreach programs including the Hispanic Outreach Program. These programs have been recognized by the Supreme Court in their Pro Bono awards for the past two years.
- The advent of the four-year program has presented the faculty and advisory committee with a wonderful opportunity to review each class in the two-year program to ascertain what value it adds to the total degree program.
- The advisory committee and the instructors have expressed their wish that the portfolio in its current form continue to be supported by the college's technology team. The portfolio has become a central feature in the two year program providing a frame for a student's educational choices throughout the program as they add to their resume and place artifacts into the online portfolio. The evaluation of the portfolio gives students the opportunity to have their class work evaluated by a professional in their chosen field and get feedback on their work. This gives the student an additional opportunity to network.





- In addressing the *Program Performance* measures:
 1. *Enrollment*: Enrollment decreased in 2005-2006 as a result of classes cancelled to accommodate productivity enhancement measures.
 2. *Productivity*: Productivity increased in 2005-2006 as a result of cancelled classes. The published schedule has resulted in an up-tick in the Fall of 2006-2007 of 206 students as compared to 183 in the previous year.
 3. *Program graduates*: A number of students with bachelor's degrees enter the program to take 15 to 21 credit hours which will make them eligible to sit for a national certification exam called the Certified Legal Assisting Exam.
 4. *Grade distribution*: Instructors encourage students in this program to aim for perfection. Students who are not perfectionists, that is, 'A' students, are not realistically employable in this field.
 5. *Full-time/adjunct faculty ratio*: The strength of this program has long been a loyal group of practitioners and judges who return year after year to teach paralegal students, with only one full-time faculty person in the two-year program.

Recommendations/Action Plan

- Program Recommendations and action plans are compiled by the Provost and Program Director, and are located at the end of the document.





SPC Mission Statement

The mission of St. Petersburg College is to provide accessible, learner-centered education for students pursuing selected baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees, technical certificates, applied technology diplomas and continuing education within our service area as well as globally in program areas in which the College has special expertise. As a comprehensive, multi-campus postsecondary institution, St. Petersburg College seeks to be a creative leader and partner with students, communities, and other educational institutions to deliver enriched learning experiences and to promote economic and workforce development. St. Petersburg College fulfills its mission led by an outstanding, diverse faculty and staff and enhanced by advanced technologies, distance learning, international education opportunities, innovative teaching techniques, comprehensive library and other information resources, continuous institutional self-evaluation, a climate for student success, and an enduring commitment to excellence.

Introduction

In a holistic approach, the effectiveness of any educational institution is the aggregate value of the education it provides to the community it serves. For over seventy-five years, St. Petersburg College (SPC) has provided a wide range of educational opportunities and services to a demographically diverse student body producing tens of thousands of alumni who have been on the forefront of building this county, state and beyond. This is due, in large part, to the College's institutional effectiveness.

Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional Effectiveness is the integrated, systematic, explicit, and documented process of measuring performance against the SPC mission for the purposes of continuous improvement of academic programs, administrative services, and educational support services offered by the College.

Operationally, the institutional effectiveness process ensures that the stated purposes of the College are accomplished. In other words did the institution successfully execute its mission, goals, and objectives? At SPC the Offices of Planning, Budgeting and Research work with all departments and units to establish measurable statements of intent that





are used to analyze effectiveness and to guide continuous quality improvement efforts. Each of St. Petersburg College's units is required to participate in the institutional effectiveness process.

The bottom-line from SPC's institutional effectiveness process is improvement. Once SPC has identified what it is going to do then it acts through the process of teaching, researching, and managing to accomplish its desired outcomes. The level of success of SPC's actions is then evaluated. A straightforward assessment process requires a realistic consideration of the intended outcomes that the institution has set and a frank evaluation of the evidence that the institution is achieving that intent.

There is no single right or best way to measure success, improvement or quality. Nevertheless, objectives must be established, data related to those objectives must be collected and analyzed, and the results of those findings must be used to improve the institution in the future. The educational assessment is a critical component of St. Petersburg College's institutional effectiveness process.

Educational Assessment

Educational programs use a variety of assessment methods to improve their effectiveness. Assessment and evaluation measures are used at various levels throughout the institution to provide provosts, deans, program managers, and faculty vital information on how successful our efforts have been.

While the focus of a particular educational assessment area may change the assessment strategies remain consistent and integrated to the fullest extent possible. The focus for Associate in Arts degrees is targeted for students continuing on to four-year degree programs as opposed to the Associate in Applied Science, Associate in Science, and Baccalaureate programs which are targeted towards students seeking employable skills. The General Education based assessments focus on the general learning outcomes from all degree programs, while Program Review looks at the viability of the specific programs.

The individual reports unique by their individual nature are nevertheless written to address how the assessments and their associated action plans



have improved learning in their program. The College has developed an Educational Assessment Website (<https://it.spcollege.edu/edoutcomes/>) to serve as repository for all SPC's educational outcomes reports and to systematically manage our assessment efforts.

Program Review Process

The program review process at St. Petersburg College is a collaborative effort to continuously measure and improve the quality of educational services provided to the community. The procedures described below go far beyond the "periodic review of existing programs" required by the State Board of Community Colleges; and exceeds the necessary guidelines within the Southern Association of Community Colleges and Schools (SACS) review procedures.

State guidelines require institutions to conduct program reviews every five years as mandated in chapter 1001.02(6) of the Florida Statutes, the State Board of Education (formerly the Florida Board of Education) must provide for the review of all academic programs.

(6) ...The programs shall be reviewed every 5 years or whenever the state board determines that the effectiveness or efficiency of a program is jeopardized. The State Board of Education shall define the indicators of quality and the criteria for program review for every program. Such indicators include need, student demand, industry-driven competencies for advanced technology and related programs, and resources available to support continuation. The results of the program reviews must be tied to the university and community college budget requests.

In addition, Rule 6A-14.060 (5) states that each community college shall:

(5) ...Develop a comprehensive, long-range program plan, including program and service priorities. Statements of expected outcomes shall be published, and facilities shall be used efficiently to achieve such outcomes. Periodic evaluations of programs and services shall use placement and follow-up data, shall determine whether expected



outcomes are achieved, and shall be the basis for necessary improvements.

Recently, SPC reduced the recommended program review timeline to three years to coincide with the long-standing three-year academic program assessment cycle, producing a more coherent and integrated review process. Figure 1 represents the relationship between program assessment and program reviewing during the three-year assessment cycle.

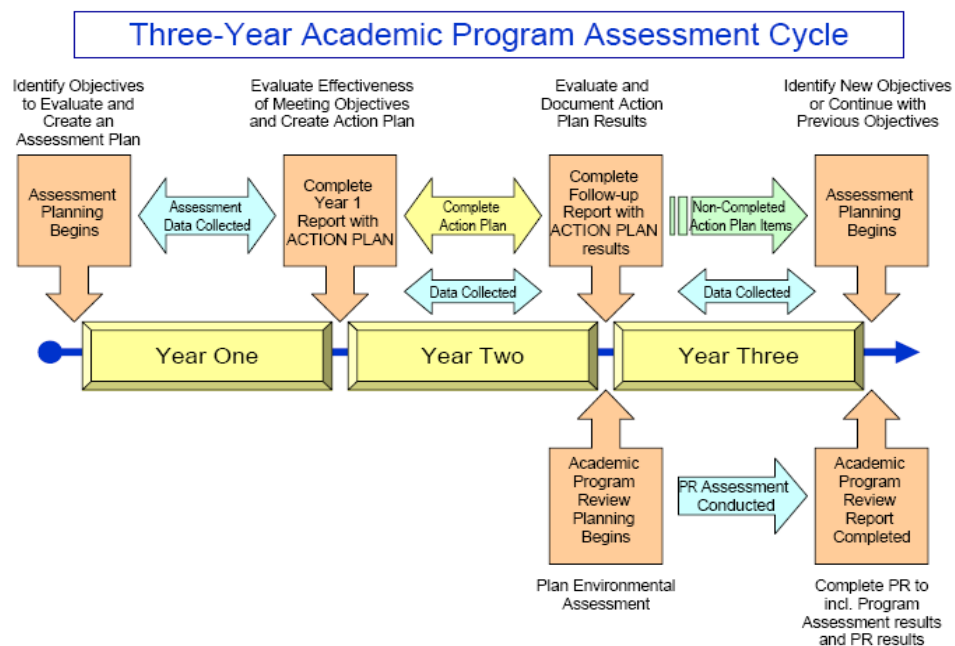


Figure 1: Three-Year Academic Program Assessment Cycle

Program Description

The goal of the program is to prepare students to meet the challenges as paralegals in law firms, governmental entities, and corporate legal departments. Paralegals work under the supervision of attorneys to provide non-clerical professional support in the delivery of legal services to clients and the community. Paralegals are not licensed to practice law. Graduates are prepared to assist in interview and investigation, legal research, discovery and litigation support, and design and development of





new procedures. Courses provide for specialization in three areas to be selected from the following: Estate and Guardianship Administration, Corporations, Real Estate, Family Law, Civil Litigation, or Criminal Litigation. The SPC Paralegal Program is approved by the American Bar Association.

