1. **Assessment information collected.** The CTC Paralegal Program uses a multifaceted plan to assess whether students are acquiring the skills and knowledge required for successful entry into the paralegal job market. The “Intended Objectives/Outcomes” in the program’s SLOA Plan identify the eight basic skills. The part of the assessment plan involving students includes:

   a) Specific questions addressing student-learning outcomes are included on the semester-end evaluations of paralegal courses. Prior to fall 2015, end of semester focus groups gathered input from students as to learning outcomes, course and instructor effectiveness, and student perception of needed changes.

   b) Comparison of legal writing projects from the introductory level (PLS 102) to the advanced level (PLS 285).

   c) Passing courses identified by the paralegal advisory committee as practical-skills intensive (PLS 102, PLS 201, PLS 203, PLS 210, PLS 240, PLS 250, PLS 260, PLS 280 and PLS 285).

   d) Detailed reports following the mandatory paralegal internship from both the student and the student’s supervisor in the internship office.

The assessment plan continues by following graduates into the job market by determining whether the courses completed provided them with the skills required to succeed in their paralegal position. This part of the assessment plan first focuses on the successful placement of graduates. The plan then follows up with a once-a-year questionnaire of recent graduates. In addition, members of the Paralegal Advisory Committee volunteer to visit with the employers of program graduates to obtain further information whether the students have learned what is required of them as successful paralegals.

A graduate survey was conducted in late 2017 with 5 respondents. The data indicates that 40% of graduates are employed full time as paralegals. Forty percent of graduates are employed in a law-related field. One graduate is continuing her education.

The survey asked the following questions and graduates provided the following responses:
Rate the importance of having familiarity with basic concepts of law in your field(s) of practice, such as family law, criminal law, torts, real property law, probate law, etc.

5 responses

[Pie chart]

How well did the program prepare you in knowledge of substantive law?

5 responses

[Bar chart]

Rate the importance of having familiarity with relevant court rules, such as civil rules, criminal rules, rules of evidence and other portions of the civil code (Title 9), such as statute of limitations.

5 responses

[Pie chart]

How well did the program prepare you in knowledge of procedural law?

5 responses

[Bar chart]
Rate the importance of being able to locate relevant authorities, such as statutes, case law, administrative rules, and other valuable resources such as procedural rules

- 20% Essential
- 80% Very Important
- Important
- Not very important
- Unnecessary

How well did the program prepare you in the area of research skills?

- 5 responses

Rate the importance of knowing how to use other law office-related software, such as word processing, database, presentation, file management, time-keeping, billing and calendaring/docketing software?

- 20% Essential
- 80% Very Important
- Important
- Not very important
- Unnecessary

How well did the program prepare you in the use of law office-related computer tools?

- 2 (40%) Essential
- 2 (40%) Very Important
- 1 (20%) Important
- 0 (0%) Not very important
- 0 (0%) Unnecessary
Rate the importance of having good oral communication skills, such as those used in interviewing clients and witnesses, and in presenting your thoughts and ideas to others in an accurate and convincing manner.

5 responses

How well did the program prepare you in the use good oral communication?

5 responses

Rate the importance of knowing how to draft letters, office memorandum, legal documents, pleadings, etc.

5 responses

How well did the program prepare you with effective writing skills?

5 responses
Overall, the graduate survey show the importance of the subject matter taught in the paralegal programs. A majority of graduates responded that the program does an excellent or very good job in providing the necessary knowledge and skills to succeed as a paralegal.

2. Conclusions drawn from the information summarized above

   a) Because most PLS courses are online, in-person focus groups are no longer feasible. The program is relying upon the semester-end evaluations and e-mailed student questionnaires. The data garnered from students indicates the current curriculum is meeting the stated learning objectives. Some courses could benefit from offering more practical, skill based projects. For example, PLS 213 Criminal Law assignments could include drafting a complaint, a motion to suppress or a trial brief.

