

Community College of Denver

Program Level Assessment Plan

Paralegal Program

Table of Contents

Mission Statement.....	3
Paralegal Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes.....	4
Curriculum.....	5
Requirements for Program Completion	
• Degrees and Certificates.....	6
• AAS Non-Transfer Degree.....	7-9
• AAS Transfer Degree.....	9-11
• Certificate.....	11-14
Required Course Student Learning Outcomes.....	14-15
Program Level Assessment Plan.....	16-17
Timeline.....	18
Correlation to the Strategic Plan.....	19-20
Appendix A: Matrices and Program Evaluation Tools	22
• Curriculum Map Program Student Learning Outcomes.....	23
• Curriculum Map Institutional Outcomes.....	24
• Key for terms in Institutional Outcomes.....	25
• Assessment Rubric.....	26
Appendix B: Assessment at Program Completion	27

- Fall 2015 Data.....27-28
- Closing the Loop-after Data
Analysis.....29
- Spring 2016 Data.....30

Paralegal Program Mission Statement

The Community College of Denver Paralegal Program produces transfer and workforce ready paralegals, with the critical thinking and literacy skills necessary for productive engagement in the 21st century legal community.

Paralegal Program Goals and Student Learning Outcomes

As students proceed through the Paralegal Program, they are asked to apply and demonstrate their learning and increasing growing knowledge by demonstrating competency with the following goals and outcomes:

1. Paralegal students must be able to articulate and apply ethical and professional behavior for paralegals.
2. Paralegal students must be able to research the law.
3. Paralegal students must be able to perform written legal analysis on issues pertaining to client matters using the Issue Rule Analysis Conclusion (or IRAC) method.
4. Paralegal students must be able to brief case law and perform statutory analysis.
5. Paralegal students must be able to think critically.

Curriculum

CCD's Paralegal Program offers required and elective courses. For the purposes of the Paralegal Program Assessment only the required courses will be used in the curriculum map. Each course has objectives and competencies that are designed to teach students the skills they need to meet the program goals. Individual course objectives and competencies are established by the Colorado Community Colleges System Office. The Paralegal Program goals and student learning outcomes are established by the Community College of Denver Paralegal Program.

Paralegal Program Certificate and Degrees

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degree – Paralegal (Non-Transfer)

60 Credits

With an Associate of Applied Science degree in Paralegal, you will be prepared for entry-level employment as a paralegal. If your goal is to go on and pursue a bachelor's degree, the Associate of Applied Science Transfer (AAS) degree is the way to go.

Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Transfer Degree - Paralegal

67 Credits

CCD has a transfer agreement with the [University of Colorado at Denver](#) (UC Denver), also on the Auraria Campus. If you earn your Associate of Applied Science Transfer degree in Paralegal at CCD can transfer the credits you earn and enter UC Denver as a junior in either Sociology or Political Science in the University's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences or Criminal Justice in the University's School of Public Affairs.

General Paralegal Certificate

30 Credits

You can earn a Paralegal certificate in as little as two or three semesters. CCD offers you the option of concentrating your certificate on different legal specialties. Credits you earn toward your certificate apply toward a degree if you decide to pursue one.

Program Requirements for Associate of Applied Science Degree in Paralegal (AAS Non-Transfer)

This program prepares students for entry into the paralegal field. Emphasis is placed on practical skills such as interviewing, research and document drafting.

NOTE: Due to accreditation standards and CCD's graduation requirement, beginning Fall 2009 semester, CCD will accept a maximum of two CCCOnline PAR courses to apply toward the AAS Paralegal course requirements: [PAR 115](#) – Introduction to Law and one PAR Elective course. Please see a Paralegal Faculty Advisor or Program Advisor for advising.

Program Admission Requirements

Meet minimum assessment scores or prerequisites required for general education courses in the program.

