

Legal Assistant

APRC 2001-2002

section 1 of 4



Ferris State University
College of Business

Legal Assistant

Academic Program Preview Report

August 2001

Panel Members:

R. Dale Hobart

John Kane

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Legal Assistant Program Review

Section One – Overview of the Program

The Ferris State University Legal Assistant Program is an Associate degree program located in the Management Department of the College of Business. The program, established in 1972, was the first Legal Assistant Program in Michigan. Six hundred sixty-nine (669) students have graduated since its inception. The primary purpose of the program is to educate students to become legal assistants or paralegals. However, many students use it to obtain a more in depth understanding of law and the United States legal system as a background for a Business degree. Others use it as course of study to prepare for law school. The program has been approved by the American Bar Association since 1977 and is evaluated by that body every five years. The curriculum meets or exceeds all ABA requirements. The requirements include criteria for number of credit hours, number of legal specialty courses, and general education requirements. This past academic year the program was reviewed by the American Bar Association. The Self-Evaluation Report prepared by the Legal Assistant Program faculty is in Appendix A.

Section II B of the report summarizes the objectives of the Legal Assistant Program. The Site Visit report (Appendix B) prepared by the ABA site visitation team concluded, "Ferris State University has a strong Legal Assistant Program with a skilled and dedicated faculty." Their recommendations for improvement were modest in length. The House of Delegates of the American Bar Association voted to reapprove the program on February 19, 2001. The University was notified of the reapproval in early April 2001 (Appendix C).

While the proportion varies from year to year, a majority of the graduates of the Legal Assistant Program obtain bachelor's degrees, usually at Ferris. College of Business records for the past 10 years indicate just under 70% of the graduates remained in bachelor degree programs at Ferris. The graduates who continue their education at FSU enjoy a reputation as excellent students among the faculty.

The faculty teaching the Legal Specialty courses in the Legal Assistant Program are: Professor John Kane, Professor John Vermeer, Adjunct James White, and Instructor Gayle Lopez (2001-2002 Academic year). Professor Kane serves as Coordinator of the Program. Faculty credentials are in Appendix D.

Following is a summary of changes since the last program review.

1. The Legal Assistant Program faculty have worked with other Management Department faculty to assure that Legal Assistant graduates can integrate into the Business Administration program and graduate in four (4) years. This became more difficult as College of Business programs added more general education courses in order to qualify for accreditation.
2. The Legal Assistant Program Coordinator has worked with faculty and advisors in Public Administration and Pre-Law in an effort to make the Legal Assistant courses available to students interested in legal studies.

The Public Administration Program requires a 15-hour concentration in one of six different areas. Legal studies is now one of those areas.

Pre-law students generally enroll in that area of study because they intend to go to law school. The Legal Assistant courses give them an opportunity to ascertain, early in their academic career, if their career choice is appropriate.

LLAW 160, Law in the United States 1 and LLAW 161, Law in the United States 2 are recommended courses for pre-law students and required courses in the Public Administration/Legal Studies concentration.

3. The advent of new technology continues to impact the program. The computers in the Legal Assistant Resource Room in the College of Business were upgraded so new legal software could be utilized. The WESTLAW contract has been terminated but students now have unlimited access to an academic version of LEXIS for legal research. In addition, there are numerous public websites available for legal research.
4. The Legal Assistant Program has had several program reviews during the past five years. In addition to the ABA review and the Academic Senate Program Review, the Legal Assistant Program has done a self-study for Occupational Programs in order to obtain a Perkins grant, has an annual review by the Management Department Chair, and the curriculum was reviewed by the site visit members of the ACBSP.

The 1999 Community College Summary Report for the Perkins grant money is in Appendix E. All of the future objectives in Part D of the report have been accomplished with the exception of developing an email system of communicating with graduates.

The most recent administrative review is in Appendix F.

5. Gayle Lopez, an attorney, and Juan Salazar, a legal assistant, have been added to the Legal Assistant Advisory Board. Also, for the past two years, the advisory board has been meeting twice a year. Previously the advisory board met once a year.
6. Professor John Vermeer is the Management Department Chair for the 2001-2002 academic year. Gayle Lopez has replaced Professor Vermeer during the 2001-2002 academic year.
7. Students pursuing BS degrees along with the Legal Assistant degree often declare the BS program as their major. This has caused the enrollment figures for the Legal Assistant Program to sometimes be inaccurate. Starting in the Fall of 2001, Legal Assistant students also pursuing the Business Administration degree may be identified as being in both programs (BALA). The Business Administration degree is the most popular BS program for Legal Assistant students. The checksheets for the AAS Legal Assistant degree and the Business Administration/Legal Assistant BS degree are in Appendix E.

Future plans include:

1. Continue efforts to utilize legal research and appropriate technology in all legal specialty courses.
2. Consider changing LLAW 160 to an Introduction to Legal Studies course.
3. Continue efforts to allow students in the Legal Assistant Program to be classified as dual enrolled in BS programs such as Public Administration.
4. Remain ABA approved.
5. Improve administrative and secretarial support. Presently the program coordinator gets no release time and little clerical support.
6. Continued efforts by the program faculty to be of service to all students interested in Legal Studies.

The goal of the Legal Assistant Program is to continue to provide a course of study that prepares graduates for employment and future educational opportunities.

Legal Assistant Program Review

Section Two-Graduate Follow-Up Survey

In 1989, 1994, and 1998 graduates of the Legal Assistant Program were surveyed as part of the self-study requirements for the American Bar Association Legal Assistant Approval Commission. The purpose of the survey was to determine the success of graduates in obtaining relevant employment and to obtain their evaluation of their education. The form of the survey was similar to those suggested by the ABA. The survey instruments and the summary of the results are in Appendix H. Additionally, in 1997 the Management Department did a comprehensive survey of graduates that included a random sampling of 20 Legal Assistant graduates.

The conclusions reached are that graduates are prepared for positions in the Legal Assistant profession and that their Legal Assistant education was beneficial when combined with other business degrees. In reviewing the results of the surveys, a number of conclusions can be made in the curriculum area.

1. Accounting, Business Math, and Social Science courses continue to be rated the least important non-law courses.
2. English and Communications courses were rated as the most important non-law courses.
3. The importance of computer skills increased significantly between the 1989 and 1994 surveys. In the 1998 survey computer skills and legal research skills were rated most important.

The 1989 survey was used in the semester conversion process. During that process Business Math was eliminated as a required course and the requirement in Accounting was reduced from two courses to one course. Requirements for specific Social Sciences courses were eliminated, since students are now required to comply with the University General Education requirements.

The surveys also confirm that a significant number of graduates obtain bachelor's degrees. This fact was taken into account in developing the curriculum during semester conversion. The 1994 survey also indicated that an increasing number of graduates found that the Legal Assistant education was a factor in an employer's decision to hire them in a non-law-related job.

The difficulties in completing the surveys were the usual ones: getting graduates to respond in significant numbers, trying to ask questions that elicit relevant information, and making sense of the data received.

In addition to the written surveys, graduates must meet with representatives of the American Bar Association during the site visits. In the Fall of 2000 the ABA visitation team interviewed over 15 graduates of the program. The interviews are done in private. The visitation team advised Legal Assistant Program faculty and the University the graduates were quite satisfied with their education at Ferris.

Legal Assistant Program Review

Section Three – Employer Survey

Employers were surveyed in 1998. Eleven Surveys were returned. The results are in Appendix I.

The small numbers made it difficult to attach meaningful significance to this data. We have had poor response from employers in the past. Some employers did not feel comfortable evaluating their employees for third parties and would not respond to this type of survey. Since many employers are attorneys, they tend to be cautious in giving information of this kind.

The program also obtains employer feedback in other ways. All students who do internships must be evaluated by their employer. Since a student does not receive credit until this is done, we always obtain the evaluations. Employer evaluations of student interns are quite positive.

Finally, both the American Bar Association and the State Bar of Michigan have done extensive surveys during the past few years. Program faculty are familiar with the surveys and the needs of employers. Information regarding those surveys is in Appendix I.

Legal Assistant Program Review

Section Four – Student Survey

Surveys of current students in the Legal Assistant Program were taken in April 2000. Twenty-two students in the program completed the survey.

The survey addressed the students' perceptions of the program both in areas that are directly related to the instructional program and also support areas. They were asked to respond within a range that included an ideal of "Excellent" down through "Good", "Average", "Below Expectations", and finally "Poor" which indicates serious inadequacy. A "Don't Know" choice was available for those who had no opinion.

Generally the results showed a satisfaction rating of "Good" to "Excellent" for the first, second, third and eighth questions relating to course availability, course objectives, teaching methods, and program instructors. Most students also were highly satisfied with questions 9, 10, and 11 relating to support services, instructional equipment, and instructional equipment. A few students in this area gave an occasional low rating. The comment section indicated a frustration with some equipment (mainly printers) and high costs of books. Questions 5, 6, and 7 relating to internships, career planning and internships were primarily rated good to excellent but there were a fair number of "don't know" answers by first year students. Question 4, related courses, received the most diverse array of answers. It is obvious that some students do not care for the general education requirements.

Overall the results of the survey indicate that the Legal Assistant students have a high degree of satisfaction with their program.

The student survey instrument and summary of results are in Appendix J.

Legal Assistant Program Review

Section Five – Faculty Survey

Surveys of College of Business faculty were taken in September 2001. Sixteen surveys were completed.

The survey addressed the faculty's perceptions of the Legal Assistant Program in areas that ranged from support of the program and the program itself to perceptions about the students who are in the program. Faculty were asked to respond within a range that included an ideal of "Excellent" down through "Good", "Average", "Below Expectations", and finally "Poor" which indicates a serious inadequacy. A "Don't Know" choice was available for those who had no opinion.

Overall, the results of the survey indicate that the faculty think highly of the Legal Assistant Program.

The faculty survey instrument and summary of results are located in Appendix K.

Legal Assistant Program Review

Section Six – Advisory Committee Perceptions Of the Legal Assistant Program

In April 2001 the Legal Assistant Advisory Board Members were asked to evaluate the program. Ten members of the advisory board completed the survey. The board members rated the program excellent in instructional content, instructional equipment and instructional facilities. (Questions 1, 2, and 3 on the survey.) However, a number of the members commented on the need to improve the location of the law collection in the library. Questions four and five on placement and follow-up studies of graduates were rated highly by most, but not all, of the board members.

In the comment section of the survey, the most frequent strengths listed were program faculty and the ability to obtain BS degree upon completion of the Legal Assistant degree.

The most frequent needs listed were better marketing and support staff to assist with the program.

The survey instrument and summary of results is in Appendix L.

Legal Assistant Program Review

Section Seven – Labor Market Analysis

According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, Paralegals held about 136,000 jobs in 1998. Although there are several ways to become a Paralegal, employers usually require formal paralegal training obtained through associate or bachelor degree programs.

Paralegals are projected to rank among the fastest growing occupations in the economy through 2008. Employment growth comes from the law firms and other firms with legal staff hiring Legal Assistants to lower the cost and increase the availability and efficiency of legal services. The majority of job opening for Paralegals in the future will be new jobs created by employment growth.

All kinds of employers hire Paralegals. They include law firms, corporations, financial institutions, insurance companies, real estate and title companies, government agencies, and courts.

Supporting data is in Appendix M.

Legal Assistant Program Review

Part Eight – Evaluations of Facilities and Equipment

Library facilities. The law collection located in FLITE is excellent. ABA site visitation teams are always impressed with the collection as it exceeds ABA standards. The faculty teaching in the Legal Assistant Program are regularly consulted concerning library needs. LEXUS is available from any computer on campus allowing students to do legal research online. The new library contains some very impressive teaching facilities that were designed with the Legal Assistant Program in mind.

A list of the FSU Law Collection holdings is in Appendix N.

Classrooms and conference rooms. The College of Business Building classrooms are used for most legal specialty courses in the program. The rooms are appropriate.

A small classroom is dedicated to the Legal Assistant Program. This room serves as a classroom, computer lab, and study area for students. New computers and a high quality laser printer were purchased last year with Perkins funds. Legal software specific to litigation and probate courses is available.

Office space. The faculty teaching in the Legal Assistant Program share an office in the College of Business. This past year the office was completely redone and all new furniture was purchased.

In sum, the facilities are excellent.