For a complete listing of all courses within the Paralegal program, please see Appendix A.

Accreditation

The American Bar Association (ABA) program 'approves' paralegal education programs that meet ABA Guidelines. The principal objective of this process is to foster high quality paralegal education and training, and the development of educational standards. The Paralegal program was most recently approved by the American Bar Association in 1/2006 and the next approval date is scheduled for 2/2011.

The Standing Committee on Paralegals and Approval Commission carry out this objective through an intensive review and on-site evaluation of such programs. The approval process is accomplished through extensive investigation of self-evaluation reports prepared by the paralegal programs as well as through on-site inspections of program operations to verify that they operate in compliance with ABA Guidelines.



Program Performance

Enrollment

Student Enrollment for 2005-2006 was lower than for 2004-2005. The decrease was primarily limited to the Fall and Summer semesters as shown in Figure 2.

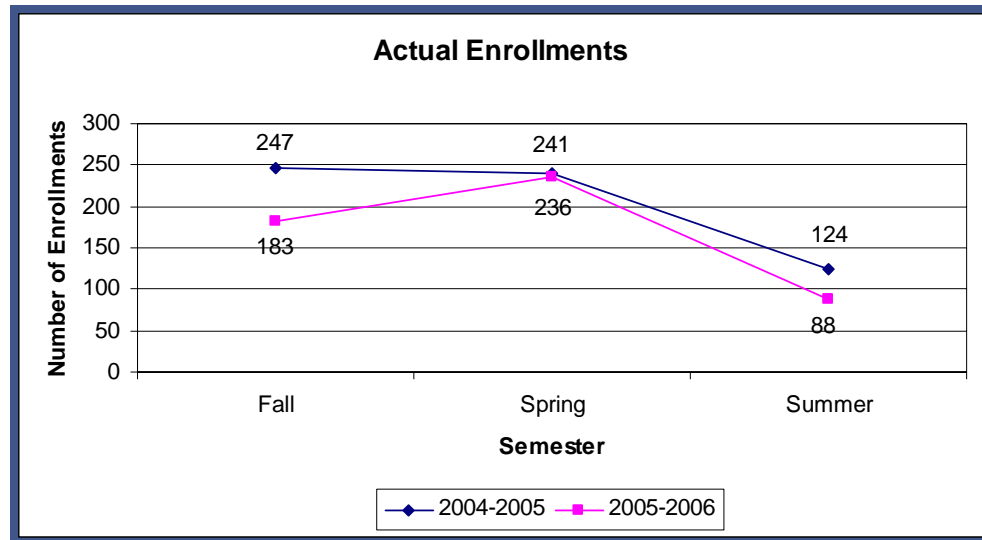


Figure 2: Actual Enrollments

Source: PeopleSoft Course Management Summary



Productivity

Student Semester Hour (SSH) Productivity is calculated by dividing actual SSH by the budgeted SSH. SSH Productivity has had a negative trend over the three semesters of the 2005-2006 academic year, but overall still remains higher than the previous year. The 2005-2006 Fall semester was the highest of any semester from the last two years with an SSH productivity number of 0.83 as shown by Figure 3.

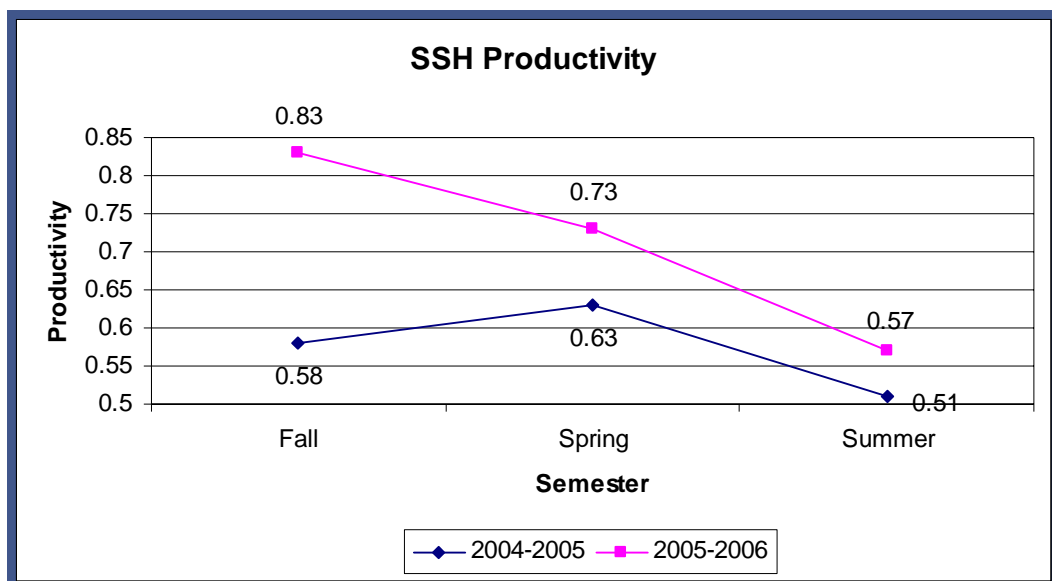


Figure 3: SSH Productivity

Source: PeopleSoft Student Administration System, report ID: S_CMSUMM





Program Graduates

The number of program graduates has been increasing over the last three academic years; from a ten-year low in 2002-2003 of twelve program graduates to a recent seven-year high of twenty-five program graduates. The ten-year high for the program was in 1998-1999 when thirty students graduated from the Paralegal program.

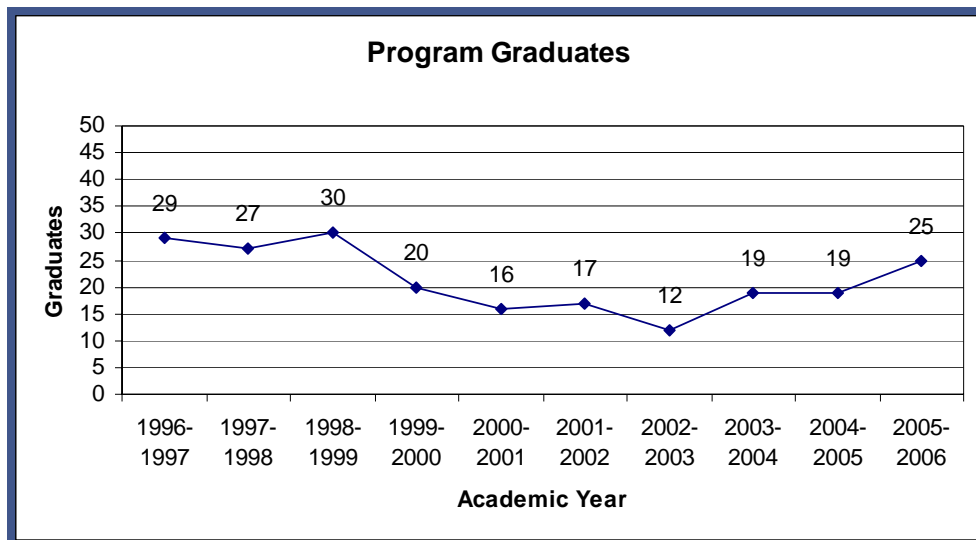


Figure 4: Program Graduates

Source: SPC Factbook, Table 31





Grade Distributions To provide a reference for program performance at the classroom level, grade distributions are provided. Table 1 includes the percentage of students receiving an A, B, C, D, or F in the program core courses. The information was compiled from the college wide grade distribution report generated at the end of the session. Some course data, such as dual credit courses generally do not end at the same time as the regular campus courses and may be omitted. In addition, the number of enrollments is a duplicated headcount where students are counted for each class registered, however, only A, B, C, D, and F grades are included in the calculations.

Table 1
Program Core Course Grade Distributions

Semester	Grade Distributions				
	A	B	C	D	F
Spring 2005	59.3%	23.4%	9.3%	1.4%	6.5%
Fall 2005	55.8%	22.7%	7.4%	4.3%	9.8%
Spring 2006	62.7%	23.8%	6.5%	1.1%	5.9%
Fall 2006	65.0%	25.0%	9.4%	0.6%	0.0%

Source: Collegewide grade distribution report generated at the end of the session

Figure 5 provides a visual representation of the grade distributions for those students receiving a grade of A, B, or C.