General Education Requirements

COM 115	Public Speaking		3
ENG 121	English Composition I:	GT- CO1	3
ENG 122	English Composition II:	GT	3
MAT 107			
107			
Career			
Math (or			
MAT 120			
or			
higher) 107			
Subtotal			9
Select one guaranteed transfer			3
course from the Arts & Humanities			
areas: (AH1, AH2, AH3 or AH4)			
Select one guaranteed transfer			3
course from Social & Behavioral			
Sciences areas: (HI1, SS1, SS2 or SS3)			

Subtotal 3

Program Requirements

PAR 115 Introduction to Law	3
PAR 201 Civil Litigation	3
PAR 202 Evidence	3
PAR 209 Constitutional Law	3
PAR 211 Legal Research	3
PAR 212 Legal Writing	3
PAR 280 Internship: Paralegal	3
PAR 289 Capstone: Paralegal Synthesis	3
Subtotal	27

Electives

Select 6 courses from the following:

CIS 118 Intro to PC Applications	3
CIS 135 Complete Word Processing*	3
PAR 116 Torts	3
PAR 117 Family Law	3
PAR 118 Contracts	3
PAR 125 Property Law	3
PAR 126 Administrative Law	3
PAR 205 Criminal Law	3
PAR 206 Business Organizations	3
PAR 208 Probate and Estates	3
PAR 210 Sexual Orientation and the Law	3
PAR 217 Environmental Law	3
PAR 218 Bankruptcy Law	3

* This course is highly recommended for students lacking word processing proficiency.

Subtotal	18
Total	60

Program Requirements for Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Transfer Degree in Paralegal

Associate of Applied Science Transfer Degree in Paralegal

Paralegal AAS Transfer Degree

The following courses represent the CCD/UC-Denver paralegal transfer agreement. Students completing these degree requirements will have completed their lower-division general education requirements and will be eligible to transfer to the University of Colorado at Denver as juniors in sociology or political science in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences or as criminal justice majors in the School of Public Affairs.

Program Admission Requirements

Meet minimum assessment scores or prerequisites required for general education and paralegal courses in the program.

General Education Requirements

Communications	9
ENG 121 English Composition I:	GT-CO1 3
ENG 122 English Composition II:	GT-CO2 3
COM 115 Public Speaking	3
Mathematics	3

Select one guaranteed transfer Math course:	GT- MA1	
Arts & Humanities		6

Select two guaranteed transfer courses from the following areas: (GT-AH1, GT-AH2, GT-AH3, GT-AH4)

Arts & Expression	GT-AH1	
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Literature & Humanities	GT-AH2	
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Ways of Thinking	GT-AH3	
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Foreign Language	GT-AH4	
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Social & Behavioral Sciences		6
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Select two guaranteed transfer courses from the following areas: (GT-SS1, GT-SS2, GT-SS3)

Economic or Political Systems	GT-SS1	
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Geography	GT-SS2	
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Human Behavior, Culture or Social Frameworks	GT-SS3	
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History		3
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Select one guaranteed transfer History course	GT-HI1	
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Natural and Physical Sciences		7
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Select two guaranteed transfer Science courses including a lab	GT- SC1/GT- SC2	
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Program Requirements

PAR 115	Introduction to Law	3
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PAR 201	Civil Litigation	3
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PAR 202	Evidence	3
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PAR 209	Constitutional Law	3
PAR 211	Legal Research	3
PAR 212	Legal Writing	3
PAR 280	Internship: Paralegal	3
PAR 289	Capstone: Paralegal Synthesis	3
	Subtotal	27

Electives

Select 3 courses from the following:

CIS 135	Complete Word Processing*	3
PAR 116	Torts	3
PAR 117	Family Law	3
PAR 118	Contracts	3
PAR 125	Property Law	3
PAR 126	Administrative Law	3
PAR 205	Criminal Law	3
PAR 206	Business Organizations	3
PAR 208	Probate and Estates	3
PAR 210	Sexual Orientation and the Law	3
PAR 217	Environmental Law	3
PAR 218	Bankruptcy Law	3

* This course is highly recommended for students lacking word processing proficiency.

Subtotal	12
Total	67

Certificate in Paralegal

This program prepares individuals with job-entry skills for the general paralegal field. Emphasis is placed on practical skills such as interviewing, researching and document drafting. This certificate is fully transferable to the Paralegal AAS and Transferable AAS degrees. Please see a Program Advisor about these pathways.

NOTE: Due to accreditation standards and CCD's graduation requirement, beginning Fall 2009 semester, CCD will accept a maximum of 2 CCCOnline PAR courses to apply toward the Paralegal Certificate course requirements: [PAR 115](#) – Introduction to Law and one PAR Elective course. Please see a Paralegal Faculty Advisor or Program Advisor for advising.