Legal Assistant Program Review

Section Nine – Curriculum Evaluation

Curriculum evaluation, an ongoing process in the Legal Assistant Program, involves input from students, alumni, advisory board members, faculty, the Academic Senate, the American Bar Association Approval Commission and the American Association for Paralegal Education. The present curriculum has existed since semester conversion in the Fall of 1993. It includes a minimum of twenty-two semester hours of legal specialty courses and one Business Law course, business courses in Accounting and computers, twenty-one hour of General Education courses, and 12 hours of free electives. The curriculum was designed to meet the ABA guidelines for legal specialty and general education courses while maintaining the maximum in flexibility to accommodate electives in special areas of interests or the completion of business core and general education requirements for students going on for bachelor's degrees.

A syllabus for each Legal Assistant course is in Appendix O.

Students regularly evaluate the legal specialty courses using the instrument required by post-tenure review. Advisory members meet during each fall and winter semester. Discussion of curriculum is a regular agenda item. Faculty have input formally through the academic procedures utilized by the university to approve all courses and curriculum. All changes in curriculum start with the professors in the program.

The ABA approval process is ongoing. Every five years an ABA site team visits the program, and a self-study is prepared. Between visits the ABA requires periodic reports if any changes are made in the curriculum. The most recent ABA site visit report is in Appendix B.

The American Association of Paralegal Education developed core competencies for Paralegal Programs in December 1994. The faculty in the program are utilizing the document to review program requirements with students graduating each spring.

The AAFPE Guide to Core Competencies for Paralegal Programs is in Appendix N.

Input from students, graduates, employers, and the American Bar Association indicate the program's curriculum is appropriate. The ability to complete the program and matriculate into a bachelor's program at Ferris is an added benefit of the program's flexibility.

Legal Assistant Program Review

Section Ten – Enrollment Trends

After the announcement of the closing of the Legal Assistant Program in the Fall of 1993, enrollment declined. While part of the difficulty may have been caused by the publicity from the Ferris Restructuring Plan, the enrollment decline in the Legal Assistant Program parallels the lower enrollments in other Business programs that were not scheduled for closure. Since existing FSU students have always been a source of new students for the program, it is not surprising that reduced enrollments in the College of Business would impact the program.

One difficulty in tracking total enrollment numbers is that the University does not allow students to indicate they are pursuing more than one course of study. Some students graduate from the Legal Assistant Program without ever being counted as enrolled in the program because they declare the bachelor's degree program as their major.

As mentioned in Section One, this fall the students in the Legal Assistant Program who are also in Business Administration can dual enroll in both programs. This should help in getting a more accurate count of students. Interestingly, this year in LLAW 160, the first Legal Assistant course, the enrollment is higher than it has been since semester conversion. (43 students) However only 11 are declared Legal Assistant students. 16 students are in the Pre-law program; 6 in the new Business Administration/Legal Assistant major, and the remainder split among 6 other majors. In LLAW 280, the first class for the second year students, there are 16 students enrolled. Six are declared Legal Assistant majors, 2 are in Public Administration, 4 in Business Administration/Legal Assistant, 2 in Business Administration, and one each in Technical Education and Psychology.

In short, students taking classes in the Legal Assistant Program increased significantly this year. However, the official count does not reflect this increase because so many of the students are also in BS programs.

Complete enrollment figures since the last program review are in Appendix Q.

Legal Assistant Program Review
Section Eleven – Program Costs

At the time this report was prepared, the program costs were not available. When they are available, they will be placed in Appendix R

Legal Assistant Program Review

Section Twelve – Conclusions Based on Data Analysis Done by the Program Review Panel

Centrality to Mission

The program is compatible with the Ferris Mission and Role Statement in that it provides a career-oriented program that:

- a. Prepares graduates to perform a wide range of professional activities in the legal area by including liberal studies for future career flexibility as well as legal specialty courses;
- b. Promotes laddering into the four year programs;
- c. Uses faculty with experience in the teaching area;
- d. Makes available cooperative education experiences,
- e. Maintains contact with the professional community through organizational memberships and activities of the faculty;
- f. Has regular meetings of the advisory committee to maintain the currency of the program content;
- g. Integrates computers, writing, and problem solving across the curriculum;
- h. Is approved by the American Bar Association.

Uniqueness and Visibility

Most of the Legal Assistant Programs in Michigan are in urban areas and at community colleges. The FSU program is unique because it is located in a rural setting at a four-year institution that allows matriculation into four-year programs. The rural setting and residential nature of the campus attract students who do not wish to attend the larger urban universities.

Service to state and nation

The program promotes the economic welfare of the State of Michigan and the nation by providing capable, job-ready graduates to work in law firms and other organizations. The critical thinking skills developed by program graduates enable them to succeed beyond entry-level positions.

Demand by students

Six hundred sixty-nine students have graduated from the Legal Assistant Program since its inception. Opening the first year courses to pre-law students, allowing Public Administration and Applied Communications students to have a Legal Studies concentration, and creating the Business Administration/Legal Assistant checksheet has significantly increased enrollment in Legal Assistant courses.

Quality of instruction

The law faculty teaching in the program are experience attorneys licensed to practice law in Michigan and in the Federal courts. All have experience working with Legal Assistants and teaching in the Legal Assistant area. The two full-time faculty members are readily available to assist students with assignments and advising. The most recent ABA site visit report described the faculty as “skilled and dedicated.”

Demand for graduates

Survey results indicate that graduate get jobs. Graduates work not only as Legal Assistants, but many use their law background in other business related occupations.

Service to non-majors

LLAW 160, the first year Legal Assistant specialty course is now available to students in other majors. Non Legal Assistant majors may continue with the program with permission of the Program Coordinator. Permission to continue is always granted for students in BS degree programs and for Technical Communications and Public Administration students getting a Legal Studies concentration. This recent change allows any FSU student to take a survey course in law designed for persons who will be working in a law related profession. LLAW 161 allows them to obtain instruction in legal research with classes held in the new library. The new Business Administration/Legal Assistant Program has eleven students in its first semester.

Facilities and equipment

The computer lab/instructional facility in the College of Business Building and the library resources are excellent.

Cost

The cost to the student is the same as the cost for other university undergraduate programs. As indicated in Section 11, the cost to the university is not available at this time.

Faculty Professional and Scholarly Activities

James White is an attorney who is active in the Mecosta-Osceola Bar Association and Past-President of the Reed City School Board. He is also active in community affairs in the Reed City area. Mr. White is an experienced adjunct law instructor who has employed program graduates in his law firm.

John Kane is a full-time faculty member who is an attorney. He is a member of the Michigan Bar, the American Bar Association, and the American Association for Paralegal Education. He also consults for the ABA in the Legal Assistant Program Approval process. Mr. Kane is an active member of the campus community to include service to the Ferris Faculty Association, the Academic Senate, and various University, College of Business and Management Department

committees. Mr. Kane also serves as the coordinator of the Legal Assistant Program and teaches Legal Assistant, Business Law and Real Estate courses on a regular basis.

John Vermeer is a full-time faculty member who is an attorney. He is a member of the Michigan Bar and served as the Mecosta County Prosecuting Attorney prior to joining the Ferris faculty. He is an active member of the campus community and presently serves as the Chair of the Management Department. He has been responsible for setting up the Legal Assistant Classroom/Computer facility in the College of Business and acts as the primary computer resource for the Legal Assistant Program. Mr. Vermeer serves as the Assistant Coordinator of the Legal Assistant Program and teaches both Legal Assistant and Business Law courses on a regular basis. He also teaches the law course in the Hospitality Management Program.

Gayle Lopez is teaching for the 2001-2002 academic year on a one-year temporary contract. Gayle is an attorney with an extensive background in civil litigation. She practiced law for eight years in California. Gayle is a member of the Michigan Bar and is a member of the FSU Legal Assistant Advisory Committee. She is a graduate of the FSU Legal Assistant and Business Administration Programs. As a successful graduate, Mrs. Lopez serves as an excellent role model for the students in the program.

Faculty credentials are in Appendix D.

Administrative Effectiveness

Presently the Legal Assistant Program is part of the Management Department. The Legal Assistant Program Coordinator is responsible for administrative work. The Management Department Chair assists the coordinator when the chair is able.

The administrative system in the Management Department could be improved. Clerical support for the Legal Assistant Program is very limited. The Department secretaries in the College of Business are not available to provide any significant amount of support services for the program.

The "Legal Assistant Program Coordinator" is not recognized as such by any University Organizational Chart. It is a title given to a faculty member without release time or administrative support in order to have a body attached to a program. The arrangement is unique to the Management department. Even in the College of Business, the administrative structure in other departments is different. In the College of Business the Marketing Department is the one most like the Management Department. The Marketing Department has four (4) faculty Program Coordinators with 12-month contracts and release time from teaching. All four are recognized on the College of Business Organizational Chart. The Management Department has no recognized Program Coordinators.

While perhaps adequate for day-to-day maintenance of the Legal Assistant Program, the present administrative structure, or lack of it, does not allow significant resources to be directed to recruitment and placement. It is also very difficult to do accreditation and program review activities while carrying the usual faculty workload and receiving little clerical assistance.

Finally, the committee is concerned about future leadership of the program. Professor Kane is the only member of the faculty with an in-depth understanding of the American Bar Association Approval Process. Since he a senior faculty member, this concern should be addressed at the earliest opportunity so that any new faculty involved in the program can be mentored.

Legal Assistant Program Review

Section Thirteen – Recommendations

The Program Review Committee believes the Legal Assistant Program is a quality program with many strengths. These include:

1. Experienced and committed faculty
2. An excellent legal collection
3. Teaching facilities in FLITE for Legal Research classes
4. A computer lab and study room in the College of Business
5. The recent re-approval by the American Bar Association
6. A high quality and flexible curriculum that allows students to matriculate into bachelor's degree programs

In most areas, university support for the program is quite strong. The Program Coordinator goes to the American Association for Paralegal Education Annual Conference each year. Vocational education money was utilized for new computers in the Legal Assistant Resource Lab. FLITE was designed with excellent teaching facilities in the area where the legal collection is located. Finally, employment opportunities in the Legal Assistant area are encouraging and the committee believes that the legal education, writing skills, critical thinking skills, and knowledge of technology obtained by the students in the program compliment other university programs. It is also an excellent feeder program that provides high quality students for B.S. programs.

The major concerns of the committee are the administrative structure in the Management Department and the future leadership of the Legal Assistant Program.

Specifically, the committee recommends:

1. That support for the program continue.
2. That recruiting efforts be increased.
3. That the administrative structure in the Management Department be revamped to provide adequate support for all programs in the department, including the Legal Assistant Program.
4. In order to provide continued leadership in the Legal Assistant Program, the next law faculty hired in the Management Department should be capable of teaching and coordinating the Legal Assistant Program as well teach the Business Law courses. It is important to have an orderly transition of leadership in the Program to have it remain viable.
5. That when programs have outside accreditation or approval agencies, that the Academic Program Review Committee accepts that review in place of the one required for the Ferris State University Program Academic Program Review process.
6. That the program faculty, who are attorneys, take a more active role in the advising and education of pre-law students.

Appendix Guide

- A. ABA self-evaluation report
- B. ABA site-visit report
- C. Letter from ABA House of Delegates saying LA program is re-approved
- D. Faculty Credentials
- E. Legal Assistant checksheet and AAS/BS Bus ad checksheets
- F. 1999 Community College Summary Report for Perkins grant
- G. Department Administrative Review
- H. Graduate Survey instruments and results
- I. Employer surveys and results
- J. Student Surveys
- K. Faculty surveys
- L. Advisory Board Survey
- M. Labor Market Analysis
- N. Law collection at FSU
- O. Syllabus for each Legal Assistant Course
- P. AAFPE Guide to Core Competencies
- Q. Legal Assistant Enrollment data.
- R. Legal Assistant Cost Data

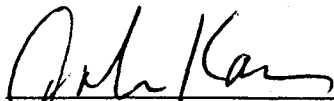
SELF-EVALUATION REPORT FOR REAPPROVAL

to

**AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL ASSISTANTS**

from

**FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
119 SOUTH STREET, BUSINESS 124-e
BIG RAPIDS, MI 49307-2284
(231) 591-2416**



John Kane
Legal Assistant Program Coordinator



Richard Hawkins
Associate Dean
College of Business

Table of Contents

Section		Page
I	General Information G-101 through G-107	1
II	Organizational Administration G-201 through G-206	5
III	Educational Programs G-301 through G-303	18
IV	Faculty G-401 through G-403	26
V	Admissions and Student Services G-501 through G-503	31
VI	Library G-601	36
VII	Physical Plant G-701 through G-703	39

**Section I
General Information
G-101 through G-107**

A. Name, address, and telephone number of the institution.

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS 124E
119 SOUTH STREET
BIG RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49307-2284

(231) 591-2416

B. Accrediting agency by which the institution is accredited.

The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools accredits Ferris State University. It was most recently granted accreditation in 1995.