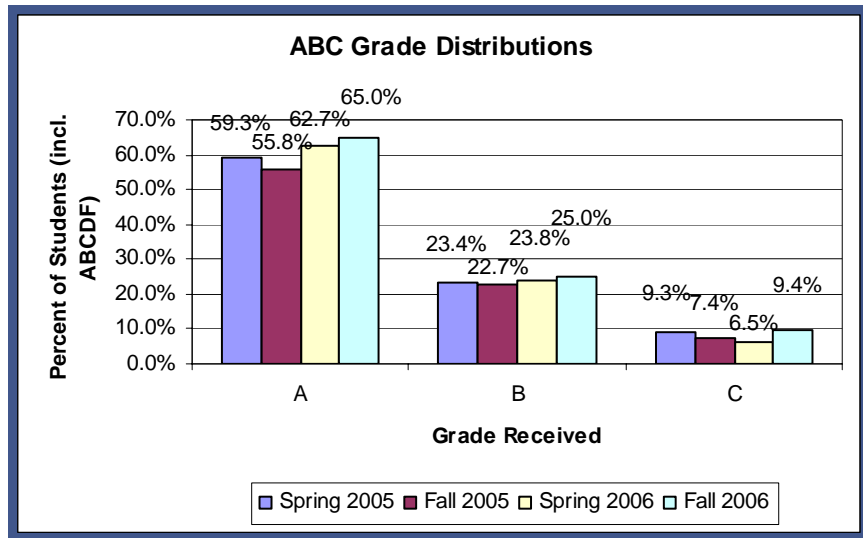


Figure 5: ABC Grade Distributions

Source: Collegewide grade distribution report generated at the end of the session

A classroom success rate was also calculated for the program. Classroom success is defined as the percent of students passing (earning a grade of A, B, and C) and once again only A, B, C, D, and F grades are included in the calculations.

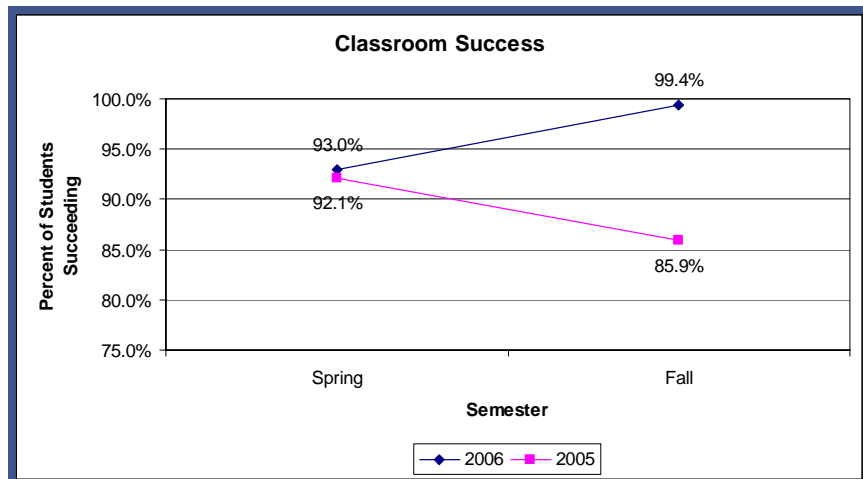


Figure 6: Classroom Success

Source: Collegewide grade distribution report generated at the end of the session





The majority of students in the program receive a passing grade in the courses as shown in Figure 6. Ninety-nine percent (99.4%) of the students experienced class room success in Fall of 2005-2006 as opposed to eighty-six percent (85.9%) in the Fall semester of the previous year.

Fulltime/Adjunct Faculty Ratio

Table 2 displays the number and percentage of Paralegal program equated credit hours (ECHs) taught by the individual faculty classifications. Fulltime faculty taught 37.8% of the ECH in 2005-2006, which is slightly down from the 44.2% of ECHs in 2004-2005. Conversely, adjunct faculty taught 62.2% of the course load for the 2005-2006 academic year as compared to 55.8% for the previous year.

Table 2
ECHs by Faculty Classification

	Fulltime Faculty		Percent of Load Faculty		Adjunct Faculty	
	Number of ECHs	% of Classes Taught	Number of ECHs	% of Classes Taught	Number of ECHs	% of Classes Taught
Fall 2004-2005	18	45.00%	0	0.00%	22	55.00%
Spring 2004-2005	15	37.50%	0	0.00%	25	62.50%
Summer 2004-2005	13	54.17%	0	0.00%	11	45.83%
2004-2005 Total	46	44.23%	0	0.00%	58	55.77%
Fall 2005-2006	9	33.33%	0	0.00%	18	66.67%
Spring 2005-2006	9	29.03%	0	0.00%	22	70.97%
Summer 2005-2006	10	62.41%	0	0.00%	6	37.59%
2005-2006 Total	28	37.80%	0	0.00%	46	62.20%

Source: PeopleSoft Student Administration System, report ID: S_FACRAT

The highest semester for Adjunct ECHs was the Spring 2005-2006 semester in which adjunct faculty taught 71.0% of the program's course load as shown in Table 2. The Fulltime/Adjunct Faculty Ratio is calculated by dividing a program's adjunct's ECHs by the sum of the Adjunct's, Percent of Load's, and Fulltime Faculty's ECHs. Figure 7 displays the Fulltime/Adjunct Faculty Ratio information for the last two academic





years. All semesters were outside of the College's general 65/35 Fulltime/Adjunct Faculty Ratio guideline.

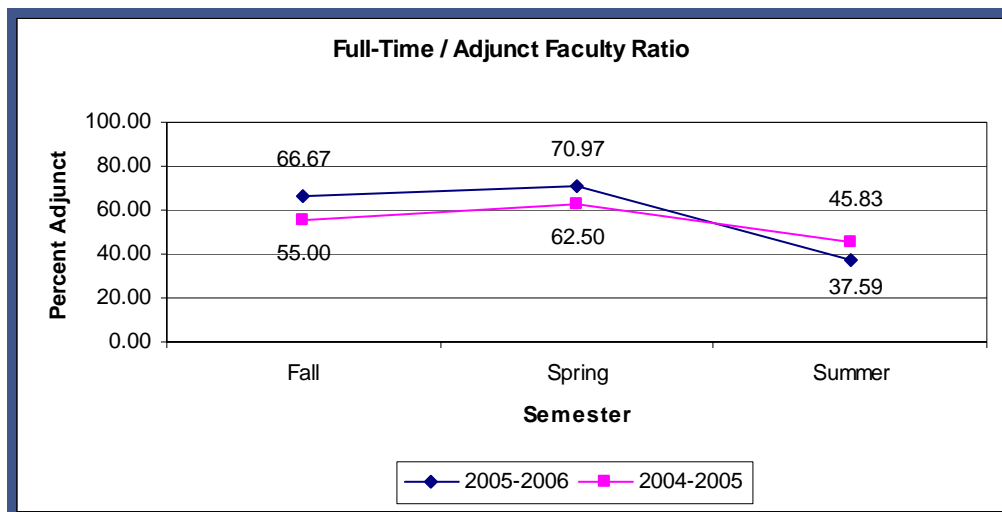


Figure 7: Full-time/Adjunct Faculty Ratio

Source: PeopleSoft Student Administration System, report ID: S_FACRAT

Program Profitability

Relative Profitability Index (RPI)

Relative Profitability Index (RPI) is a measure of program profitability. It is calculated by dividing a program's income by the sum of its personnel costs and current expenses. Only Fund 10 financials were used in the calculation of RPI for this report; specifically, 400000 level accounts were used for program revenues, 500000 level accounts were used for personnel costs, and 600000 level accounts were used for current expenses. The RPI has remained relatively stable over the last few academic years for the Paralegal program, increasing slightly since a six-year low in 2002-2003 (0.36). Figure 8 displays the RPI over the last six years.