Program Admission Requirements

Meet minimum assessment scores or prerequisites required for general education courses in the program.

Program Requirements

PAR 115	Introduction to Law	3
PAR 201	Civil Litigation	3
PAR 202	Evidence	3
PAR 209	Constitutional Law	3
PAR 211	Legal Research	3
PAR 212	Legal Writing	3
PAR 280	Internship: Paralegal	3

PAR	Capstone: Paralegal	3
289	Synthesis	
	Subtotal	27

Electives

Select 2 courses from the following:

CIS 135	Complete Word Processing*	3
PAR	Torts	3
116		
PAR	Family Law	3
117		
PAR	Contracts	3
118		
PAR	Property Law	3
125		
PAR	Administrative Law	3
126		
PAR	Criminal Law	3
205		
PAR	Business Organizations	3
206		
PAR	Probate and Estates	3
208		
PAR	Constitutional Law	3
209		
PAR	Sexual Orientation and the	3
210	Law	
PAR	Environmental Law	3
217		
PAR	Bankruptcy Law	3
218		

* This course is highly recommended for students lacking word processing proficiency.

Subtotal	6
Total	30

LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES IN PAR REQUIRED COURSES

PAR 115 INTRODUCTION TO LAW:

- I. Gain a better understanding of how the legal system works.
- II. Develop a basic understanding of the duties, responsibilities, and tasks that a paralegal performs in the legal environment.
- III. Demonstrate an understanding of legal ethical issues.
- IV. Develop a general understanding of the different areas of the law.
- V. Increase critical thinking and analytical skills through class projects and assignments.

PAR 201 CIVIL LITIGATION:

- I. Understand the legal process of civil litigation.
- II. Gain a familiarity with the Rules of Civil Procedure.
- III. Draft pleadings and related trial documents.
- IV. Increase critical thinking and analytical skills.

PAR 202 Evidence:

- I. Demonstrate knowledge of the Rules of Evidence.
- II. Describe different categories of evidence.
- III. Creation of trial exhibits.
- IV. Increase critical thinking and analytical skills.

PAR 209 Constitutional Law:

- I. Demonstrate knowledge of the U. S. Constitution and the federal judiciary.
- II. Have an ability to analyze cases and the development of constitutional theories.
- III. Demonstrate knowledge of the divisions of government power.
- IV. Increase critical thinking and analytical skills.

PAR 211 Legal Research:

- I. Demonstrate knowledge of the use of a law library and computer-assisted legal research.
- II. Distinguish between primary and secondary authorities.

- III. Apply research skills to fact patterns.
- IV. Increase critical thinking and analytical skills.

PAR 212 LEGAL WRITING:

- I. Demonstrate ability to communicate in written form.
- II. Demonstrate ability to perform legal analysis.
- III. Draft legal documents, such as client letters, legal memorandums, and briefs.
- IV. Increase critical thinking and analytical skills in written form.

PAR 280: Internship:

Provides students with the opportunity to supplement coursework with practical work

experience related to their educational program. Students work under the immediate supervision of experie

PAR 289 Capstone:

Emphasizes a synthesis of the information and skills that students learned throughout their paralegal studies.

Program Assessment

The assessment plan for the Community College of Denver Paralegal Program ensures that students who are graduated from the Program possess the skills necessary to become work-force ready paralegals.

1. PAR 289: Capstone, the final class in the Paralegal Program, is the benchmark course for assessing these skills.
2. The artifact for the direct measure will be:
 - a. Requiring all students to use the Model Rules of Professional Conduct to answer an ethical question relevant to working in a professional legal setting in a Memorandum discussion posting that uses the IRAC case briefing format and requires students to relate the law to the client issues presented.
3. The evaluation tool will be an analytical rubric. Paralegal Program faculty will rank student effort for the rubric using four frequencies: (1) did not meet expectations, (2) acceptable but needs work, (3) meets expectations and (4) exceeds expectations.
4. Paralegal faculty will perform a norming exercise where the facilitator will pull artifacts from all four frequencies and ask each assessor to evaluate the student work. The group will norm their efforts in order to achieve rater reliability.