The College of Business, where the Legal Assistant Program is located, is a candidate for accreditation by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs.

Additionally, many of the programs at Ferris are accredited, approved, or certified by agencies associated with particular programs.

C. Indicate degree(s) and/or certificate(s) awarded for completion of the paralegal program or any of its options.

Students earn an Associate in Applied Science upon completion of the Legal Assistant Program. Graduates may, and often do, continue in numerous Bachelor degree programs at Ferris State University.

D. Describe the location of the program and its courses.

All courses in the program are taught at the Big Rapids campus. No courses are taught at other locations.

E. Provide information about the following for each program option:

1. Date students first admitted.

1973

2. Number of students enrolled each year for the past three years since date of last report.

1995-96 – 35 full-time

1996-97 – 26 full-time
1997-98 – 29 full-time
1998-99 – 28 full-time, 2 part-time
1999-00 – 32 full-time, 5 part-time

3. Number of graduates in each year since inception of the program.

1973-74	27
1974-75	33
1975-76	38
1976-77	31
1977-78	32
1978-79	37
1979-80	29
1980-81	32
1981-82	29
1982-83	27
1983-84	33
1984-85	22
1985-86	36
1986-87	28
1987-88	29
1988-89	25
1989-90	20
1990-91	19
1991-92	23
1992-93	25
1993-94	28
1994-95	17
1995-96	13
1996-97	10
1997-98	9
1998-99	4
1999-00	7

4. Total number of graduates since inception of the program.

663

5. Effective date of the last approval by the House of Delegates and the date of the last report.

In February 1996 the ABA granted reapproval for the five-(5) year period beginning August 1993 and ending August 1998. The House of Delegates has extended the reapproval.

F. Describe how the program has responded to the recommendations of the last site visitation team.

1. The site team recommends that the Interim Dean, the Management Department Chair, the Academic Vice-President and the President of the University continue their support of the program.

FSU has continued to show strong support for the Legal Assistant Program. Money has been budgeted to maintain the Legal Assistant Resource Facility and the program was given strong support in the Academic Senate Program Review Process completed in 1997. In November of 1999 the program received \$15,000 to purchase new computers, printers, and audio-visual equipment for the Legal Assistant Resource Facility.

2. That the Advisory Board be revitalized by the addition of new members.

Judge Susan Grant and high school librarian Diane Stephens has been added to the advisory board.

3. That the university provide the coordinator with opportunities for professional development by providing funding for attendance at the meetings of the American Association for Paralegal Education.

The Program Director has attended the annual AAFPE meetings since the last ABA approval visit.

4. That the Advisory Committee and the program administrators review the curriculum and consider adding additional legal specialty courses.

The Legal Assistant curriculum has been reviewed. Former LLAW 261, Drafting Legal Instruments, has been changed to LLAW 261, Probate and Estate Planning. All syllabuses were reviewed and updated.

5. That the Program Coordinator review the curriculum to ensure accuracy in course descriptions and course titles.

When the university converted from terms to semesters in 1993 the Legal Assistant Program, like all university programs underwent major changes. Adjustments have been made and coverage in courses is consistent.

6. The program coordinator be granted some reallocated time to market the program and to do curriculum development.

The Program Coordinator has received credit for doing internships.

- 7. That if additional instructors are needed the program attempt to hire adjunct instructors for the program who are practicing attorneys.**

As of this date, the program has not had the need to hire adjunct instructors.

- 8. The site team recommends that the program investigate the possibility of expanding WESTLAW availability, perhaps with a paralegal program option now available from West.**

The university now subscribes to Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe. This database is available to all students at the university from any computer on campus with Internet access.

Section II

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION G-201 through G-206

- A. For Programs seeking reapproval: Describe how the program continues to assess and respond to the needs of the legal community. If a survey has been used as part of this assessment, since the date of the last report, include a summary of the results in Exhibit 1.**

The program responds to the needs of the legal community by feedback from graduates employed in the legal community, interaction with interns and their employers, and by keeping current in the area of paralegal education. All three professors who teach in the Legal Assistant Program are members of the Michigan Bar. No formal survey has been Done since the last reapproval visit.

- B. State the specific objectives of the program in terms of the educational results to be achieved and how those objectives are to be met, including the major tasks the students will be able to perform upon completion of the program.**

The mission of the Legal Assistant Program at Ferris State University is to equip students with both the technical and human skills necessary to function as legal assistants or in similar law related occupations. This mission is accomplished by providing students with a strong general education background, a core of specialized law courses, and options which enable students to specialize and/or to integrate into Bachelor degree programs.

More specifically, the Mission Statement for the Legal Assistant Program identifies the following goals for the program:

1. To increase student knowledge in relevant substantive and procedural areas of the law.
2. To demonstrate competence in legal research.
3. To increase problem solving and communications skills.
4. To demonstrate competent writing skills in the creation of pleadings and legal documents.
5. To increase student participation in appropriate professional organizations and other extracurricular activities that contribute to their professional and personal growth.
6. To increase knowledge and skills for adapting to a dynamic society by continuing to require appropriate liberal arts courses.

7. To increase the student's utilization of data base retrieval systems in legal research.
8. To increase the student's knowledge of microcomputer systems and the appropriate software.
9. To increase the student understanding of ethical dilemmas in all areas of the legal profession.

The goals are accomplished by offering a curriculum that emphasizes the following:

1. legal research and writing,
2. a broad survey of all major substantive and procedural areas of the law,
3. computer skills,
4. document and pleading preparation, and
5. a strong liberal arts background.

Specialization is possible by taking courses in insurance, real estate, taxation, and accounting. Additionally, students may obtain a B.S. degree in over 14 different programs while receiving full credit for all Legal Assistant classes.

In the first year the students take Law in the United States I and II and Criminal Law and Procedure. Law in the U.S. I and II introduce the students to the United States legal system, the role of the legal assistant, and surveys the major areas of substantive law. In Law in the U.S. II the students devote about one half of their time to legal research and writing. The student's meet in small groups (5-8 students) with the instructor in the library and do weekly research and writing assignments. At the conclusion of the first year, students will have an understanding of the legal system in the United States, understand the major substantive areas of law and legal terminology, understand the role of the legal assistant and attorney, and be able to engage in basic legal research and writing.

Second year courses are designed to both increase the knowledge of the law and legal system and to give students the skills to accomplish specific tasks performed by legal assistants such as interviewing, research, and drafting documents and pleadings. While an internship in a law office is not required, it is encouraged. Most second year students do participate in internships.

In the second year all students are required to take Civil Litigation. This course includes learning both pre-litigation tasks such as interviewing, investigation, timekeeping, and data control techniques and preparing pleadings for a civil case, including discovery materials and a brief. Besides using a standard civil litigation text, the students use the Michigan Court Rules, Michigan Rules of Evidence, and the

Code of Professional Responsibility. One class each week is held in the law library or Legal Assistant Resource Facility where the instructor meets with students in small groups (5-8 students).

Second year students are also required to take Real Estate Law and Probate and Estate Planning. The former involves the study of law that governs real property transfers, including surveys, legal descriptions, real estate contracts, deeds, financing, title examination, and leases. The latter course concentrates on learning the substantive and procedural laws regarding estate planning and probate, to include drafting documents and pleadings relevant to these areas of law.

During their final semester students must take either Advanced Legal Research and Writing or Practice Studies. Many students take both courses.

Students are required to take a microcomputer class in their first year and then have access to a computer laboratory to prepare all papers during the remainder of their program. Additionally, students may take other computer classes as electives. Legal Assistant students have had access to computerized legal research through WESTLAW.

In addition to numerous research and writing assignments in the law classes, students are required to take two English classes as well as a speech class.

The University has strong general education requirements designed to give the student a well-rounded education and to better prepare them to continue with the life-long process of learning which is essential to a professional career.

C. Describe the affiliation with the organized bar associations, paralegal associations, paralegal educational associations, paralegal and legal management associations, and cooperation with the legal community as a whole.

John A. Kane, Jr., the coordinator of the program, is an active member of the American Bar Association and the Michigan Bar Association.

John Vermeer, the assistant coordinator of the program, is an active member of the Mecosta County Bar Association and the Michigan Bar Association.

Honorable Susan Grant, District Court Judge, is an active member of the Michigan Bar and a leader in the local legal community. She has also taught in the program in the past.

Adjunct faculty teaching in the program are members of the Michigan Bar Association and Mecosta County Bar Association.

With one exception, all advisory board members are practicing lawyers or legal assistants who are active in the legal community in various areas of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

Ferris State University is an institutional member of the American Association for Paralegal Education.

The Michigan Bar Association is a long time supporter of the utilization of paralegals and presently allows paralegals to become associate members.

D. Provide an organizational chart showing the relationship of the program to the institution. The chart should include major academic units as well as other support activities within the institution such as offices of admission, registrar, student services, placement, etc. Include as Exhibit 2.

See Exhibit 2

E. Describe the relationship of the Legal Assistant Program to:

1. Administration of the institution offering the program.

The Legal Assistant Program is a subdivision of the Management Department. The program coordinator reports to the Chair of the Management Department.

Since the program does have special needs and requires knowledge of the field, recommendations made by the program coordinator have been well received by all levels of the University administration. Course requirements must be approved by the Department faculty, College of Business faculty, the University Academic Senate, and by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

The members of the law teaching staff of the program are accountable to the Chair of the Management Department and the Dean of the College of Business.

2. Other units of the institution.

(a) Library: Recommendations for purchase of library materials are made by the coordinator of the program to the library. As funds become available, additions are purchased. If a particular purchase is of immediate necessity, priority may be obtained by satisfying the Dean of Library Sciences of the urgency of acquiring particular materials. This was done with the initial purchase of the library when \$30,000 was set aside to acquire a basic law library. The university is presently in the process of building a fifty million dollar (\$50,000,000) library that will be three times as large as the present facility. The former coordinator of the Legal Assistant Program, Dale Hobart, is on the committee designing the library and he is quite aware of the needs of the program. When the library opens, the law collection, which is quite excellent, will be housed in a state of the art facility.

(b) Copy Facilities: The copy and mass production facilities are centralized on campus in one copy center. Written materials, such as tests and assignments, are reproduced here for use in the classroom. Costs are charged to the

department requesting the materials. Additionally, four new copiers were added within the college of business for faculty use. This allows reproduction of materials without leaving the building.

The centralized facility may be used for larger projects such as the production of extensive handouts, outlines, or texts prepared by faculty. They are then sold to the students at the cost of reproduction.

- (c) **Admissions:** The admissions requirements for the program are set by the Chair of the Management Department and the Legal Assistant Program Coordinator within the parameters of University policy. The Admissions Office implements them. The number of students allowed into each entering class is also set at the departmental level and enforced by the Admissions Office.
- (d) **Student Placement:** The coordinator works closely with the Placement Office by assisting that office with information to be sent to inquiring perspective employers. When the Program Coordinator receives notice of a job opportunity, it is posted for legal assistant students, announced in class, and forwarded to the Placement Office. The program coordinator and faculty try to place students into jobs that fit their particular strengths.
- (e) **Special Services:** Media Distribution provides films, slides, voice tapes, and videotape materials for classroom use. Media Production will produce films, slides, overheads, posters, and other special classroom materials.
- (f) **Tutorial Services:** Tutorial services are provided at no cost to the students by student tutors. The tutors are chosen upon faculty recommendations.
- (g) **Testing Services:** Testing services are provided for general testing and CLEP examinations.

3. Governing bodies, committees, academic or faculty senates, etc. Include a description of the representation of the legal assistant program.

The Legal Assistant faculty are members of the Management Department and as members, vote on approval of all new programs and changes in existing programs in the department.

Faculty also are entitled to vote for representatives to the Executive Committee of the Ferris Faculty Association, the faculty union.

The faculty may also vote for their college representative in the university's Academic Senate. That body advises the President of the University on all academic matters.

Other committees are formed at various levels in the Department, College, and University. Legal Assistant faculty serve on these committees on a regular basis.

Presently, Legal Assistant faculty are serving on the following committees.