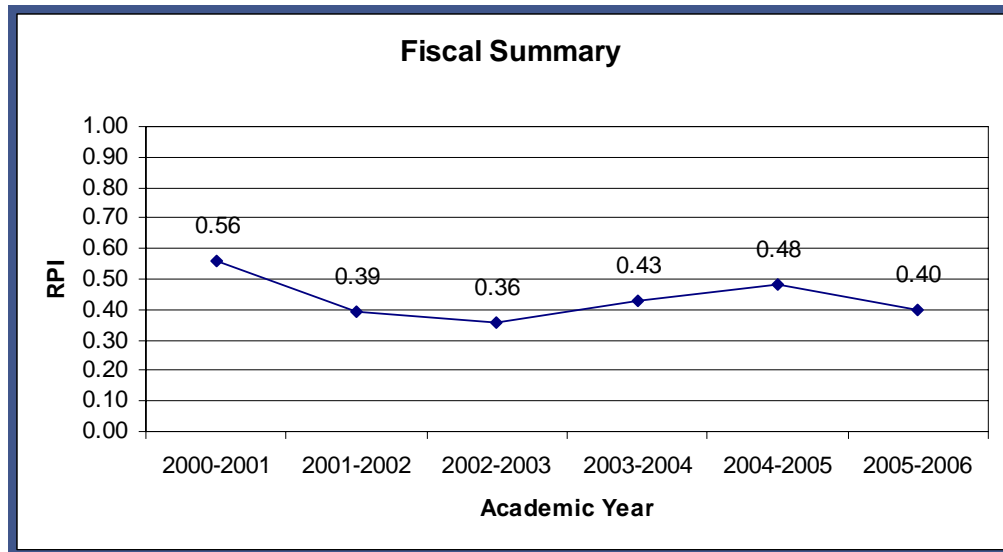


Figure 8: Fiscal Summary

Source: PeopleSoft Financial Production database, report ID: ORGBUDSI

Academic Outcomes

As part of SPC quality improvement efforts, academic assessments are conducted on each AAS/AS program every three years to evaluate the quality of the program's educational outcomes. The Paralegal program was recently evaluated through an Academic Program Assessment Report (APAR) in 2004-2005. Each of the program's eight major learning outcomes (MLOs) was evaluated during the assessment. The eight MLOs are listed below:

1. The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze a problem; identify and evaluate alternative solutions; formulate logical solutions to problems; construct logical arguments in support of specific positions; evaluate solutions and arguments; and determine which areas of law are relevant to a particular situation. (Critical Thinking)
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to organize and manage information effectively and the ability to manage time efficiently. (Organizational)
3. The student will demonstrate the ability to interact effectively, in person, by telephone and in written correspondence with lawyers,



- clients, witnesses, court personnel, co-workers, and other business professionals. (Communication)
4. The student will demonstrate the ability to competently use the tools of research available in a standard law library, "cite check" the legal sources, run a computer assisted legal research program, and incorporate the results of the research into a proper memorandum format. (Legal Research)
 5. The student will demonstrate the ability to write various types of documents, correspondence, pleadings, memoranda, and briefs. (Legal Writing)
 6. The student will demonstrate the ability to deal with a basic word processing program, a spreadsheet program, and a database as well as presentation software; the student will apply these to solving organizational and management issues in the office setting. (Computer and Law Office Management)
 7. The student will demonstrate basic interview and investigating skills including identifying and locating witnesses, potential parties to a suit and experts; preparing for and conducting effective interviews, locating information and obtaining records and using the Internet to obtain relevant and reliable information pertaining to a given situation. (Interview and Investigation)
 8. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the types of work paralegals/legal assistants perform, the nature of supervision that must be present, the manner in which their conduct is directed by the ethical guidelines of the American Bar Association, the Florida Bar and the ethical guidelines for paralegal/legal assistants. (Professionalism and Ethics)

The program used an evaluation which was adapted from the Core Competencies of the program promulgated by the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE).

Data was collected during 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. However, only the most recent two semesters are listed on Table 3, to illustrate the 2004-2005 mean values for each of the eight MLOs. The established standard was a mean score greater than 3.25 in each category of the evaluation relating to these outcomes. Forty-seven (47) out of the 48 items assessed had scores above the 3.25 threshold as shown below.



Table 3
Summary of 2004-2005 Assessment Findings

Summary of Assessment Findings - Portfolio Evaluations	Number of Students	Evaluation Area		
		Sufficient Documentation (Mean)	Acceptable to Florida Courts & Attorneys (Mean)	Timely (Mean)
2004-2005 Session I	9			
MLO 1	9	3.83	3.85	3.89
MLO 2	9	3.59	3.78	3.78
MLO 3	9	3.70	3.78	3.81
MLO 4	9	3.78	3.81	3.81
MLO 5	9	3.70	3.81	3.81
MLO 6	9	3.52	3.81	3.70
MLO 7	9	3.59	3.81	3.81
MLO 8	9	3.81	3.85	3.85
2004-2005 Session II	13			
MLO 1	13	3.42	3.58	4.00
MLO 2	13	3.67	3.70	4.00
MLO 3	13	3.55	3.61	4.00
MLO 4	13	3.28	3.55	4.00
MLO 5	13	3.24	3.52	3.94
MLO 6	13	3.61	3.76	4.00
MLO 7	13	3.64	3.83	4.00
MLO 8	13	3.58	3.73	4.00

Source: Academic Outcomes 2004-2005 Assessment Report

The 2004-2005 Academic Program Assessment follow-up report was completed in October of 2006. This report indicated that all thirteen action items had been successfully completed.





Stakeholder Perceptions

Student Survey of Instruction (SSI)

Each Fall and Spring semester, St. Petersburg College (SPC) administers the Student Survey of Instruction. Students are asked to provide feedback on the quality of their instruction using a 7-point scale where 7 indicates the highest rating and 1 indicates the lowest rating.

Several variations of the survey exist including lecture, non-lecture, clinical, and eCampus (on-line) classes. The purpose of the SSI survey is to acquire information on student perception of the quality of courses, faculty, and instruction, and to provide feedback information for improvement.

The survey questions are grouped into four categories; faculty/student interaction, organization, presentation, and evaluation, as defined below:

- **Faculty/Student Interaction** - focuses on how successful the faculty was in encouraging students to excel, the time spent on relevant course material, and responding to concerns and questions both inside and outside of the classroom.
- **Organization** - deals with clear instructions, defined objectives, relevant course materials, and whether the assignments were challenging.
- **Presentation** - focuses specifically on the instructor and their preparation for the course, enthusiasm for course, time spent on course related activities, ability to speak clearly and distinctly, thorough explanation of the subject matter, and assignment of material throughout the term.
- **Evaluation** - focuses on course expectations and grading policies, applying the stated grading policies consistently and impartially, and giving applicable course assignments including quizzes and exams.



Lecture. The lecture version of the survey is distributed to all students enrolled in traditional classroom sections within the College. The results show that the average scores have remained fairly constant during the last two years and are well above the traditional threshold (an average of 5.0 used by the College for evaluating seven-point satisfaction scales). The average survey results by semester and content area are shown in Figure 9. The Fall semester scores were slightly lower than the Spring in everyone of the four categories.

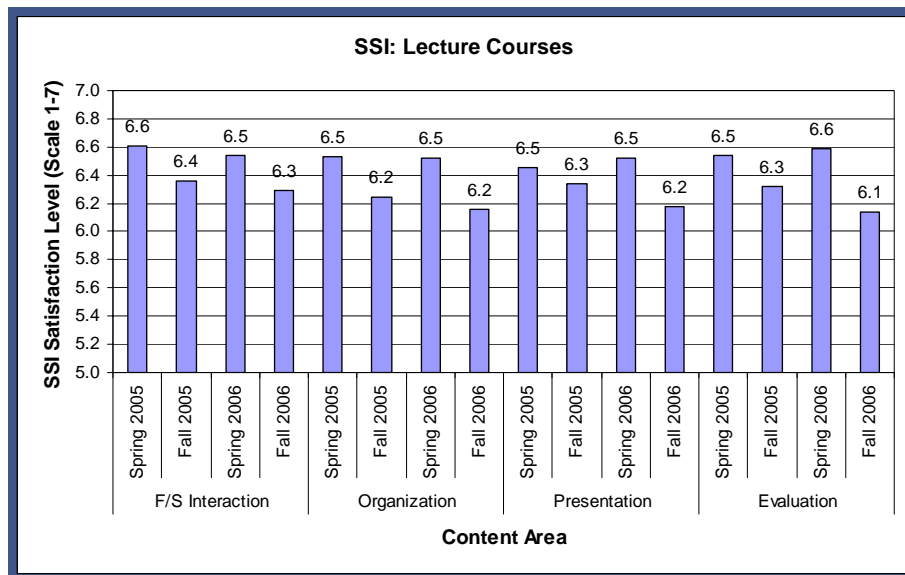


Figure 9: SSI Lecture Courses

Source: PeopleSoft Query S_SSI_CHRT_ORY_CAMPUS

Non-Lecture. Lab courses and self-paced or directed individual study use the non-lecture version of the survey. Results were only available for the Fall 2005 administration of the non-lecture version of the SSI. Results indicate that the average scores were all above the College' five point threshold as shown in Figure 10.