5. The analytical rubric will list the four frequencies, with their attendant 1 through 4 rankings. Our Program goal is to have 80% of the student work rank at 3 and 4.

6. The assessors for the actual assessment will not include the course instructor.

7. We will also conduct an indirect measure of the Program Level Student Learning Outcomes by providing an anonymous survey to the graduating class in the PAR 289 Capstone class. This survey will have a 1 through 5 ranking system where one is the lowest and 5 as the highest. Students will be asked to evaluate their perceived competency in distinct targeted areas.

Assessment Timeline

- 1) Starting in Summer 2015 design the assignments to be collected as artifacts.
- 2) Starting in Fall 2015 collect the artifacts.
- 3) Over Fall 2015 break distribute the artifacts to each assessor for evaluation using the rubric.
- 4) Beginning of Spring 2016 pull all the data for review.
- 5) Before Spring 2016 host Department meeting to discuss Spring 2016 changes.
- 6) Spring 2016 make Department changes.
- 7) Spring 2016 collect second set of artifacts.
- 7) End of Spring 2016: analyze data and meet with Department faculty to review our findings and assess strengths and weaknesses.
- 8) This cycle continues from semester to semester until the Program reaches the desired benchmark for these program outcomes.
- 9) Once the benchmark has been meet the Department will come together to discuss further assessments.

Correlation to Strategic Plan

At the Community College of Denver our first Strategic Priority is Student Learning and Success. The Paralegal Program conducts Program Level Assessment to determine if our core courses are providing relevant and integrated content which result in students being able to collaterally achieve our Program Student Learning Outcomes, in our certificate and two AAS degrees.

The Paralegal Program manifests Strategic Plan Priority Two: Organizational Integration and Effectiveness by creating collaborative learning opportunities for students across the College with various departments including Math, English, Career Services, Technology and the Library. Our efforts in this regard help sustain the college-wide culture of collaboration and integration.

The Paralegal Program also strongly manifests Strategic Plan Priority Three: External Engagements and Partnerships through our mandatory internship requirement and by utilizing our Program Advisory Board in in developing our Program Level Student Learning Outcomes. We continually utilize the collective wisdom of our Advisory Board as we create, modify and evaluate our various assessment projects.

The Paralegal Program Advisory Board is comprised of a broad range of legal professionals from the Metro area. They fully represent the community where our students eventually find employment. The Board's input into our Program Level Outcomes is driven by their work-world perspective which focuses on paralegal employability and paralegal career success.

Finally, the Paralegal Program embodies Strategic Plan Priority number Four by creating a culture of Evidence, Transparency and Shared Information. This priority is deeply valued by the Paralegal Program as evidenced by our Department Chairperson's efforts in co-chairing the college-wide sub-committee on creating a culture of Evidence, Transparency and Shared Information. To that end, the findings from our assessment will be uploaded on the CCD paralegal website so that current and future students will be able to see the work we do in creating a successful paralegal program.

Appendices

Appendix A:

1. Program Curriculum Map

2. Institutional Curriculum Map

- a. Key for terms in Institutional Outcomes

3. Rubric

Appendix B:

Assessment Results DATA

Curriculum Map

Curriculum Map to Paralegal Program Student Learning Outcomes								
Student Learning Outcomes	PAR 115 Intro	PAR 201 Civil Litigation	PAR 202 Evidence	PAR 209 Constitutional	PAR 211 Legal Research	PAR 212 Legal Writing	PAR 280 Internship	PAR 289 Capstone
1. Paralegal students will be able to identify ethical and professional behavior for paralegals.	I PR, R	I/D Q	I/D E, LA	I/D LA,P,D	D PR, P	D PR, M	D PR	M M, D
2. Paralegal students will be able to research the law.	I LA, EX	I/D PR	I/D LA	I/D/M LA,P,Ex	D LA, PR, Ex	M PR, M	D/M PR,LA	M M, D
3. Paralegal students will be able to perform written legal analysis on issues pertaining to client matters using the IRAC method.	I LA,PR, P	I/D PR	I/D LA, Q	D/M LA,P,Ex	M PR, EX	M PR, M	D/M PR,M,LA	M M, D
4. Paralegal students will be able to brief case law and perform statutory analysis.	I LA, PR	I/D PR	I/D LA, Q	I/D/M LA,P,Ex	D LA, P, Q	M PR, M	M PR	M M, D
5. Paralegal students will be able to think critically.	I LA, Q, P, EX	I/D PR	I/D LA, Q	I/D LA,P,Ex	D LA, PR, Q, P, EX	M PR, M PR	D/M PR,M,LA	M M, D