Professor John Kane: College of Business Representative – Academic Senate
Secretary and Executive Board Member – Academic Senate
College of Business Representative - Executive Board of
The Ferris Faculty Association.
Grievance Chair – Ferris Faculty Association.
Member – Library/Historical/Archival Committee
Member – College of Business Curriculum Committee.

Professor John Vermeer: Member – College of Business Promotion/Merit Committee
Member – College of Business Computer Usage
Committee
Member - College of Business Recruiting and Retention
Committee.
Chair – Dean’s Challenge Cup Committee.
Chair – Management Department Committee on Career
Focus Day
Management Department Liaison - Autumn Adventure
Program Representative – Career Coffeehouse for the
Summer High School Institute

F. Provide information with regard to budgetary provisions for the legal assistant program:

- 1. State the source(s) of financial support, i.e., state support, student tuition, community taxes, grants. Indicate the approximate percentage of financial support from each source.**

Ferris State University is a state-sponsored, four-year university with graduate programs in the Colleges of Pharmacy, Optometry, and Business. The majority of its funding is from the state of Michigan and student tuition. Less than 5% of the University budget is from grants.

- 2. What indications are there that financial support is firm and will be available on a continuing basis?**

Historically, the university has been very supportive of the Legal Assistant Program. The excellent law collection and Legal Assistant Resource Facility are two examples. In the fall of 1993, the university instituted a fiscal restructuring plan that called for the elimination of over twenty (20) programs at the university, including the Legal Assistant Program. After resolution of lawsuits between the Ferris Faculty Association and the University regarding the plan and reconsideration by the Board of Trustees, the Legal Assistant

Program was maintained. Since that time the Legal Assistant Program was given strong support by the Academic Senate Program Review process. Also, the university's new library facility will have excellent facilities for the law collection.

The Dean of the College of Business has been very supportive of the program.

3. Indicate the amount spent for each of the following items for each of the past three years or, if this is a reapproval application, for each year since the date of the last report. Include as Exhibit 3.

- a. Faculty and program director salaries.
- b. Professional growth for program director and faculty members.
- c. The program director and/or faculty members to attend local, state, regional, or national conferences.
- d. Support personnel salaries.
- e. Instructional supplies.
- f. Library materials.
- g. Equipment.
- h. Research or other special projects relating to the program or the legal assistant field.
- i. Program evaluation.
- j. Special meetings, such as advisory committee, faculty, and alumni.
- k. Student activities such as legal assistant club, field trips, and guest lectures.
- l. Membership in related professional associations.
- m. Any other expenditures that may be relevant to assessing the adequacy of financial support for the program.

Provide a copy of operating budget from the current academic year indicating the allocation of funds for each of these items and, if possible, totals spent. If available, include the budget for the next academic year. Include budget(s) as Exhibit 4.

4. Explain the budgetary process and identify any variations from

budgetary procedures utilized by other units within the institution.

The Legal Assistant Program does not have a separate budget. The College of Business receives money from Academic Affairs, which is allocated to the Dean's office and each Department. (Management, Marketing, Accounting-CIS, and Economics and Applied Statistics.) Programs and professors within each department are treated equally. The Legal Assistant Program, in the Management Department, has access to the same resources as any of the other programs. Additionally, the Legal Assistant Program, as a two-year applied Program, is eligible for Perkins grants from the State of Michigan. The program has received over \$30,000 in Perkins money in recent years.

Faculty salaries are determined by a collective bargaining agreement.

G. Describe how the legal assistant program is compared to other similar units within the institution with respect to the following factors:

1. Responsibilities of program director.

The coordinator of the Legal Assistant Program is responsible for teaching courses in the program, taking an active roll in curriculum development, engaging in appropriate professional activities to promote the program, and ensuring that competent and professionally accredited faculty are teaching in the program. This is the role of program coordinators throughout the university.

2. Enrollment.

The university has over 100 programs with enrollment figures of just a few to over 700. The Legal Assistant Program is presently small (about 25 students) compared to past years. In recent years, enrollment has decreased significantly in almost all of the College of Business programs.

3. Status of program director.

Both the Program Coordinator and Assistant Program Coordinator are full Professors.

4. Treatment of faculty, program director and staff.

All tenured and tenure-track faculty are subject to a collective bargaining agreement and receive salary, benefits, and working conditions in accordance with that agreement.

5. Office space.

The Legal Assistant faculty shares a large office adjacent to the Legal Assistant Resource Facility. The faculty has computers and telephones in their office.

6. Support for professional development.

Expenses for attending seminars and other development activities are paid from Management Department funds, College of Business funds, College of Business Alumni Development funds, Academic Affairs, and Timmee grants, at the university. Faculty teaching in the legal Assistant Program has the same access to these funds as other faculty at the university.

7. Participation in academic affairs and decision making.

Faculty participate in the decision making process through the collective bargaining process with the Ferris Faculty Association and the Academic Senate. The Coordinator of the Legal Assistant Program was a member of the last two faculty bargaining teams and presently serves as the Secretary of the Academic Senate.

Faculty also influence the decision making process by participation in various university committees. Legal Assistant faculty have been active in numerous committees over the years.

8. Clerical, technical, and other supporting services (In addition to the secretarial support described below.)

See H below. The Legal Assistant Program is treated in the same manner as other programs.

9. Any other factors that may be relevant to assessing comparability.

The Legal Assistant Program, including its students and faculty, are treated the same as other students and faculty at the university.

H. Is there secretarial support staff working directly for the legal assistant program? If so, indicate the amount of time spent each week or the equivalency of time to full-time. If not, describe the secretarial support arrangements and estimate the amount of secretarial support time the program receives each week.

The secretary of the Management Department is available to provide some assistance to the program coordinator. The amount of time available varies with the needs of the program at any particular time. The program coordinator has the use of a student assistant 15 to 20 hours per week. The student assistants are generally graduates of the

program. The Management Department also employs a part-time typist that is available to assist any department member.

I. Describe the advisory committee:

- 1. List the members of the legal assistant advisory committee by name and professional affiliation of each member and whether he or she is a practicing lawyer, public or private sector legal assistant, manager of legal assistants, faculty member, school administrator, representative of the general public, or other. For each member indicate the date of appointment and affiliation, if any, with the program and/or institution in addition to service on the advisory committee. Include as Exhibit 5.**
- 2. Provide copies of written guidelines or procedures governing advisory committee activities, if any. Include as Exhibit 6.**

No written guidelines exist.

- 3. How are advisory committee members appointed and what is the appointment term?**

Suggestions for the advisory committee members are obtained from the faculty and friends of the University, including existing committee members. After determining that a qualified individual is willing to serve, the Department Chair recommends to the Dean of the College of Business that the individual be added to the committee. The recommendation, along with the Dean's endorsement, is sent to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and then to the President. When approved, the Department Head notifies the individual of his appointment to the committee for a three-year period. Membership may be extended beyond a three-year period.

- 4. Describe the advisory committee's functions in terms of the six listed activities under Guideline 203.**

- a. Developing admission standards for the selection of qualified applicants.**

None.

- b. Assisting in securing competent instructors.**

One of the advisory members has taught in the program in the past and one presently teaches in the program on a regular basis. They are a source of ideas for competent adjunct instructors but there has been little turn over in that area.

- c. Assisting the program staff in keeping abreast of changes and trends occurring within the field.**

We consider this to be the main function of the advisory committee and this topic is regularly discussed at advisory board meetings as well as on an individual basis throughout the year.

- d. Assisting program officials in job market assessments and in the exploration and development of career opportunities for legal assistants.**

The advisory committee is very helpful in providing information concerning the current job market.

- e. Publicizing the program and securing community cooperation and interest.**

The advisory committee has no formal role in publicizing our program. Our community is the State of Michigan and our advisory committee comes from all over the state. They do, however, act informally as ambassadors of good will concerning the program.

- f. Evaluating the total program in terms of its curriculum and objectives, the needs of the legal community and performance of graduates.**

The advisory committee reviews all program changes before they are implemented. As mentioned in (c) above, keeping the faculty informed of the needs of the legal community and what skills our graduates need is their primary role.

- 5. Indicate whether the committee has subcommittees and what the specific areas of responsibility of these subcommittees are.**

The committee does not have subcommittees.

- 6. How often does the advisory committee meet? If applicable, how often do subcommittees meet?**

The advisory committee has met once a year, in April, since the inception of the program with two exceptions. They did not meet in April, 1994 when the program was scheduled to be eliminated and they did not meet in April, 1997 when the faculty had voted to strike and the likelihood of this happening looked very high. In the latter instance the meeting was to be postponed until early September. However, the faculty did strike in the fall of 1997 and the meeting was not held. However, in late April, 1997 the faculty and students in the Paralegal Association traveled to Lansing for a day to meet with the

president of the Legal Assistant Division of the Michigan Bar Association, a bankruptcy trustee who was a paralegal, and two paralegals who had recently taken the NALA exam. The meeting was extremely informative to both faculty and students.

The Legal Assistant program has tried to maintain an advisory committee that reflects a statewide perspective. Some of our members have to drive four hours to the meetings. This makes it impossible to have evening meetings or meetings from October to March when the weather is too unpredictable. (Last year an Honors College entrance examination scheduled in early April had to be cancelled because of a snowstorm.) Members of the advisory board generally must take the day off from work to attend the meeting. In light of the ABA rules on 2 advisory board meetings per year, we are in the process of rethinking this position by possibly expanding the number of members from the local community.

- 7. Provide copies of the minutes of the advisory committee meetings and any subcommittee meetings held during the past three years of, if this is a reapproval application, since the date of the last report. Include as Exhibit 7.**

J. Describe the procedures by which the institution maintains equality of opportunity and seeks to avoid prohibited discrimination.

- 1. Does the institution have a written non-discrimination policy and/or affirmative action plan? If yes, include a copy as Exhibit 8.**

Yes

- 2. Describe the methods used to recruit faculty. The description should include the methods used to encourage diversity and the steps taken to encourage recruitment and retention of minority faculty members. If written advertisements and/or announcements are used, include copies as Exhibit 9.**

No faculty have been recruited since the last reapproval.

For full-time tenure track positions a national search is conducted with special emphasis placed on advertisements in journals directed toward under represented groups. The University Affirmative Action officer reports to the University General Counsel and she reviews all hiring procedures to ensure that hiring is done in accord with Board policy.

For adjunct positions, the university selects from a pre-approved group of instructors who have expressed a desire for part-time employment.

- 3. Describe the methods used to encourage diversity in the student body of the legal assistant program.**

Ferris State University admissions counselors visit high schools throughout the state to recruit students. The university has an Office of Minority Affairs that assists in the recruiting and retention of minority students.

- 4. Provide the following information regarding the program to the best of the institution's ability.**
 - a. The composition of the student body in the legal assistant program by racial/ethnic group and gender for each of the last three years, or if this is a reapproval application, for each year since the date of the last report. Include as Exhibit 10.**
 - b. The composition of the faculty teaching in the legal assistant program by racial/ethnic group and gender for each of the last three years or, if this is a reapproval application, for each year since the date of the last report. Include as Exhibit 11.**

See exhibit 11.

- 5. Describe the methods used to accommodate students, staff, and faculty members with disabilities. If the institution has a written policy on accommodating students and employees with disabilities, include as Exhibit 12.**

See exhibit 12.

SECTION III

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS G301- G303

A. Describe the total curriculum for the legal assistant program.

1. **Indicate the degree(s) or certificate(s) awarded. Include the total number of semester hours or their equivalent for the program(s). (If the program does not use semester hours, indicate whether clock hours, contract hours, quarter hours, or continuing education units are used.**

The Legal Assistant Program requires a minimum of 64 semester hours to graduate with an Associates Degree.