   b) Writing samples from PLS 102 Introduction to Paralegal Studies and PLS 285 Advanced Legal Writing were compared. The projects were identical in nature: read and brief a number of cases, then draft an interoffice memorandum that applies the law to a fact situation and recommends a course of action. Student work showed significant improvement from the introductory writing to the advanced writing projects. Improvements included grammar, sentence structure, word choice and voice, proper citations to case law, application of case law to the facts, and the quality of legal analysis.

   c) The data collected during this assessment period indicates a majority of students are successfully passing the practical skills intensive courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Average Enrollment (AY 2016-2013)</th>
<th>A%</th>
<th>B%</th>
<th>C%</th>
<th>D, F, NB, IN, W%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PLS 102 Introduction to Paralegal Studies (required)</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19.75</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLS 201 Practical Paralegal Skills (required)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLS 203 Torts (elective)</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLS 210 Civil Procedure (required)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLS 240 Family Law (elective)</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLS 250 Probate Law (elective)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
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<td>PLS 260 Computers in the Law Office (required)</td>
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<td>66.65</td>
<td>16.65</td>
<td>16.65</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>PLS 280 Legal Research &amp; Writing (required)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>71.65</td>
<td>18.35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLS 285 Advanced Legal Writing (required)</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paralegal Studies, A.A.S. Degree

**d)** Four students enrolled in PLS 299 Paralegal Studies Internship between Fall 2016 and Spring 2018. Three students successfully completed the internship. The student and supervisor reports indicate that these students had the requisite skills required of a working paralegal and the students were well prepared to enter the workforce. One student secured a paid internship and was offered a full-time position at the end of the internship. One student began employment as a paralegal and one student is continuing her education. One student requested an incomplete for the internship.

**e)** Between Fall 2016 and Spring 2018, nine students graduated from the paralegal degree program. Of those graduates, four are working in the legal field, one is working in a law-related field, two are continuing their education, and two have not sought employment as paralegal. While the number of graduates working in the legal field is short of the 75% goal as stated in the SLOA plan, employers consistently express satisfaction with program graduates and frequently comment on how little on-the-job training is required.

**3. Curricular changes resulting from conclusions drawn above**

**a)** **PLS 210 Civil Procedure:** There is concern regarding the disproportionate number of As given in this course. Instructors were asked to create assignments to better challenge students and to evaluate student effort more critically.

**b)** **PLS 250 Probate Law:** Spring 2017 was the first semester PLS 240 Probate Law was offered online. Six students requested incomplete grades. Instructors were asked to reevaluate the appropriateness of the course material and determine if the material is suitable for a 200-level course. The online course structure will be examined for ease of student navigation and content. Instructors were encouraged to monitor student effort and performance closer so the student can be counseled or withdrawn as appropriate. The course was cancelled in Spring 2018 due to low enrollment. If the trend of students receiving a D/F/NB/IN/W remains in future assessments, this course should be offered in a face-to-face format.

The curriculum is meeting the learning objectives identified in the SLOA Plan. However, all instructors are encouraged to add more practical, hands-on type of projects to their individual courses. Instructors of courses with a disproportionate number of high grades should reevaluate their grading criteria and/or incorporate more challenging assignments.

**4. Identify the faculty members involved in reaching the conclusions drawn above and agreeing upon the curricular changes resulting**

The Outcomes Assessment Subcommittee of the Paralegal Advisory Committee, chaired by the Paralegal Studies program coordinator, Deana Waters, gathers information from students, graduates, and employers of graduates. This information is organized, compiled and presented to the full advisory committee at fall meeting each year, as well as the fall meeting of the paralegal faculty each year.

The Paralegal Advisory Committee oversees of the program’s curriculum. Two judges, four practicing lawyers, and three practicing paralegals make up the bulk of the committee. This
is the group which can assess the changes occurring in the paralegal profession, local legal community and job market, and which most often provides recommendations for updating or changing the curriculum. The paralegal faculty, which also consists primarily of practicing lawyers and paralegals, is involved in this process, but to a lesser degree.

5. Has your SLOA plan been updated to include assessment of the program’s Communication Plan, as required by Faculty Senate motion? (required for baccalaureate programs only)

The Paralegal Studies program, which offers an Associate of Applied Science degree, is exempt from this requirement.