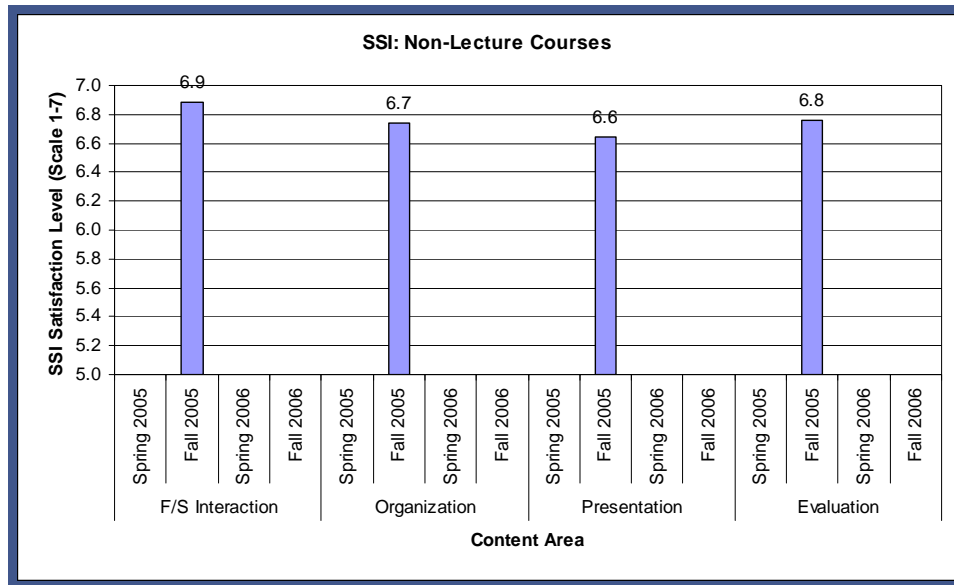


Figure 10: SSI Non-Lecture Courses

Source: PeopleSoft Query S_SSI_CHRT_ORY_CAMPUS

Clinical. The clinical version of the survey is distributed to all students enrolled in a clinical specific class. This typically only includes health-related programs. The Paralegal program did not have any Clinical SSI Survey results.

eCampus. The eCampus or on-line version of the SSI survey is electronically distributed to all students enrolled in on-line courses at the College. The Project Eagle Research Capsule #4 provides information on the difference in the wording of the questions (<http://www.spcollege.edu/eagle/research/perc/perc4.htm>). There were no eCampus classes in the Paralegal program during the time of the review.

Summary. All the individual average content area scores were above the traditional threshold (an average of 5.0) used by the College for evaluating seven-point satisfaction scales. These results suggest general overall satisfaction with the courses within the Paralegal program; specifically, as they relate to faculty/student interaction, course organization, course presentation, and evaluation methodologies.



Technical Education Advisory Committee

Community input and participation is an important component of the educational process at the College. The technical education advisory committees are an example of this community input. Advisory committees meet a minimum of twice annually with additional meetings as needed for good program coordination.

Advisory committee members are appointed by the College President to serve a one-year term of office and must have a demonstrated competency in the program specialty area or an understanding of the program and of the community at large. An exception to the above may be a lay person directly involved in a related program field such as counseling, public relations, or administration of a business or industry.

Specific Duties of Advisory Committees are to:

1. serve as a communication channel between the college and the community;
2. determine specific skills and suggest related and technical information for the program;
3. suggest ways for improving public relations and articulation of the program with other institutions;
4. assist in recruiting, providing internships, and in placing qualified graduates in appropriate jobs;
5. keep the program personnel informed on changes in labor market, specific needs (competencies), and surpluses;
6. recommend curriculum revisions as necessary to comply with current trends;
7. assist in assessing the program needs in terms of the entire community (long-range planning);
8. assist program personnel in searching for sources of funding for scholarships, equipment, etc.;
9. in general, to advise, recommend, and assist in assuring a quality program as determined by community needs; and
10. discuss proposed equipment purchases in excess of \$9,999.99.



Recent Meeting Summary. A Paralegal advisory committee meeting was held on October 19, 2006. The meeting consisted of comments from the Provost; a discussion of the SACS accreditation process and upcoming SACS site visit; the Florida Common Course Numbering System and what that means in terms of transferability; the proposed Rule 20; and a list of recommendations and new course review.

Provost Comments. Dr. Anne Cooper, Clearwater provost, welcomed the group and thanked them for their time and contribution to the Paralegal Studies program. Susan Demers shared the sad news of the deaths of Martha Adkins, former program director for Business Technologies, and Barbara Adamo, program graduate and long-time committee member.

Accreditation. Susan Demers reported on the accreditation process of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. She noted that the college is currently preparing for a site visit and gave the committee basic information on regional accreditation. She also spoke of other outside accreditations that programs within the college have obtained and what they mean.

Numbering System. There was general discussion about what this might mean for students of the program and students applying to the program. There was extended discussion about the Florida Common Course Numbering System and what that means in terms of transferability.

Proposed Rule 20. Regina Kavanaugh then reported on the proposed Rule 20, Florida Registered Paralegal plan currently before the Florida Supreme Court. Although this voluntary rule is not what the organized paralegal community was hoping for, Regina Kavanaugh reported that the largest part of the paralegal community believes that this is an excellent first step.

Recommendations. The committee gave the following recommendations:

- The portfolio should be continued for the two-year program along with work experience.



- The four-year capstone should include:
 - Portfolio substantiating paralegal skills,
 - Service learning component which can serve as work experience, and
 - Capstone project which involves research and a presentation based upon a problem which involves a working partnership with an attorney.
- The committee will assist with the creation of the problems for the presentation. The committee then reviewed the plans for the development of new courses for the upper division. The suggestion that Administrative Law be offered in the near future found general support within the group, as did Litigation Technology.

The complete committee minutes along with the minutes from previous meeting are located in Appendices B, C and D.

Recent Graduate Survey Information

Recent Graduate Surveys were provided to the 2004-2005 graduates of the Paralegal program. Forty-seven percent (47.4%) of the 19 graduates responded to the survey. Four of the respondents also provided permission to contact their employers.

Notable results include:

- 88.9% of recent graduate survey respondents were employed fulltime.
- 77.8% of recent graduate survey respondents had a current position related to their studies.
- 33.3% of recent graduate survey respondents thought that SPC did 'Exceptionally well' preparing them for their current position, 55.6% thought that SPC did 'Very well' and the remaining 11.1% thought that SPC did 'Adequately' preparing them for their current position.
- 100.0% of recent graduate survey respondents employed in a field related to their studies believed that their studies at SPC prepared them for their chosen career.
- For hourly employees, 20% of the recent graduate survey respondents earned \$19.50 or more per hour, while the remaining 80.0% earned between \$10.00 - \$16.49 per hour.



- For salary employees, 100.0% of recent graduate survey respondents earned between \$30,000 - \$39,000 per year.
- 50.0% of recent graduate respondent who are continuing their education are doing so in the upper division Paralegal Studies program at SPC.
- 100.0% of recent graduate survey respondents would recommend the Paralegal program to another.

Employer Survey information

Four employer surveys were sent out to employers based on the permission provided by recent graduates in the 2004-2005 recent graduate survey. Fifty percent (50.0%) of the four employers surveyed responded to the employer survey.

Notable results include:

- 50.0% of employers responding to the survey had graduate employees who earned between \$16.50 - \$19.49 or more per hour, while the remaining 50.0% earned between \$10.00 - \$12.00 per hour.
- An employer evaluation of the graduates general education competencies are displayed in the Table 4. Chooses ethical courses of action, participates as a team player, and works well with individual from diverse backgrounds had the highest mean values (7.0), while possesses effective computer skills (5.0), and uses written communication skills effectively (4.5) had the lowest.





Table 4
Employer Competency Ratings for Recent Paralegals Program Graduates

Competency Area (Seven point rating scale with 7 being the highest value)	Item Ratings		
	N	Mean	SD
1. Possesses necessary reading skills.	2	6.0	2.83
2. Uses written communication skills effectively.	2	4.5	1.77
3. Uses oral communication skills effectively.	2	5.5	2.47
4. Posses effective computer skills (e.g., for computing, word processing)	2	5.0	2.12
5. Possesses necessary mathematical skills	2	5.5	2.47
6. Exhibits an appropriate level of responsibility and self-management.	2	6.5	3.18
7. Chooses ethical courses of action.	2	7.0	3.54
8. Participates as a team player.	2	7.0	3.54
9. Works well with individuals from diverse backgrounds.	2	7.0	3.54
10. Acquires, interprets and uses information effectively.	2	6.5	3.18

Occupation Profile

Occupation Description

The occupation description used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics is shown below:

Assist lawyers by researching legal precedent, investigating facts, or preparing legal documents. Conduct research to support a legal proceeding, to formulate a defense, or to initiate legal action

US, State, and Area Wage Information

The distribution of 2005 wage information for Paralegals is located in Table 5. The wage information is divided by percentiles for hourly and yearly wages. This information is also separated by location.