2. **Provide a list of the suggested sequence of courses for each program option including the following information:**
 - a. **Semester hours or equivalent for each course/subject.**
 - b. **Pre- and co-requisites.**
 - c. **Identify the legal specialty courses as defined in Guideline 302(D) and for each course, indicate whether it is required or elective. (Use abbreviations LS-R and LS-E.)**
 - d. **If general education is part of the required course work, identify the general education courses as defined in Guideline 303(F). (Use abbreviations GE.)**

Legal Specialty Courses Required (LS-R)

LLAW 160 Law in the United States I (3 credits) – No pre-requisites.
LLAW 161 Law in the United States II (4 credits) – LLAW 160 pre-requisite
LLAW 251 Criminal Law and Procedure(3 credits) – LLAW 160 pre-requisite
LLAW 260 Real Estate Law (3 credits) – LLAW 161 pre-requisite
LLAW 261 Probate and Estate Planning (3 credits)– LLAW 260 pre-requisite
LLAW 280 Civil Litigation (4 credits) LLAW 161 pre-requisite

Legal Specialty Courses Elective. (One is required for graduation)

LLAW 253 Advanced Legal Research and Writing (2 credits) LLAW 161
LLAW 291 Practice Studies (2 credits) LLAW 280

General Education Courses Required (GE)

COMM 121 Fundamentals of Public Speaking (3 credits) – none
ENGL 150 English 1 (3 credits) - none
ENGL 250 English 2 (3credits) – ENGL 150

MATH 115 Intermediate Algebra –(3 credits)
Scientific Understanding elective required – (3/4 credits)
Cultural Enrichment elective required – (3 credits)
Social Awareness elective required – (3 credits)

Related Courses Required

ACCT 201 Principles of Accounting 1 (3 credits) MATH 110 or equiv.
BLAW 321 Contracts and Sales (none)
ISYS 105 Micro Computer Applications (none)

Free Electives Required – 12 credit hours.

3. Describe how the distribution requirement for general education courses in Guideline 303 (G) is met.

Students must take general education courses in Science, Math, English, Communications (Speech), Social Awareness (Social Science courses), and Cultural Enrichment (Humanities and foreign languages). A minimum of 21 hours is required. Both the number of credit hours and the distribution requirements exceed ABA minimum requirements.

B. Provide an Exhibit 13, a roster of the legal specialty courses offered for each of the past three years, or if this is a reapproval application, for each year since the date of the last report, with the following information.

- 1. Semester, term, or date.**
- 2. Day or evening session.**
- 3. Title of course.**
- 4. Number of students.**
- 5. Name of instructor.**

See exhibit 13 for roster of legal specialty courses offered.

C. For each legal specialty course, provide a course outline with the following information. Include in Exhibit 14.

- 1. Title and course description.**
- 2. Semester hours or their equivalent in clock hours, contract hours, quarter hours, or continuing education units.**
- 3. Required textbook(s) and other material.**

4. **Course objectives including paralegal skills to be developed.**
5. **Instructional methods.**
6. **Methods of evaluation of student performance, i.e. number and type of tests, assignments, and other factors affecting student's grades. Include description of work products demonstrating the development of practical paralegal skills.**
7. **Detailed outline of subject area with breakdown of time devoted to each major topic. (Textbook chapter titles will not suffice. A description of the material that will be covered in each class session or course segment not to exceed three clock hours is required.)**

See exhibit 14 for outline of legal specialty courses.

D. If any legal specialty courses are offered through alternative means, such as distance learning:

1. **Indicate which course or courses and fully describe the method(s) utilized.**
2. **Describe how the quality of each course offered through alternative means is comparable to the same course offered through traditional means and what methods are used to assure quality. Provide summary results of survey questions and course evaluations relationship to these courses as Exhibit 15.**

No legal specialty courses are offered through alternative means.

E. Does the legal assistant program include an internship as a legal specialty course? If yes, describe the systematic plan for developing, assigning, monitoring, and evaluating internships.

The FSU Legal Assistant Program does include an internship as a legal specialty course. Students are encouraged, but not required, to complete an internship. The course is two (2) semester hours and is graded on a credit/no credit basis. A minimum of 60 hours in a law office or other approved internship cite is required. With rare exceptions, interns are not paid.

During the internship the student is expected to utilize their legal assistant skills in the real world and observe office procedures in the following areas:

- how the office functions to include the roles of the various employees of the office;

- do an analysis of the computer hardware and software utilized and describe their ability to utilize the technology
- develop an understanding of the firm billing and timekeeping procedures and calendaring systems;
- where possible, accompany attorneys and paralegal to the courts to meet judges and clerks.

Interns are required to keep a log of their time and tasks performed. They must write a summary at the conclusion with an evaluation of their ability to utilize technology and perform tasks. The employer must evaluate the intern and forward the evaluation to the professor assigned the course.

**F. Describe how computer instruction is incorporated into the curriculum.
(Reference may be made to course outlines included in Exhibit 14.)**

1. How does the program encourage students to acquire appropriate computer skills?

Students are required to take ISYS 105, a microcomputer course, to graduate. They are encouraged to take it during their first semester. All papers in legal specialty courses must be done on the computer. Computer labs are located in the College of Business and the Legal Assistant Resource Facility also has computers exclusively for use by the legal assistant students.

2. How is instruction in computerized legal research provided to the students?

In LLAW 161, Law in the United States II, one-half of the course is devoted to legal research and writing. Computerized legal research is covered as a part of that course. Assignments are given in LLAW 280, Civil Litigation, that require the students to utilize computerized legal research.

**G. Which course(s) provide instruction in ethics and professional responsibility?
Reference may be made to course outlines included in Exhibit 14.
Approximately how much overall time in the program is devoted to teaching this subject?**

It is the goal of the FSU Legal Assistant Program to teach ethics across the curriculum in all legal specialty courses. By way of example:

In LLAW 160, the roles of all of the participants in the legal system are reviewed along with their ethical obligations. Students review the *NALA Model Standards and Guidelines for Utilization of Legal Assistants* and questions on the unauthorized practice of law and ethics are included on exams. As each substantive area is covered the ethical dilemmas common to that area are discussed. In LLAW 251, Criminal Law and

Procedure, the instructor reviews ethical dilemmas in the criminal area. In LLAW 280 the students review the *Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct* and review conflicts of interest concerns in the practice of law.

H. Describe the method(s) used to determine whether students demonstrate writing proficiency at the college level.

Students are required to complete two English courses, (English 150 and 250) as a requirement of graduation.

I. Describe policies that govern the acceptance of transfer of legal specialty credits completed at other institutions.

In the history of the Legal Assistant program few transfer credits have been accepted. None will be accepted except on approval of the program coordinator. Credits are generally accepted as electives only and not substituted for required legal specialty courses at Ferris.

J. Describe policies that govern the award of legal specialty credit by course challenge or examination, if applicable.

Not allowed.

K. Describe policies that govern the acceptance of the transfer of general education credits completed at other institutions. How are the courses evaluated to ensure that they meet the ABA definition of general education and the breadth of requirements specified in Guideline 303(F)?

The university will not accept a transfer course as a general education course unless the course meets the university's definition of general education as stated on pages 56 to 60 of the catalog. The university's general education requirements are consistent with Guideline 303(F)

L. Describe evaluation procedures:

1. How are individual courses and the program evaluated by the students? (As Exhibit 16, include a copy of the evaluation instrument.)

Students evaluate each course using a standard form available in the Management Department office. A copy is in Exhibit 16. In the past tenured faculty could not be forced to utilize the student evaluation process under the faculty contract. Under the recently bargained faculty contract post-tenure review will be done on a regular basis. The exact procedures for post-tenure review are being developed at this time. The Legal Assistant faculty has utilized student evaluations on a voluntary basis for many years.

- 2. How are individual courses and the program evaluated by the institution? If an institution evaluation of the individual legal specialty courses or the program has been conducted in the last five years or, if this is a reapproval application, since the date of the last report, include a summary of the results as Exhibit 17.**

The Curriculum committee of the College of Business, the Academic Senate, and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs must approve individual courses. The Academic Senate reviewed the program in the spring of 1996. A copy of the results is in Exhibit 17

- 3. How is feedback obtained from the employers and managers of legal assistants? (As Exhibit 18, include a copy of the evaluation instrument and a summary of the results for the past three years or, if this is a reapproval application, since the date of the last report.)**

The last employer survey was done in December of 1994. It was not well received by employers. A number of employers who did not respond were contacted. Some indicated they did not feel comfortable evaluating employees for third parties and would not respond to this type of survey. As one noted, if they were not satisfied with the skills and performance of the graduate, he/she would not be an employee.

The best data we have obtained has been from employers who have utilized Legal Assistant students as interns. Employers seem more comfortable doing the evaluation as part of a grading process for students enrolled in a course of study. The results of data from supervisors of interns indicate the students are well prepared.

- 4. How is feedback obtained from graduates? (As Exhibit 19, include a Copy of the evaluation instrument and a summary of the results for the Past three years or, if this is a reapproval application, since the date of the last report.)**

In the fall of 1996 the Management Department surveyed graduates with BS degrees that were received two, five, ten, and fifteen years ago. The legal assistant faculty participated in doing the survey and graduates were asked to identify any Associates degree they received. Ten per cent of the almost two hundred respondents had graduated from the Legal Assistant Program. This was the first time the legal assistant graduates who also received BS degrees from Ferris had been surveyed as a group. The survey instrument and summary are in exhibit 19.

As part of an improved assessment of graduates the College of Business started doing exit surveys for students graduating from BS programs last year. It will be expanded to Associates degree programs this year.

5. Describe the procedures for evaluation of faculty members. (As Exhibit 20, include a copy of the evaluation instruments(s).)

Non-tenured faculty is evaluated as part of the tenure process. Historically, tenured faculty have not been evaluated but, as previously mentioned, post-tenure review is being implemented. Tenured faculty have long been evaluated by the promotion/merit procedures at the university. Both of the tenured faculty teaching in the Legal Assistant Program have been promoted to the rank of professor. Also, both of them received merit increases in the past two years. (Faculty are eligible for merit increases every five years.)

The Management Department chair evaluates adjunct faculty. If their performance is not satisfactory their contract is not renewed.

6. What other measures, if any, are used to evaluate the program?

The program is under constant evaluation by the faculty involved in the program and the advisory committee. In 1996 both the advisory board and the other faculty in the College of Business evaluated the program.

7. How are the results of these evaluation procedures analyzed and used? What changes have been made to the program as a result of these evaluations within the last three years or, if this is a reapproval application, since the date of the last report?

Programs are reviewed by the faculty in the Law Program and by the Academic Senate during program evaluation, which occurs every seven years..

Since the last report there has been one course revision; Drafting Legal Instruments was revised to Probate and Estate Planning. The real estate documents were transferred to the Real Estate Law course. Also, the Program coordinator has been given credit for doing internships which has reduced his workload. Since the university switched from terms to semesters in the fall of 1993, which called for extensive revision of all of the courses, considerable time has been spent fine-tuning the new semester's courses..

M. If the program admits and graduates students who have not met the general education or total unit requirements, please provide the following information:

1. Number and percentage of admitted students receiving exemptions from the general education and/or total unit requirements during the last three academic years or, if this reapproval application, for each year since the date of the last report.

All students must meet the university general education requirements to graduate.

Legal Assistant

APRC 2001-2002

Section 2 of 4

2. **Detailed information for each admitted student granted an exemption. Include as Exhibit 21.**

Not applicable

N. For institutions offering associate degrees, describe your institution's articulation agreements that are designed to facilitate the further education of legal assistant degree holders.

1. **Describe articulation agreements, if any, for legal assistant students with institutions offering baccalaureate degrees.**
2. **Describe the process for developing articulation agreements and the steps that have been take by the institution to promote these agreements.**
3. **Describe the process for informing students about transfer opportunities.**
4. **What percentage of paralegal students graduating in each of the past three years, or if this is a reapproval application, in each year since the date of the last report, have transferred to an institution offering a baccalaureate degree?**

Since Ferris State University is a four-year institution we do not have problems with articulation. On the average, about seventy per cent (70%) of the graduates of the Legal Assistant programs get BS degrees, usually from Ferris. The university has a long-standing tradition of accepting graduates of associate degree programs. Since Ferris acts as the community college for this area of Michigan, over 70 % of the freshman at the university are enrolled in two-year programs. A large percentage of the graduates receiving bachelor's degrees from the institution have associate degrees.

The Legal Assistant Program was designed to allow easy access into four-year programs by allowing sufficient electives to take addition general education courses applicable to four year programs and by making sure all non-legal specialty courses will transfer to B.S. programs. Students are informed of the B.S. opportunities on the first day of the first class in the program. (This allows them to participate in drop/add if they are taking courses that will not be acceptable in a B.S. program.) Course checksheets integrating the two-year legal assistant degree with the Management and Business Administration degrees have been developed and are distributed to students. Finally, all legal assistant students are assigned to faculty advisors in the program who must approve courses before they register during their first year in the program.