Key

I= Introduced
D=Developed
M=Mastered

Assignments

PR= Project
M=Memorandum
LA=Legal Analysis
P= Presentation
D=Discussion Post
R= Review Questions
B= Case Brief

Curriculum Map of Institutional Outcomes

Curriculum Map to Paralegal Program Student Learning Outcomes									
Student Learning Outcomes ↓	Courses →	PAR 115 Intro	PAR 201 Civil Litigation	PAR 202 Evidence	PAR 209 Constitutional	PAR 211 Legal Research	PAR 212 Legal Writing	PAR 280 Internship	PAR 289 Capstone
1. A CCD graduate is a COMPLEX THINKER									
2. A CCD graduate is an EFFECTIVE and ETHICAL USER of TECHNOLOGY									
3. A CCD graduate is an EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR									
4. A CCD graduate is GLOBALLY AWARE									
5. A CCD graduate is PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE									
6. A CCD graduate is a NUMERIC THINKER									

Key

I= Introduced
D=Developed
M=Mastered

Assignments

PR= Project
M=Memorandum
LA=Legal Analysis
P= Presentation
D=Discussion Post

Key for terms in Intuitional Outcomes

1. A CCD graduate is a COMPLEX THINKER

Students will examine multiple sources of information and their synthesis to solve problems; take meaning from text, instruction, experience and other sources of information to construct new insights and generate new problem solving approaches based on these insights. Students will create connections between classroom and out-of-classroom learning.

2. A CCD graduate is an EFFECTIVE and ETHICAL USER of TECHNOLOGY

Students will exhibit technological literacy and skills, demonstrate the ethical application of intellectual property and privacy; manage technology ethically and effectively to communicate, solve problems and complete tasks; stay current with technological innovations.

3. A CCD graduate is an EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Students will convey meaning by writing, speaking, or visually communicating coherently and effectively in a way that others understand;

Students will write, speak, or visually engage the target audience after reflection;

Students will influence others through writing, speaking, visual representation, or artistic expression that is appropriate for the context and audience;

Students will use appropriate syntax and grammar and will present or express their ideas coherently;

Students will attentively apply receptive skills and respond appropriately.

Students will understand and apply conventions of effective written, oral or visual communication in academic, public, and professional discourse.

4. A CCD graduate is GLOBALLY AWARE

Globally aware students consider the interconnectedness of our community and world; understand how cultural differences (beliefs, traditions, religions) impact personal and community participation; are aware of the social, environmental, and economic impacts of their actions; and evaluates how technology links us as individual and communities.

5. A CCD graduate is PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE

Students will incorporate ethical reasoning into action; explore and articulate the values of strong professionalism (including appropriate dress and behavior) in personal decision-making; act in congruence with personal values and beliefs; exemplify dependability, honesty, and trustworthiness; and accept personal accountability. Students will exhibit self-reliant behaviors including managing time effectively, accepting supervision and direction as needed; valuing the contributions of others; and holding self accountable for obligations.

6. A CCD graduate is a NUMERIC THINKER

Students will select relevant data and use several methods such as algebraic, geometric, and statistical reasoning to solve problems; interpret and draw inferences from mathematical models; and represent mathematical information symbolically, graphically, numerically, and verbally.