Table 5
Wage Information for Paralegals

Location	Pay Period	2005				
		10%	25%	Median	75%	90%
United States	Hourly	\$12.63	\$15.61	\$19.79	\$25.22	\$31.41
	Yearly	\$26,300	\$32,500	\$41,200	\$52,500	\$65,300
Florida	Hourly	\$12.36	\$15.33	\$19.59	\$23.95	\$27.42
	Yearly	\$25,700	\$31,900	\$40,700	\$49,800	\$57,000
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL MSA	Hourly	\$14.25	\$16.15	\$19.09	\$21.91	\$26.25
	Yearly	\$29,600	\$33,600	\$39,700	\$45,600	\$54,600

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics Survey; Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation

National, State, and County Trends

Employment trend information is included in Table 6 and divided by country, state, and county. The table displays a significant average annual increase (30% - 37%) in employment for the profession over the next 5 - 7 years for the country and state.

Table 6
State and National Trends

United States	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2004	2014		
Paralegals and legal assistants	224,000	290,600	+ 30 %	8,460
Florida	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2002	2012		
Paralegals and legal assistants	16,850	23,040	+ 37 %	750

¹Job Openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.

Note: The data for the State Trends and the National Trends are not directly comparable. The projections period for the State Trends is 2002-2012, while the projections period for the Country and County Trends is 2004-2014.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections; Florida Employment Projections

Paralegal
2006-2007 Comprehensive Academic Program Review
Department of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

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For Pinellas County, the employment projection for paralegals and legal assistants is at 31.8% with an average of 4.0% change in job openings per year over the next seven years as shown in Table 7.

*Table 7
Occupational Employment Projections in WorkNet Pinellas for a base year of 2006 and a projected year of 2014*

Code	Occupational Title	2006 Estimated Employment	2014 Projected Employment	Total 2006-2014 Employment Change	Annual Avg. Percent Change	Total Percent Change
232011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	1,044	1,376	332	4.0	31.8

Source: [Labor Market Statistics, Occupational Employment Projections Unit](#)

Table 8 presents the Hourly wage OES Wage Survey Data for 2006 in Pinellas County for paralegals and legal assistants for specific industries. The highest average hourly wage was \$25.81 in the management of companies and enterprises industry. The range of hourly wages was between \$19.95 and \$25.81.





Table 8
Hourly wage OES Wage Survey Data for 2006 in Pinellas County

Standard Occupation Code	Occupational Title	Industry Title	Entry Level	Mean (average)	Median	Experienced
232011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Total, All Industries	\$15.45	\$20.38	\$19.88	\$22.84
232011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Finance and Insurance	\$14.90	\$21.47	\$20.90	\$24.75
232011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Professional and Technical Services	\$15.68	\$20.29	\$19.95	\$22.59
232011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Management of Companies and Enterprises	\$14.57	\$25.81	\$24.74	\$31.44
232011	Paralegals and Legal Assistants	Public Administration	\$14.61	\$19.95	\$17.82	\$22.61

Source: FL Labor Market Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics & Wages Program

State Graduates Outcomes

To provide reference information for the employment trend information, Paralegal program graduate state outcome data is provided in Table 9. Almost three hundred and fifty (345) students completed a state Paralegal program in 2003-2004, of those approximately three hundred (299) had some matching state data. Eighty-five percent (225) of those state graduates were employed at least a full quarter. SPC's Paralegal program exceeded the state total for graduates with at least a full quarter of employment (100%).





*Table 9
Paralegal Program Graduates 2003-2004 Outcomes by Florida Community College*

	Total Completers	# W/Matching State Data	# Employed for a Full Qtr	% Employed For a Full Qtr
Pasco	11	11	7	88%
Brevard	23	21	16	84%
Central Florida	6	5	4	100%
Daytona	9	9	5	71%
Edison	22	15	11	73%
FCCJ	19	18	11	85%
Florida Keys	1	0	0	--
Gulf Coast	2	2	2	100%
Indian River	17	16	10	77%
Broward	36	31	27	87%
Miami - Dade	62	57	44	90%
Palm Beach	29	23	18	90%
Pensacola	20	13	8	73%
Santa Fe	6	6	5	100%
Seminole	8	7	4	57%
St. Petersburg	18	15	15	100%
Tallahassee	12	10	9	90%
Valencia	26	26	19	79%
Hillsborough	18	14	10	91%
Total	345	299	225	85%

Source: Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP): Community College Vocational Reports (<http://www.firn.edu/doe/fetpip/pdf/0001pdf/0102pdf/0203pdf/0304pdf/cc0304asc.pdf>)



Summary

Addressing program performance measures:

Enrollment: Enrollment decreased in 2005-2006 as a result of classes cancelled to accommodate productivity enhancement measures. The result was that while productivity grew, the actual student enrollments decreased. To address this issue, the program has published an annual rotation (session and night of the week) which emphasizes that most of the specialty courses will only be offered once a year and encourages students to plan for that particular session and day. There has been a bump in enrollment of core classes as students with AA degrees prepare to enter the BAS program.

Productivity: Productivity increased in 2005-2006 as a result of cancelled classes. The published schedule has resulted in an up-tick in the Fall of 2006-2007 of 206 students as compared to 183 in the previous year. Other than the core classes in the program, most classes are offered only one time a year. Unrealistic standard course listing sizes have only been addressed for Session I offerings. For example, an SCL of 40 for Criminal Litigation II although Criminal I has an SCL of 25. Law office management has an SCL of 40 although a basic part of the curriculum is computer skills and requires that a large portion of the class be taught in a computer classroom. There is an emphasis on group work and student projects which also makes 40 an unrealistically high number of students to accommodate and maintain the high pedagogic standards of the program. As a result, productivity falls in the spring and summer sessions every year.

Program graduates: A number of students with bachelor's degrees enter the program to take 15 to 21 credit hours which will make them eligible to sit for a national certification exam called the Certified Legal Assisting Exam. We know that a number of students enter the program with this goal, but at present there is no organized method of capturing these students.

Grade distribution: Instructors encourage students in this program to aim for perfection. Students who are not perfectionists, that is, 'A' students, are not realistically employable in this field. This ABA approved program emphasizes practical applications as well as traditional evaluation



techniques like tests. Students who cannot turn out a perfect work product are not candidates for a career in this field.

As more students enter the AS classes aiming for the BAS degree, there is an increase in quality in classroom performance.

Full-time/adjunct faculty ratio: The strength of this program has long been a loyal group of practitioners and judges who return year after year to teach paralegal students. With only one full-time faculty person in the two-year program and one recently added in the four-year program, the program relies on their expertise to make certain that our graduates are ready to make a contribution to their firms in the first month of employment.

The paralegal career is at a crossroads. Pending before the Florida Supreme Court is a proposal for voluntary regulation which emphasizes formalized learning. St. Petersburg College remains the only ABA approved four-year program in the state regularly offering classes. [South University is approved on the basis of its South Carolina programs, but is still in the process of establishing its courses.] SPC is the only public ABA approved four-year program. Our students are consistently sought by the local legal community. Both Hillsborough and Pinellas firms regularly contact the program looking for current students and graduates to employ.

SPC students contribute to the local community by working with Gulfcoast Legal Services, Community Law, and the Clearwater Bar's outreach programs including the Hispanic Outreach Program. [Students serve as intake coordinators, witnesses for living wills and other documents, translators, and kiddie wranglers at these free sessions.] These programs have been recognized by the Supreme Court in their Pro Bono awards for the past two years. Our students' participation is an integral reason for these awards.

The advent of the four-year program has presented the faculty and advisory committee with a wonderful opportunity to review each class in the two-year program to ascertain what value it adds to the total degree program. Students have been assisting in the evaluation process particularly where textbooks, online supplements, and library materials are concerned.





The advisory committee and the instructors have expressed their wish that the portfolio in its current form continue to be supported by the college's technology team. The portfolio has become a central feature in the two year program providing a frame for a student's educational choices throughout the program as they add to their resume and place artifacts into the online portfolio. The evaluation of the portfolio gives students the opportunity to have their class work evaluated by a professional in their chosen field and get feedback on their work. This gives the student an additional opportunity to network.