SECTION IV

FACULTY

G-401 through G-403

- A. Identify the name and the position within the institution of the full-time member of the faculty or the administration who is responsible for the direction of the program. Under G-402, the responsibilities for the program direction may be divided among two or more persons as appropriate to the institutional setting and the program enrollment. If another person within the institution also has substantial responsibilities for the direction of the program, identify this person, his or her position within the institution, and status as full or part-time. Provide a resume for each person having substantial responsibilities for program direction as Exhibit 22. Each resume must include the beginning date of service with the institution and the program, relevant professional qualifications, and experience working with legal assistant and/or as a legal assistant. If there is a new person with substantial responsibility for the program direction within the last three years, or if this is a reapproval application, since the date of the last report, indicate the reason for the change.

Professor John Kane is the Coordinator of the Legal Assistant Program.

- B. Describe the responsibilities within the institution of each person identified above with respect to the following. Include the approximate time allocation during the year for each area.
1. Program administration
 2. Other program-related duties.
 3. Non-program-related duties.
 4. Teaching. (If applicable, specify the usual teaching load at the institution and the amount of release time, if any, that is given for direction of the program.)

The percentages of the program coordinator responsibilities in a usual semester are:

1. 20% Program administration
2. 5% Other program related duties.
3. 25% Non-program related duties.
4. 50% Teaching. The usual teaching load for faculty is 12 credit hours. The coordinator teaches 12 credit hours. He has taught a reduced load (9 credit hours) on a regular basis the past four years because of his duties as secretary of the Academic Senate. He is also given credit for internships when they exist in suitable numbers.

C. Identify the person or persons who have been responsible for program direction since the program's inception and specify the dates of service.

John Kane has been the Coordinator since 1985.

R. Dale Hobart was the Coordinator from 1978 to 1985.

W.R. Terry was Coordinator from 1972 to 1978.

D. Describe the role and authority of the person(s) responsible for program direction and other key personnel with responsibilities to the legal assistant program in each of the following areas. If these functions are divided, provide a description of the role each person performs.

1. Defining major program objectives.

Program objectives are the responsibility of the Program Coordinator in consultation with the faculty teaching in the program, the advisory committee, and the internal university processes for making major changes such as adding new courses, changing graduation requirements, etc. The internal processes include the approval of the College of Business Curriculum Committee, the Academic Senate, and the Vice-President for Academic Affairs.

2. Representing the program throughout the administrative and academic structure of the institution.

This is primarily the responsibility of the Program Coordinator, Management Department Chair, and the Dean of the College of Business. In matters of academic policy, the primary responsibility is the Program Coordinator. In budget matters the Management Department Chair integrates the needs of the Legal Assistant Program into the department budget. The Dean then merges the department budget into the College of Business budget and acts as the advocate for the College of Business.

3. Determining the financial needs and formulating the budget.

The needs are determined by the Program Coordinator and forwarded to the Department Chair. The Management Department budget is formulated by the Department Chair and forwarded to the College of Business Dean.

4. Attracting, selecting, and retaining qualified faculty and encouraging faculty development.

If the faculty is applying for a tenure tract position, he/she is hired upon the recommendation of the Search Committee appointed to hire for that position. The Dean of the College of Business, Vice-president for Academic Affairs, and eventually the University Board of Trustees must grant final approval.

The Department Chair hires part-time faculty after the prospective faculty's credentials have been reviewed by at least three tenured faculty and approved by the program coordinator.

Faculty development is encouraged in a number of ways. The university has a faculty development office with a full-time director to coordinate on campus development seminars and training programs. A one-week Summer Institute is held each summer and is limited to twenty-five faculty. (The Legal Assistant Program coordinator attended in 1996) The university provides grant money and travel money to cover expenses for travel and other expenses. Finally, faculty being considered for tenure, promotion, or merit pay must demonstrate they have engaged in development activities. The university is in the process of developing post-tenure review, which will also encourage faculty development.

5. Advising program students.

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor. The Program Coordinator and Assistant Program Coordinator advise all legal assistant students. Students also have access to Academic Counselors at the university.

6. Assuring the proper organization and operation of the advisory committee.

Program Coordinator.

7. Maintaining liaison with the legal, paralegal, and paralegal education communities.

The Program Coordinator and faculty teaching the legal specialty courses are responsible. The Program Coordinator usually attends the AAFPE National Conference. All faculty in the program are attorneys licensed to practice in Michigan and keep up to date on the needs for paralegals in the community. The Advisory Board also plays a role in representing the program in the legal community.

8. Identifying and responding to the occupational and educational needs of the community.

The Program Coordinator and the advisory board.

9. Arranging and monitoring internships.

Students taking an internship must enroll in LLAW 291(Practice Studies). A faculty member is assigned the course and is responsible for monitoring the student interns. In recent years the Program Coordinator has been assigned this course.

10. Handling placement or coordination with the central placement office.

Program Coordinator and Department Chair.

11. Coordinating the educational program.

The Management Department Chair assigns courses to faculty in consultation with the Program Coordinator. The coordinator and faculty teaching in the program are responsible for program content.

12. Evaluating the overall program.

On a day to day basis this is the responsibility of the Program Coordinator. The program is also reviewed by the Academic Senate on a regular basis. The program has been approved by the American Bar Association since 1977 and has been evaluated by that body on a number of occasions.

E. State the minimum qualifications set by the institution in hiring faculty members to teach legal specialty courses.

Faculty must have at least a Masters degree in a relevant field. To date, all faculty teaching in the program have been attorneys.

F. Provide a roster of all faculty members who are now teaching and who have taught legal specialty courses offered for each of the last three years or, if this is a reapproval application, for each year since the date of the last report. Include the following information as Exhibit 23.

1. Name of faculty member
2. Status within the institution, i.e. full-time, part-time, regular, or adjunct.
3. Legal specialty courses taught and dates (by semester, quarter, etc.)
4. If no longer teaching, indicated the reason.

See Exhibit 23

G. Describe the role of faculty members in advising and assisting students. Are faculty members required to maintain regularly scheduled office hours? If yes, indicate the number of hours required.

Full-time faculty is required to have a minimum of four office hours per week. As stated above, the Program Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator advise the students in the legal assistant program.

H. As Exhibit 24, provide a resume (not employment application) for each faculty member listed. Each resume must include a description of the faculty member's professional qualifications including experience working with legal assistants and/or working as a legal assistant.

See exhibit 24.

I. How frequently are meetings of the full-time and adjunct legal assistant faculty held? As Exhibit 25, provide minutes of meetings held during the past three years, or if this is a reapproval application, since the date of the last report.

The three faculty teaching in the legal assistant program share an office and meet, informally, on a regular basis.

J. Describe the measures that are taken to support and encourage the professional growth of all full and part-time faculty in the legal assistant program, i.e., in-service training, funds for attendance at continuing education programs and conferences. Describe the participation of faculty members in such professional growth activities during the past three years, or if this is a reapproval application, since the date of the last report.

Faculty are encouraged to participate in faculty development and tenure, promotion, and merit increases are influenced by this participation. The university provides a Faculty Development Office and money for travel.

Since the last ABA review, John Kane, the Program Coordinator attended the AAFPE annual conference each year, the Michigan Bar Association annual meeting in 1996, participated in the university 1996 Summer Institute, and attended numerous in-service training seminars on teaching skills. In the summer of 1997, Mr. Kane, at university expense, was sent to Russia where he met with members of the legal community, including judges, lawyers, and Law School Deans as part of the development of an exchange program with the University of Moscow and various business' in Russia. In early February, Ferris will host 15 University of Moscow law students and Mr. Kane, the other faculty, and the students in the legal assistant program will have an opportunity to work with the visiting students. In the past three years Mr. Kane has taken undergraduate courses in Finance and Computers at Ferris.

Since the last ABA review the Assistant Coordinator, John Vermeer, has taken two undergraduate computer classes at Ferris, attended a "Choice of Business Forums" seminar, a seminar on On-Line education, received training in "HyperStudio" (a multi media program), did inservice training on the administration and interpretation of the Holland Career Inventory, attended a 40 hour training session on "Dispute Resolution", and has attended numerous computer seminars sponsored by Ferris and Microsoft.

SECTION V

ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES G-501 through G-503

A. Describe admission requirements and procedures used to select students.

Students must have a minimum of a 2.5 GPA in high school or in their prior college courses. The Program Coordinator may make exceptions. Qualified students are admitted in the order of their application.

B. Describe the methods used to recruit students. Provide copies of all advertisements, promotional material, and brochures relating to the program including the college catalog, as Exhibit 26.

Recruiting of students for the program is done primarily at high schools as part of Ferris' regular recruitment program.

C. Describe procedures used to give information to prospective students about the legal assistant program and the profession.

Prospective students are sent the brochure in Exhibit 26. The Program Coordinator and Assistant Program Coordinator are available to speak with potential students to discuss the program and the profession. University admissions counselors visit high schools

D. Describe the policy and procedure for permitting non-paralegal students to enroll in legal specialty classes. What is the proportion of such students in each legal specialty courses?

Students not accepted into the legal assistant program are not allowed to take the legal specialty courses. The program coordinator may make exceptions.

E. Provide information about costs incurred by students for:

1. Tuition and fees.

Tuition is \$1904 per semester for Michigan residents. Non-residents pay \$3925 per semester. Fees vary with courses taken.

2. Books and other materials.

The costs of books and other materials vary considerably because of course selection and availability of used books. On average, the university estimates that students spend \$370 on books and supplies per semester.

3. Placement.

There is no charge for using the Career Services Office.

4. Other.

There are no other required costs. Residence Halls are available at a cost of \$2,396 per semester for the nineteen-meal plan.

F. Describe activities for, or services available to, students in the following areas:

1. Course selection and registration and advisement.

All students are assigned a faculty advisor and first year students cannot register without written permission of their advisor. Checksheets with required courses are provided to each student. Faculty have access to complete student records on the Student Information System which may be accessed from their personal computer.

2. Career counseling and testing.

The university employs eight academic counselors and 4 personal counselors to advise students. In addition, students may meet with their faculty advisor.

The university has a testing office, which provides a wide variety of testing services.

In 1996 Ferris started the University College to advise and assist the undecided and underprepared student as well as run the Honors Program. They provide a number of remedial and career exploration courses to students who need assistance of this nature. They also coordinate the FSUS 100 course, a one-hour orientation course for 1st year students to assist them in adjusting to college life and to gain an understanding of the programs and services available at the university.

The Career Services Office also assists students by providing career information. The office utilizes "Focus II," an interactive computer-based guidance system that provides career and educational planning for students.

3. Support programs such as remediation and tutoring.

Remedial courses are offered through the University College. Tutoring is available to students at no cost for any course.

4. Orientation for new students to the legal assistant program and to the career.

Orientation is provided in the first Legal Assistant course, LLAW 160.

5. Student organizations and associations.

Students in the Legal Assistant Program have an active Paralegal Association. The association sponsors speakers, trips to courts and law schools, and has an annual banquet.

Like any university with 9000 students, students may join a large number of organizations such as:

Student Government
Residence Hall Associations
Social Fraternities and Sororities
Honor Societies
Professional Fraternities and Sororities
Academic Organizations
Special Interests Organizations.

Student organizations are listed on pages 22-25 of the FSU catalog.

6. Representation on college or program committees.

The President of the Paralegal Association is invited to all Advisory Board Meetings. The Presidents of the College of Business Professional Organizations are members of the College of Business Professional Council. The President of the Paralegal Association presently serves as secretary of that organization.

7. Continuing legal assistant education.

The university does not provide continuing legal assistant education.

8. Other services or activities that are relevant to legal assistant students.

The Legal Assistant Resource Facility is a dedicated room with study tables, computers, and reading material that is available only to students in the Legal Assistant Program. The room is adjacent to the offices of the faculty teaching in the program. This common gathering area encourages interaction between students outside of class and is the meeting place for the Paralegal Association.

G. What is the completion rate for students entering the legal assistant program? Describe the procedure used to determine this rate. How does this rate compare with the completion rate in other career programs and in the institution?

The completion rate averages between 50 and 60% of students who enter the program. The rate fluctuates and is difficult to pinpoint because students who leave the program may come back years later and complete it. The completion rate for other university

programs varies. Those with highly selective admissions criteria, such as Pharmacy and Optometry, have high graduation rates. The procedure used to compute the rate is to look at the students in the first course each year (LLAW 160) and check on how many of them graduate.