Appendix A Rubric

Paralegal Program Student Learning Outcomes Rubric

Frequencies	1 does not meet expectations	2 acceptable	3 meets expectations	4 Exceeds expectations
Paralegal students will be able to identify the ethical issue of confidentiality	Paralegal student was not able to identify the ethical issue of confidentiality	Paralegal student will be able to identify the ethical issue of confidentiality but not develop the idea	Paralegal student was able to identify the ethical issue of confidentiality but was not able to articulate the ethical issue	Paralegal student was able to identify the ethical issue of confidentiality and completely articulate it
Paralegal students will be able to research the law.	Paralegal student was not able to research the law.	Paralegal student was able to research the some of the law.	Paralegal student was able to research most of the law.	Paralegal student will be able to research all of the law.
Paralegal students will be able to perform 1. written legal analysis on 2. issues pertaining to client matters 3. using the IRAC method.	Paralegal student was not able to perform 1. written legal analysis on 2. issues pertaining to client matters 3. using the IRAC method.	Paralegal student was somewhat able to perform 1. written legal analysis on 2. issues pertaining to client matters 3. using the IRAC method.	Paralegal student was almost able to perform 1. written legal analysis on 2. issues pertaining to client matters 3. using the IRAC method.	Paralegal student was always able to perform 1. written legal analysis on 2. issues pertaining to client matters 3. using the IRAC method.
Paralegal students will be able to brief case law and perform statutory analysis.	Paralegal student was not able to brief case law or perform statutory analysis.	Paralegal student was somewhat able to brief case law and/or perform statutory analysis.	Paralegal student was mostly able to brief case law and/or perform statutory analysis.	Paralegal student was completely able to brief case law and perform statutory analysis.
Paralegal students will be able to think critically.	Paralegal student was not able to think critically. (student was not able to find the appropriate law and/or apply it to a real world situation)	Paralegal student is thinking somewhat critically. (student was either able to find the appropriate law or apply it to a real world situation, but not both)	Paralegal student was mostly able to think critically. (student was able to find the appropriate law and/or apply it correctly to a real world situation)	Paralegal student can think critically. (student was able to find the appropriate law and apply it to a real world situation)

Appendix B DATA Collected and Analysis:

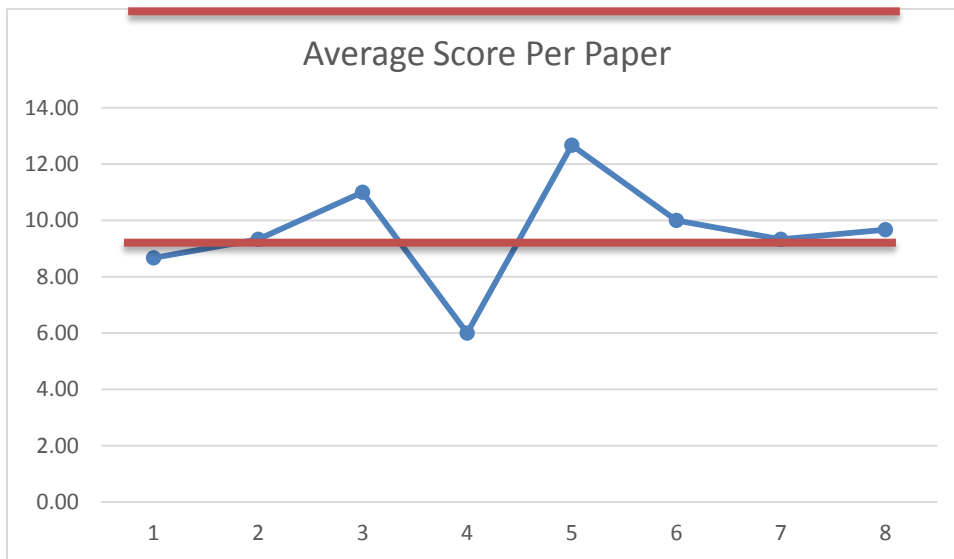
Fall 2015

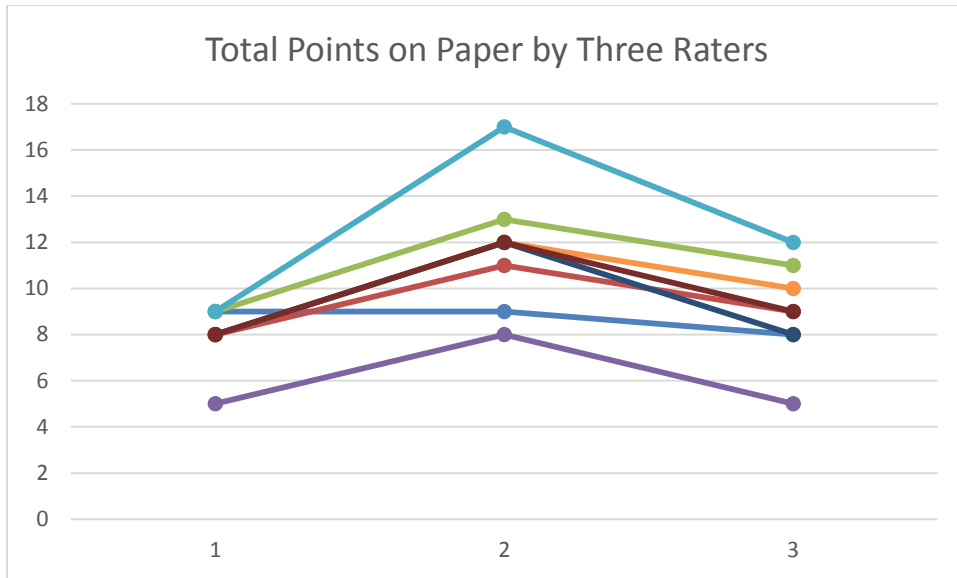
Paralegal Program Student Learning Outcomes