Recommendations/Action Plan

Program: Paralegal

Date Completed: March 1, 2007

	Action Item	Completion Date	Responsible Party
	Rework website for two-year program		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include pdf worksheet for students. • Add information on ABA approval • Video clips of instructors discussing their classes and how to be successful in that class • Add instructions on working with FACTS.org 	August 2007	Program Coordinator
2	Construct a survey to be administered to all PLA 1003 students to determine their goals in the program/class	May 2007	Program Coordinator
3	Develop one semester upper division classes which will allow AA students to gain basic paralegal information in Real Estate, Probate, Litigation, and Family Law	June 2007	Program Coordinator
4	Rework graduate questionnaire to continue graduate tracking to solicit suggestions for improvement of program	May 2007	Program Coordinator
5	Develop specialized Paralegal Studies Survey of Student Engagement	August 2007	Program Coordinator





Special Resources Needed:

- Specialized data regarding library and textbook usage

Area(s) of Concern/Improvement:

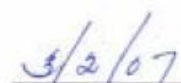
The advisory committee and the instructors have expressed their wish that the portfolio in its current form continue to be supported by the college's technology team. The portfolio has become a central feature in the two year program providing a frame for a student's educational choices throughout the program as they add to their resume and place artifacts into the online portfolio. The evaluation of the portfolio gives students the opportunity to have their class work evaluated by a professional in their chosen field and get feedback on their work. This gives the student an additional opportunity to network.

The law has always been a paper bound profession and thus the shift to technology has been a particularly difficult one. Paralegals are often charged with bridging the technological gap. This situation has prompted the following list of areas to be concerned about over the next cycle:

- Reassess textbooks and how they are utilized with online support tools
- Assess library usage
- Assess usage of online library materials
- Focus on technology infusion in all substantive law classes



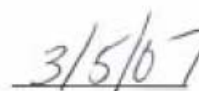
Program Director



Date



Provost



Date



President's Cabinet Review

Summary of observations, recommendations, and decisions:



President's Signature

5/1/07
Date

Paralegal
2006-2007 Comprehensive Academic Program Review
Department of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

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Action Plan Follow-up and Evaluation Report

Program: Paralegal

Date Completed:

Prepared By:

I. Action Plan Item Status

	Action Item	Completion Date	Completion Status
1			
2			
3			
4			

II. Non-Completed Action Plan Items and Plan for Completion

	Action Item	Completion Date	Completion Status
1			
2			
3			
4			



III. Evaluation of the Impact of Action Plans on Program Quality

Provost

Date

Responsible VP

Date





References

Rule 6A-14.060(5). *Florida Administrative Code, Accountability Standards*. Retrieved October 2002, from the Division of Community Colleges
Web site: <http://www.firn.edu/doe/rules/6A-14.htm>

Contact Information

Please address any questions or comments regarding this evaluation to:

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St. Petersburg College, P.O. Box 13489, St. Petersburg, FL 33733
(727) 341-3059
weideman.carol@spcollege.edu





Appendix A: Program Overview (2006)

PARALEGAL STUDIES

(LEGAL-AS)

ASSOCIATE IN SCIENCE DEGREE

(Fully transferable to Paralegal Studies BAS degree at SPC)

Dr. Susan Demers, Program Director, (727) 791-2501

The goal of this program is to train students for entry-level employment as legal assistants (paralegals) in law firms, governmental entities and corporate legal departments. Paralegals work under the supervision of attorneys to provide non-clerical professional support in the delivery of legal services to clients and the community. Paralegals are not licensed to practice law. Graduates are prepared to assist in interview and investigation, legal research, discovery and litigation support and design and development of new procedures. Courses provide for specialization in three areas to be selected from the following: Estate and Guardianship Administration, Corporations, Real Estate, Family Law, Civil Litigation or Criminal Litigation. Legal Specialty courses are offered only at night and not every course is offered every semester. Program is directed from the Clearwater campus with a majority of the classes held at the Caruth Health Center in Pinellas Park. The SPC Legal Assisting Program is approved by the American Bar Association.

Students entering the program are encouraged to attend a special orientation held each session for new and interested students. Computer skills are essential for employability and should be acquired early in the program.

GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES (21 credits)

ENC	1101-1102	Composition I, II or Honors	3, 3
SPC	1600	Introduction to Speech Communication OR (SPC 1600H, 1016, 1060 or 1060H)	3
		Humanities/Fine Arts Approved Course	3
		Mathematics One college-level course with a MAC, MGF, MTG or STA prefix	3
		Social & Behavioral Sciences Approved Course	3
PHI	1631	Studies in Professional Ethics OR (PHI 1600, 1602, 2635 or 2649)	3
		Computer/Information Literacy Competency Requirement	

SUPPORT COURSES (3 credits)

ACG	2021	Financial Accounting	3
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MAJOR COURSES (40 credits)

BUL	2241	Business Law I	3
PLA	1003	Introduction to Paralegalism	3
PLA	1104	Legal Research and Writing	3
PLA	1361	Techniques of Interview and Investigation	3
PLA	1730	Computerized Legal Research	1
PLA	1763	Law Office Management	3
PLA	2114	Advanced Legal Research	3
PLA	2940	Legal Assisting Seminar and Work Experience	3

SPECIALTY AREA ELECTIVES – Select 3 areas – (18 credits) 6,6,6

Area I: ESTATE AND GUARDIANSHIP – 6 credits

PLA	2601	Wills, Trusts and Estates
PLA	2603	Guardianship and elder Law

Area II: CORPORATE – 6 credits

BUL	2242	Business Law II
PLA	2433	Business Organizations

Area III: REAL ESTATE – 6 credits

REE	1040	Real Estate Principles and License Law
PLA	2610	Real Estate Transactions

Area IV: CIVIL LITIGATION – 6 credits

PLA	2203-2223	Civil Litigation I, II
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Area V: CRIMINAL LITIGATION – 6 credits

PLA	2303-2323	Criminal Litigation I, II
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Area VI: FAMILY LAW – 6 credits

PLA	2800-2801	Family Law I, II
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TOTAL PROGRAM HOURS

64





Appendix B: Advisory Board Committee Minutes, 2006-2007

Minutes
of the
Advisory Committee
of the
Paralegal Studies/Legal Assisting Program
St. Petersburg College
October 19, 2006

In attendance: Rosemarie Kafer, Andy Sasso, Bob McClure, Mary Jane Arbutine, Regina Kavanaugh, James Bennett, Herb Larson, Lia Shafer, John Schaefer, Susan Demers, Shri Goyal, and Sean Scott.

Absent: Kim Rogers, Nora Bergman, Karen France, Robert Shumaker, Steve Brashear, Suzanne Lomascolo and Tim Kelly.

The meeting was called to order at 4:35 in PT 160 on the Clearwater campus of St. Petersburg College.

Dr. Anne Cooper, CL provost, welcomed the group and thanked them for their time and contribution to the Paralegal Studies program. Susan Demers shared the sad news of the deaths of Martha Adkins, former program director for Business Technologies and Barbara Adamo, program graduate and long time committee member.

Susan Demers reported on the accreditation process of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. She noted that the college is currently preparing for a site visit and gave the committee basic information on regional accreditation. She also spoke of other outside accreditations that programs within the college have obtained and what they mean.

There was general discussion about what this might mean for students of the program and students applying to the program. There was extended discussion about the Florida Common Course Numbering System and what that means in terms of transferability.

Regina Kavanaugh then reported on the Proposed Rule 20, Florida Registered Paralegal plan currently before the Florida Supreme Court. Although this voluntary rule is not what the organized paralegal community was hoping for, Regina reported that the largest part of the paralegal community believes that this is an excellent first step.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to addressing what should be included in the Capstone course for the four year degree program. The group looked at the existing curriculum for the two year program and then the proposed curriculum for the four year program.

The committee then gave these recommendations:

The portfolio should be continued for the two year program along with work experience.

The four year capstone should include:

Portfolio substantiating paralegal skills.

Service learning component which can serve as work experience.

Capstone project which involves research and a presentation based upon a problem which involves a working partnership with an attorney.

The committee will assist with the creation of the problems for the presentation.

The committee then reviewed the plans for the development of new courses for the upper division. The suggestion that Administrative Law be offered in the near future found general support within the group, as did Litigation Technology.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05.

Paralegal
2006-2007 Comprehensive Academic Program Review
Department of Institutional Research and Effectiveness





Appendix C: Advisory Board Committee Minutes, 2005-2006

St. Petersburg College Paralegal/Legal Assisting Program
Advisory Committee Meeting
March 23, 2006
PT 160 Clearwater Campus

Attending: Barbara Benedek, Carol Hague, Herbert Larson, Kimberly Rogers (by telephone), Andy Sasso, Mary Jane Arbutine, Jim Bennett, Lia Diaz Shafer, Carolyn Poole, Susan Demers

The meeting was called to order at 5 pm.