H. Describe how job placement is handled for graduates of the program.

- 1. Does the institution have a central placement office or program? If so, what role does the college placement office play in placing legal assistant graduates?**

The Office of Career Services acts as the central placement office for the university. The role of the office is to assist the students and alumni in their search for employment. Students and alumni may register with the office. The office will provide any student with a copy of Resume' Expert on disk to assist them in preparing a resume. The office places student and alumni resumes on the university web page using Resume Book. Employers may search all resumes at any time. The office also places all job announcements on the Web Job list for alumni and students seeking employment. Career Services regularly holds job fairs and job search workshops.

- 2. Describe the role of the program director, faculty, staff, and other program personnel in placement.**

The program coordinator and faculty in the program regularly hear from graduates and prospective employers about employment opportunities. Notices of job opportunities are passed on to present students, graduates who have indicated that are looking for employment, and to the Office of Career Services.

- 3. What steps does the institution take to ensure non-discrimination in the placement process?**

Employers who interview on campus must sign a statement indicating they will not discriminate.

- 4. Describe any assistance that is given in regular classes, internships, pre-employment workshops, etc.**

The Office of Career Planning holds pre-employment workshops.

- 5. Describe the assistance given to students and graduates in resume writing and interviewing skills.**

As indicated above, the Office of Career Services provides Resume Expert to students. That office also will review resumes written by students and has walk-in resume review hours Monday through Friday from 2-4 PM.

The office provides job workshops on a monthly basis on interviewing skills, job search strategies and portfolio building. Mock interviews may be scheduled with a professional staff member of the office. The interview is videotaped and critiqued.

- 6. As Exhibit 27, provide a list of graduates for each of the past three years or, if this is a reapproval application, for each year since the date of the last report, and identify the names and addresses of their employers and their job titles. For graduates continuing their education, indicate the name of the institution they are attending and whether they are full-time or part-time students.**

SECTION VI

LIBRARY

G-601

- A. Describe the library facilities that are available to students in the legal assistant program, particularly as to their suitability for the legal specialty courses.

Identify the library as a:

1. Law school library.
2. Regularly staffed county or bar library.
3. A section of the college library.
4. A library set up specifically to serve the legal assistant program.
5. A combination of two or more of the above.

Ferris State University's Timmee Library has an excellent law collection on the main floor of the facility.

- B. If #1 or #2 above, provide the following information:

1. Distance of library from the institution.
2. Describe the method of travel between the library and the institution and the approximate travel time.
3. Describe the agreement between the library and the program regarding student restrictions, if any.

Not applicable.

- C. Please provide the following information:

1. Hours of library operation.

The library is open Monday through Thursday for 8AM to 10PM, Friday from 8AM to 5PM, Saturday from Noon to 5PM, and Sunday from 1PM to 10PM.

2. Is instruction in legal bibliography permitted within the library? Please state restrictions, if any.

Yes. A whiteboard and tables are available within the law collection to teach at the facility. There are also classrooms available in the library. There are no

restrictions other than the library's request that the space be reserved in advance, if possible, to avoid conflicts.

D. As Exhibit 29, provide a listing of the legal materials in the collections, including the following: (Indicate the most recent update.)

1. Codes.
2. Reporters.
3. Digests.
4. Shepard's Citations.
5. Legal encyclopedias.
6. Texts, practice manuals, and form books in all areas of legal assistant instruction.
7. Local and state bar journals and appropriate legal periodicals
8. Texts on the role of the legal assistant and materials on the legal assistant profession.
9. Law dictionaries.

See exhibit 29 for list of Materials available in the Library.

The following are available in the Legal Assistant Resource Facility.

The Michigan Legal Assistant
Michigan Bar Journal
The National Law Journal
Lawyers Weekly USA
Law Technology Product News
The ABA Bar Journal

E. Describe student access to research materials through computer technology.

Students have access to legal materials on the Internet in the various College of Business computer labs and the Legal Assistant Resource Lab. LEXIS is available to students from any computer on campus with Internet access.

F. Describe the provisions that have been made for maintaining, updating, and adding to library resources.

Library staff regularly reviews the holdings of the law collection. The Program Coordinator is consulted before any legal materials are changed. Faculty may initiate requests for new materials.

The law collection is excellent and current. A new library will be constructed on campus in the next few years and the facilities for teaching at the library should be even better.

G. What course or courses provide instruction in legal research? When is legal research instruction provided in the curriculum? What legal specialty courses utilize the skills developed in legal research?

Basic instruction in legal research is taught to all students in LLAW 161, Law in the United States II. This course is taken in the students second semester of the program. The class meets once a week in small groups in the law section of the library. Students may take LLAW 253, Advanced Legal Research and Writing in their fourth semester in the program.

LLAW 251, Criminal Law and Procedure, and LLAW 280, Civil Litigation both require students to utilize their research skills.

SECTION VII

PHYSICAL PLANT G-701 THROUGH G-703

Describe the facilities provided the legal assistant program with reference to:

1. Classrooms.

The Legal Assistant Program is located in the College of Business and utilizes the classrooms in that facility. Legal Research is taught in the library.

2. Conference Rooms.

Conference rooms are available in the College of Business and other campus locations. The Legal Assistant Resource Facility is also used as a conference room.

3. Office space for the program director, full and part-time faculty, and staff. Indicate what space is provided for meeting privately with students for advising and counseling.

A large office adjacent to the Legal Assistant Resource Facility is utilized by the faculty teaching in the Legal Assistant Program.

4. Office equipment such as computers, fax machines, copying machines, telephone answering system and e-mail access.

Each full-time faculty teaching in the program is provided a computer, a telephone with phone mail, and access to e-mail. Copy machines and fax machines are available for all faculty. Faculty may also use a central copy center on campus.

5. Equipment for classroom use such as projectors, computers, etc.

Overhead projectors, TV and VCR's, and computers are available for use in the classroom.

6. Laboratories, such as computer labs.

The College of Business computer labs are the best on the campus. The Legal Assistant Resource Lab also has five computers available to legal assistant students.

Re-approval Site Visit Report

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Legal Assistant Program
Big Rapids, Michigan

October 8-10, 2000

MaryAnn Henderson, Paralegal
Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance
Mt. Vernon, Illinois
ABA Representative

Elizabeth Nobis, Coordinator
Lansing Community College
Lansing, Michigan
Program Director Representative

Ferris State University has applied to the American Bar Association for re-approval of its Legal Assistant Program. The initial approval was granted in 1978. The site visit for re-approval was conducted on October 8-10, 2000 by MaryAnn Henderson, ABA Representative and Elizabeth Nobis, Program Director Representative

The visit consisted of the following activities:

- A meeting with the Program Coordinator, John Kane;
- A meeting with Acting Dean, Jim Maas and Management Department Chair, John Valas;
- Dinner meetings with members of the Advisory Board, and program faculty;
- A meeting with Vice President for Academic Affairs, Barbara Chapman;
- A meeting with Admissions counselor, Bill Kirwin and Associate Director of Admissions, Cathryn Claerhout;
- A meeting with academic counselors, Rebecca and Rick Kowalkoski;
- A meeting with graduates of the program;
- A tour of the Timme Library and meeting with Dean Richard Cochran;
- Visitation of two legal specialty classes;
- A meeting with current students;
- Review of legal assistant materials, course materials, student files, assignments and teacher evaluations;
- Review graduate and employer surveys; and
- Exit meeting with the Program Coordinator, John Kane, faculty member and assistant coordinator, John Vermeer, and Acting Dean, Jim Maas.

SECTION I - GENERAL INFORMATION

G-101-107

Ferris State University is located in Big Rapids, Michigan, a rural town with a population of about 12,000. The University is state supported and is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools to award associate degrees, bachelor degrees, Masters and professional degrees. The Legal Assistant program offers an Associates degree.

John Kane is an attorney and full time faculty member. He has been the Program Coordinator since 1985. John Vermeer, an attorney and full time faculty member, is the assistant coordinator. Both are tenured full-professors. The program has graduated over 660 students since its inception. There are currently 37 students enrolled in the program, 32 are full time and 5 are part time students.

SECTION II - ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

G-201

The Legal Assistant Program has clearly defined publicly stated goals. This language is included in the catalog and other promotional materials. The specific objectives of the program include the instruction of students in the basic legal concepts, which will enable them to function effectively and confidently as legal assistants in various legal settings. The program strives to meet this objective by educating the students in the areas of research, case analysis and practical skills.

The Program Coordinator is a full time faculty member of the university and is responsible for evaluating the program and setting program goals and objectives.

The Legal Assistant Program is one of 15 programs in the Management Department. The Coordinator reports to the Chair of the Management Department, who in turn reports to the Acting Dean, who in turn reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. There is a good working relationship with administration at all levels, and the administration is very supportive of the program.

The Program Coordinator serves on various committees within the institution and is a strong advocate for the program.

The program is allocated funds for its expenses through the Management Department and resources are adequate for the program to accomplish its objectives.

G-202

The Legal Assistants Program and its Coordinator are given equal status within the institution comparable to other units. The Coordinator has input on budgeting, the hiring of faculty, course design and offerings. He is also responsible for maintaining the quality of the program and the program's relationship with the surrounding community.

Funds are allocated for professional development of the faculty and the Coordinator is able to attend meetings of AafPE, the American Association for Paralegal Education. John Kane has adequate office space which he shares with his assistant and one adjunct. A conference room is available for private conferences with students. The program has adequate classroom space, clerical, technical, and other supportive services.

G-203

The Advisory Board is comprised of ten individuals including three faculty member, two lawyers, three paralegals in the private sector, one judge and one public sector individual. Because the University is located in a very rural area, a legal assistant manager is not available to participate on the Board. In fact, most members, other than

the faculty drive a great distance (over an hour) to participate. Efforts continue to be made to recruit a public sector paralegal, but have not yet been successful.

Prospective members are recommended by current members, friends, or faculty of the University. After determining that a qualified individual is willing to serve, the Department Chair recommends to the Dean of the College of Business that the individual be added to the committee. The recommendation, along with the Dean's endorsement is sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and then to the President. When approved, the Department head notifies the individual of the appointment to the committee. Appointments are for three years, however active and contributing members are asked to serve again. Membership may, and has been extended beyond the three year period.

Members of the Advisory Committee provide the required contact with the local bar association and the legal community. A good working relationship exists between the Program Coordinator and faculty and potential employers.

Members report and minutes reflect valuable input on changes and trends in the legal community. Members review changes proposed for the program and keep the program abreast of the current job market.

The Advisory Board met at least once a year through 1996, although the Coordinator was regularly in touch with members of the Board. Due to internal problems, the Board did not meet regularly until 1999 and has since held two meetings per year. The program is still in the process of restructuring the Advisory Board in efforts to increase regular participation.

The site team met with members of the Board and found them dedicated to the program and very vocal advocates of the program.

The site team recommends that the program continue its efforts to recruit additional committee members who are not connected to the university.

G-204

The University has an affirmative action plan in place for both students and faculty. The average percent of minorities in the program is 3%, which is higher than the general public breakdown. There are no racial minorities teaching in the program but female adjunct instructors have been utilized in the past. There has been no turnover in faculty for quite some time, and the site team recommends that the program recruit more guest speakers, and if the need arises with a vacant faculty position, to encourage minority instructors to apply.

G-205

Salaries of full time and adjunct faculty are comparable to other faculty in the institution. The funding for the program appears to be firm. Salaries for faculty and support personnel are adequate to attract and retain well qualified staff. Instructional supplies, equipment, and library materials are more than adequate.

SECTION III - EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

G-301 and 302

Ferris State University's legal assistant program is clearly complying with the requirement to maintain a program for the education of legal assistants designed to qualify its graduates to be employed in law-related occupations including public and private law practice and/or corporate or government law-related activities. The program includes a strong general education component, combined with a legal specialty component that, while including only a small number of substantive practice areas, provides a broad-based knowledge of the law. Students prepare a variety of documents in the mandatory civil litigation course. With the exception of the introductory course LLAW 160, legal research and writing skills are emphasized in legal specialty courses throughout the program. The Timme library contains an excellent collection of legal resources, and a new library building under construction will provide convenient meeting rooms for the teaching of legal research in the library. LEXIS Academic Universe computer assisted legal research may be accessed via the internet from any computer in the library or elsewhere on campus, including the excellent legal assistant resource room. This room is close to the legal assistant classrooms and faculty offices and houses several computers and study tables for the exclusive use of legal assistant students and faculty.

Ferris is especially successful in meeting the requirement that students be able to achieve upward mobility by pursuing a Bachelors degree. The associate degree may be coordinated with two years of upper level courses to achieve a bachelor's degree, using a "2 + 2" plan. While this has primarily led students to earn a business degree, other degree options have become available in recent years, notably in Public Administration, Technical Communications, and Psychology. Other B.A. programs are being explored by the program coordinator in the liberal arts area.