Eight student papers were reviewed by three independent evaluators on five outcomes. Using a rubric each outcome was rated as not meeting expectations, acceptable, meeting expectations, and exceeds expectations. A total of twenty points was possible for the paper. The average score across all papers, all items and all reviewers is 9.58 or 47.9%.

The reviewers were in complete agreement on twelve of the forty outcomes rated (32.5%), within +/- one level on twenty-two (55%), and more than one level difference on 12.5% of the ratings.

Paper	Mean	Median	% Total
1	8.67	9	43.3%
2	9.33	9	46.7%
3	11.00	11	55.0%
4	6.00	5	30.0%
5	12.67	12	63.3%
6	10.00	10	50.0%
7	9.33	8	46.7%
8	9.67	9	48.3%





In some cases the disagreement among reviewer's ratings will result in a different grade on the paper.

The rubric itself was not evaluated for validity or reliability. A standard measure or 'true score' is needed to evaluate the rubric and determine inter-rater reliability.

Spring 2016 Data

See attached

Closing the Loop after Reviewing DATA Fall 2015:

2. Redesign the ethics artifact assignment for Capstone so that it is clearer and lays out the step by step process for the requirements and expectations for the artifact document.
3. Redesign grading rubric for the artifact assignment to set out clearer expectations.
4. Incorporate additional ethics discussion and exam questions in PAR 201 Civil Litigation and PAR 202 Evidence.
5. Redraft Assessment Rubric to create stronger parameters in order to promote inter-rater reliability.

Things to consider trying at the course level:

- More writing required in all classes
- Require students to do exercises in classroom that involve critical thinking; i.e. giving them hypothetical cases and have them discuss law and apply it to cases; do it as groups so they can hear other students' analysis
- Writing is a real problem in all my classes; some don't know what a complete sentence is and grammar is just not a thing they care about; maybe make students do more writing and English prerequisites; it is embarrassing to me
- None of the students even researched a case; did they just not think cases were relevant? In Intro I make them brief and read ethics cases; in Legal Research students research all types of laws; why aren't they thinking of cases?
- The format wasn't even correct or complete in most of the work - maybe every class should involve writing some type of report to an attorney in a required format
- Critical thinking is a real issue with a lot of the students; they don't know what it means and they struggle with notion of applying law to a situation; I work all semester with this and some never get it; I need to try some new techniques
- Citations need a lot of work; I am real strict on the format and follow the Bluebook requirements

Spring 2016 Data

Closing the Loop after Reviewing DATA Spring 2016:

- We will be hosting a norming session in Spring 2017 to work on our rater reliability issue.
- We are going to add a layer of data to include the instructor's grades to the data we are currently generating.
- We will also conduct an indirect measure of the Program Level Student Learning Outcomes by providing an anonymous survey to the graduating class in the PAR 289 Capstone class. This survey will have a 1 through 5 ranking system where one is the lowest and 5 as the highest. Students will be asked to evaluate their perceived competency in distinct targeted areas.
- We purchased an Ethics DVD to play in the classes throughout the program to increase student awareness of ethics in the legal profession.
- Our faculty have researched ways to increase success in teaching legal writing and critical thinking using the "Marsh Method" and we are working on including this pedagogy in the classes we teach.
- During our next advisory meeting we will discuss ways to increase critical thinking.