Rainna Reaves, new staff assistant for the Paralegal/Legal Assisting program was introduced to the group. Each member of the group introduced themselves and outlined the history of their participation with SPC's Paralegal Studies Program. Approval letters from the ABA for the four year program and the acceptance of the interim report were distributed to the group. The document indicating SACS approval for the four year program was also distributed to the group.

The group reviewed the four year curriculum as well as the transfer policy. Jim Bennett expressed a concern that the two year graduates would have a more complete legal understanding than the four year graduates. He was particularly concerned about the absence of upper division courses in basics such as civil litigation and probate. The group discussed the development of upper division courses in these areas that would be required for those who are building a four year legal assisting degree on an AA degree rather than the AS in legal assisting.

The group reviewed the job listings on the PLA Commons and the college Job Center website. Job skills materials available to students were reviewed. Rosemarie Kafer suggested that the program place an ad in the Paraclete and the Res Ipsa advertising the Job Center. The Hillsborough Bar Association Placement office and what it offers to prospective employers was discussed thoroughly.

The group reviewed curriculum for the proposed classes in Professional Responsibility and Computers in the Law Office. Specific assignments for both classes were solicited. The group came up with a number of suggestions to be passed on to the instructors.

Carolyn Poole who serves as the four year librarian assigned to the legal assisting program, distributed a list of newly acquired books purchased to support the newly developed four year classes. She sought suggestions for specific practice manuals as well as periodicals in addition to those contained in online databases. Andy Sasso told the group that Carolyn had agreed to serve on the Sixth Circuit Grievance committee for the Florida Bar.

The remainder of the discussion was devoted to the newly proposed rule 20 of the Florida Bar and the proposed voluntary regulation scheme for Registered Florida Paralegals. A copy of the proposed rule was distributed to the committee. Particular attention was paid to the section dealing with educational programs. Susan Demers explained the different kind of programs. Barbara Benedek spent some time describing the content of the CLA exam and noting that those who have previously been called Certified Legal Assistants can now select the designation of Certified Paralegal (CP). There was some discussion of the historical reason for the use of the term "legal assistant" vs. "paralegal". Susan Demers told the group that the Florida Department of Education had changed the name of the degree to Paralegal Studies in October of 2005. The group discussed the general reticence of the bar to recognize the profession and how Rule 20 might be helpful to the development of dialogue between lawyers and paralegals.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45.

Paralegal
2006-2007 Comprehensive Academic Program Review
Department of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

43

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Appendix C: Advisory Board Committee Minutes, 2005-2006 (con't)

St. Petersburg College Legal Assisting Program
Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday November 17, 2005
PT 160 Clearwater Campus

Attending: Karen France, Carol Hague, Herbert Larson, Kimberly Rogers, Andy Sasso, Mary Jane Arbutine, Jim Bennett, Lia Diaz Shafer, Carolyn Poole, Susan Demers

The meeting was called to order at 5 pm.

Susan Demers briefly reviewed the status of the new four year program and thanked the Advisory Committee for all their assistance in creating the philosophy, goals and curriculum for the new BAS in Paralegal Studies. Three classes will offered in the spring semester-Logic and the Law, Comparative Legal Systems and Securities Law. Committee members were each given a copy of the newly adopted curriculum and the final curriculum proposal. Additionally all were given copies of the hour by hour break out and asked to review. There were several specific cases that were suggested for the Logic course. Herb Larson suggested some international patent discussion particularly involving plant patents in the Comparative Law class. Susan Demers asked each committee member to email suggestions for specific assignments in each of the courses as they occur to them.

Graduates and a select group of current students will be sent announcements of the new program.

A proposed transfer policy for both the two year and four year programs was discussed. The general view of the committee was that at least 30 hours if not more of the four year degree must be acquired at SPC. Lia Diaz Shafer suggested that all the core courses of the BAS degree should be taken at SPC since they are the meat of the program.

Carolyn Poole who serves as the four year librarian assigned to the Paralegal Studies program then solicited advice on texts to purchase for the library's permanent collection. The discussed for the group the documents available via electronic checkout and discussed how that system worked. She then circulated a list of titles which she had pulled from the Library of Congress lists and the collections of other in-state and out of state schools offering four year paralegal studies programs. She asked the committee members to indicate those books that they thought the library should acquire. Carol Hague offered to contact a local business which specializes in law librarianship to make certain that our students have access to the most often used practice materials. Caroly reminded the group that we need to have both practical and intellectually challenging materials within our collection.

The topic then shifted to placement for students in the program. The county attorney's office currently has an intern who has never served in a law office before. Jim Bennett suggested organizing shadowing experiences as options for students who are employed full time and who therefore cannot do a full fledged internship until late in the program.

Susan Demers gave a report on the Florida Bar Committee on Paralegal Regulation on which she serves. She reported on the abject ignorance among the members of the Bar on what paralegal programs teach and how paralegals can be used. Jim Bennett suggested that law offices that do not have paralegals are excellent places to place an early short internship, both to acquaint practitioners with the program and to emphasize to students the need for law office management skills. Carol Hague suggested that we organize a series of lunch and learn programs focusing on how to use paralegals. These programs should be directed especially to solo practitioners.

This led the group to discuss whether a shadowing exercise in the first semester should be mandatory rather than voluntary.

The group then took of the issue of placement. Susan Demers promised to have someone from the College's Job Placement office attend the next meeting and report on the various types of job skills training provided by the college outside the program.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35.



Appendix D: Advisory Board Committee Minutes, 2004-2005

ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE
LEGAL ASSISTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MARCH 17, 2005
ROOM 105 HEALTH EDUCATION FACILITY

Attending: Jim Bennett, Nora Bergman, Carol Hague, Herbert Larson, Rosemarie Kafer, Bob Mc Clure, Andy Sasso, Judge John Schaefer, Bob Schumaker, Lia Shafer, Susan Demers, and Sean Scott.

The meeting was called to order at 4 o'clock. Susan Demers discussed the college's enrollment challenges with the shift to so many online students and course offerings. Almost all campuses and departments have been negatively impacted by this. The legal assisting program is an exception with strong enrollments in a comparatively small program. General discussion was held as to why the enrollments were holding steady. There was also discussion about the push to include online course offerings. Susan Demers distributed charts illustrating the steady growth of enrollment over the last five years.

The May graduating group includes 15 students. A reception will be held to honor these graduates and those who graduated in December. The reception will be held on May 5 in the Fine Arts Gallery on the Clearwater Campus. This will bring the total number of SPC graduates since the program was initiated to almost 500.

Susan Demers distributed copies of the Senate and House bills filed in the Florida legislature dealing with paralegal licensing. There was general discussion about the scheme involved including the regulatory board and the feeling of the Florida Bar on this issue. Rosemarie Kafer pointed out that the Bar had dangled the prospect of paralegal regulation before the paralegal organizations for almost ten years but had failed to act. A bill similar to this year's was considered last legislative session but never made it out of committee. A link to both bills will be distributed by e-mail.

Sean Scott talked with the group about placement for students in the Seminar class and also graduate placement. There were several suggestions for placement over the summer including Gentry Burns at Bank of America and John Biesinger's office at Wachovia. Nora Bergman pointed out that the St. Petersburg Bar's website allows students to post their resumes at no cost.

The current reading project is based on the book *Trial by Jury* by , a true account of a teacher's participation in a jury trial. The book was used by the cast of *Twelve Angry Men* to prepare for the current Broadway production. Students are reading the book and then will watch the movie on movie night with Judge Bill Overton leading the discussion between drama and real life.

Susan Demers pointed out that the Clearwater and St. Pete Bar Associations were co-sponsoring a seminar for new lawyers dealing with law office management issues which account for the largest number of complaints before the 6th Circuit Grievance Committee. Andy Sasso pointed out that the professionalism booklets could be distributed at that time. Nora and Susan both assured the group that SPC students would be welcome to attend at a discount rate.

The group then broke into groups dealing with proposed curriculum for a four year program in Paralegal Studies. The college has done a feasibility study indicating interest in the community as well as student interest in such a program. Rosemarie Kafer pointed out that a number of local firms would not hire anyone without a bachelor's degree as a paralegal although their degree was in something unrelated to legal assisting.

Rough drafts of proposed courses were constructed and will be shared via e-mail.

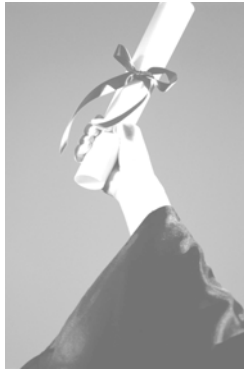
The meeting adjourned at 5:35.

Paralegal
2006-2007 Comprehensive Academic Program Review
Department of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

45

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