The program needs to strengthen its effort to assess whether or not graduates feel that they are prepared for paralegal employment and are securing suitable positions, and whether or not employers are satisfied with the preparation provided by the program. Surveys of graduates and employers are not completed on a regularly scheduled basis.

Despite the fact that the program coordinator feels that lawyers may not customarily use placement offices as resources to locate potential employees. The program coordinator should be prepared to tell students what services the placement office can offer them and how those services can be accessed.

G-303

Graduates of the legal assistant program earn an associate degree in applied science. Students may then apply these credits, using the “2 + 2” option, to pursue a bachelor’s degree within the institution.. Students who enter the program must have a 2.5 grade point average or have received a waiver of this requirement from the program coordinator. The program does not grant any exceptions to general education requirements.

The curriculum is composed of 64 credits, distributed as follows:

Legal Specialty Courses Required (LS-R):

LLAW 160 Law in the United States I (3 credits) – No pre-requisites.
LLAW 161 Law in the United States II (4 credits) – LLAW 160 pre-requisite
LLAW 251 Criminal Law and Procedure (3 credits) – LLAW 160 pre-requisite
LLAW 260 Real Estate Law (3 credits) – LLAW 161 pre-requisite
LLAW 261 Probate and Estate Planning (3 credits) – LLAW 260 pre-requisite
LLAW 280 Civil Litigation (4 credits) LLAW 161 pre-requisite

Legal Specialty Courses Elective: (One is required for graduation)

LLAW 253 Advanced Legal Research and Writing (2 credits) LLAW 161
LLAW 291 Practice Studies (2 credits) LLAW 280

General Education Courses Required (GE)

COMM 121 Fundamentals of Public Speaking (3 credits) – none
ENGL 150 English 1 (3 credits) - none
ENGL 250 English 2 (3credits) – ENGL 150
MATH 115 Intermediate Algebra –(3 credits)
Scientific Understanding elective required – (3/4 credits)
Cultural Enrichment elective required – (3 credits)
Social Awareness elective required – (3 credits)

Related Courses Required

ACCT 201 Principles of Accounting 1 (3 credits) MATH 110 or equiv.
BLAW 321 Contracts and Sales (none)
ISYS 105 Micro Computer Applications (none)
Free Electives Required – 12 credit hours.

The internship course LLAW 291 is considered legal specialty, but the program does not have a systematic plan evaluating the internships to assure that the work performed emphasizes legal assistant skills and competencies.

SECTION IV - FACULTY

G-401

John Kane, an attorney, has been the coordinator of the legal assistant program at Ferris since 1985. He is a tenured professor and teaches in the program. Mr. Kane is a very qualified, enthusiastic program coordinator. The site visitors found that the students, faculty, and college administrators liked and respected him. John Vermeer assists John Kane as assistant coordinator. Mr. Vermeer is a former prosecuting attorney who is a tenured professor who teaches in the program. Mr. Vermeer is also well liked and respected.

John Kane and John Vermeer both take part in activities that contribute to their professional growth. Mr. Kane attends conferences presented by AAFPE and is also very involved in campus activities. Mr. Vermeer is a member of the Legal Assistant Section of the State Bar of Michigan. He reads the publications of the section but does not attend any activities sponsored by the section. He is extremely active in keeping current regarding computer technology, serves on college committees related to this, and is considered a leader on campus in this regard. Although Mr. Kane and Mr. Vermeer are active in professional growth activities, they do not attend activities sponsored by the State Bar Legal Assistant Section as well as the Legal Assistants Association of Michigan when such activities are near their geographic area. This would enhance their ability to relay current information to students, would contribute to placement success, and would be a part of recruitment and retention strategies.

G-402-403

Mr. Kane's time is typically allocated as follows: 20% program administration, 5% other program-related duties, 25% non-program-related duties, 50% teaching. The usual teaching load for faculty is 12 credit hours. Mr. Kane and Mr. Vermeer teach all of the legal specialty courses, except for real estate and probate, which are taught by the only adjunct, practicing attorney James White. Current students and graduates indicated satisfaction with the administration and instruction of the program. The instructors are very accessible to students.

The program clearly meets the guideline that the size of the faculty be commensurate with the number and type of courses offered and the number and needs of students served. The program faces a challenge, however, in providing its substantial population of female and minority students with role models. The faculty members recognize this need, and are willing to develop a plan to systematically provide opportunities in the classroom each semester where students will meet legal assistants and other law professionals who represent the female and minority populations. These sessions should allow for meaningful question and answer periods. This suggestion is not intended to reflect in any way on the high level of teaching ability and effectiveness of the current staff. Nevertheless, if the need arises in the future for additional faculty, increasing diversity in the program should be a consideration in the selection process.

The program receives adequate clerical, technical, and other supporting services. A student employee assists the program on a regular basis, and regular secretarial support is available for other needs and for large projects. However little, if any assistance is provided to market the program.

SECTION V - ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES

G-501

The admissions policies of the program are well designed to enroll students qualified for and interested in careers as legal assistants. Students must have a 2.5 grade point average in high school and/or previous college work in order to be admitted to the program. The program coordinator sometimes waives this requirement, based on the individual background and qualifications of a student. Formal orientation to the program is held during the first sessions of the introductory course LLAW 160.

The admissions officers, counselors and advisors with whom the site visit team met were knowledgeable about the program. In addition, John Kane serves as a college-wide advisor during the summer, and this is valuable in making sure that the program is understood by other advisors and is properly represented to students and potential students. However, inconsistency appears in the advertising and advising materials. Certain pieces need to be revised to comply with the requirement that limitations on the practice of law by non-lawyers be clearly stated.

G-502

Placement is handled by the campus-wide placement office as well as the program, but better coordination is not in place to assure that students know what services are available and how they can avail themselves of those services. Graduates must be surveyed on a regularly scheduled basis to assure that the program's plan for assisting graduates in securing suitable employment is effective. While students are comfortable discussing issues with the coordinator and assistant coordinator, periodic student surveys on an anonymous basis could also provide ideas for program improvement.

G-503

Several students from other programs are permitted to enroll in the introductory course LLAW 160; however, this does not adversely affect the progress, content, level and quality of the course.

SECTION VI - LIBRARY

G-601

The collection of the legal library is housed within a separate area of the Timme Library. There is adequate space for teaching legal research with computer labs located throughout the library. The law collection is periodically reviewed by the library staff and the Program Coordinator. The collection is the only complete and up-to-date one in the area and is used by professionals and other community members as well as students.

Legal research is taught in one of the computer labs and utilizes Lexis. In addition, the Legal Assistant students have their own room (in the College of Business building) with seven state of the art computers and Lexis access.

Students report that library hours are sufficient and convenient.

SECTION VII - PHYSICAL PLANT

G-701-703

The facilities available to the Legal Assistant Program at Ferris State University are excellent. The classrooms are located in the College of Business building. All of the classrooms are spacious and well lit with a variety of equipment and instructional materials available. The students have their own lab type classroom where they meet for class and it is also available as a quiet study and research space.

RESPONSIVENESS TO PREVIOUS TEAM'S RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous report dated September, 1995, the site team noted several points for which recommendations were offered:

- 1) The site team recommends that the Interim Dean, the Management Department Chair, the Academic Vice-President and the President of the University continue their support of the program.

Ferris State has continued to show strong support for the Legal Assistant Program. Money has been budgeted to maintain the Legal Assistant Resource Facility and the program was given strong support in the Academic Senate Program Review Process completed in 1997. In November, 1999, the program received \$15,000 to purchase new computers, printers, and audio-visual equipment for the Legal Assistant Resource Facility.

- 2) That the Advisory Board be revitalized by the addition of new members.
(G-203)

Judge Susan Grant and high school librarian Diane Stephens were added to the advisory board.

- 3) That the University provide the coordinator with opportunities for professional development by providing funding for attendance at the meetings of the American Association for Paralegal Education. (G-205)

The Program Director has attended the annual AAFPE meetings since the last ABA approval visit.

- 4) That the Advisory Board and the program administrators review the curriculum and consider adding additional legal specialty classes. (G-303)

The Legal Assistant curriculum has been reviewed. Former LLAW 261, Drafting Legal Instruments, has been changed to LLAS 261, Probate and Estate Planning. All syllabi were reviewed and updated.

- 5) That the Program Coordinator review the curriculum to ensure accuracy in course descriptions and course titles. (G-301)

The University converted from terms to semesters in 1993 and the Legal Assistant, like all university programs, underwent major changes. Adjustments have been made and coverage in courses is consistent.

- 6) That the Program Coordinator be granted some reallocated time to market the program and to do curriculum development. (G-402)

The Program Coordinator has received credit for monitoring internships. However, marketing continues to be a challenge for the program.

- 7) That if additional instructors are needed the program attempt to hire adjunct instructors for the program who are practicing attorneys. (G-403)

There has been no turnover in faculty.

- 8) The site team recommends that the program investigate the possibility of expanding Westlaw availability, perhaps with a paralegal program option now available from West.

The University now subscribes to Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe. This database is available to all students at the university from any computer on campus with Internet access.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ferris State University has a strong Legal Assistant Program with a skilled and dedicated faculty. The program is supported by the administration and the curriculum is well designed to provide practical skills to its students. Recognizing that the American Bar Association Guidelines are minimum educational standards for legal assistant education programs, the site team made the following recommendations for continued improvement of the program at Ferris State University:

1. (G-203) That a public sector paralegal be appointed to the Advisory Board and the program continue to revamp the board to utilize it to its full potential.
2. (G-203 D) That the Advisory Board become involved in the marketing and promotion of the program.
3. (G-301) That graduate and employer surveys be reviewed, revised and sent regularly, and that the results be used to evaluate, review and improve the program.
4. (G-401 E) That minutes be kept of faculty meetings, and that faculty meetings address the issues set forth in this guideline.
5. (G-402) That the program design a method to market and promote the Legal Assistant program.
6. (G-501 C) That the language in the Career Guide (page 23) be revised to include statements about the unauthorized practice of law.

It is the site teams recommendation that Ferris State Univeristy's Legal Assistant program be re-approved.

CHAIRArthur G. Greene
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Bedford, NH 03110
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April 3, 2001

Mr. John Kane
Coordinator, Legal Assistant Program
Ferris State University
College of Business
901 S. State Street
Big Rapids, MI 49307-2295

Dear Mr. Kane:

I am pleased to inform you that on February 19, 2001 the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association acting on the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Legal Assistants, granted reapproval to the Legal Assistant Program at Ferris State University.

The term of approval is for a period of seven years, beginning August, 1998 and ending August, 2005. Your application for reapproval, including a self-evaluation report, supporting documents and fees, must be filed by January 15, 2005.

During the interim period, you are required to submit two interim reports, at the 24th and 48th month anniversaries of your approval. For your information and calendaring, these reports are due on September 15, 2000 and September 15, 2002. Instructions for preparing these reports and a standardized form will be forwarded to you approximately four months before the due dates. In addition to meeting these reporting requirements, approved programs must pay annual fees of \$500 which will be billed on February 1 and will be due no later than May 1.

Should any major changes be made to your program between reports, these changes must be reported to the ABA Standing Committee staff in writing. The staff should also be informed of any change in personnel holding the position of program director. Please familiarize yourself

with G-105.D in the *Guidelines for the Approval of Legal Assistant Programs* which delineates the kind of changes that must be reported.

Also, please familiarize yourself with G-501.D which contains the restrictions on advertising ABA approval and referring to ABA approval in program literature. As required by this section, please use the word "approval" or "approved" in describing your status and refrain from using the ABA logo and from citing the language of the site team report in advertisements, brochures and other promotional literature.

Congratulations on your approval and best wishes for continued success with your program.

Sincerely,



Arthur Greene
(MG)

Arthur Greene
Chair of the Standing Committee on Legal Assistants

GAYLE S. LOPEZ
4367 Creekside Drive
Whitehall, MI 49461
(231) 894-2889

EDUCATION

University of San Francisco School of Law, San Francisco, CA
J.D., Cum Laude, top 15%, 1992

Ferris State University, Big Rapids, MI
B.S., Business Administration, High Distinction, 1986
Real Estate Certificate, High Distinction, 1986
A.A.S., Legal Assistant, High Distinction, 1984

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Eight years experience representing defendants in a variety of litigated civil cases from inception to resolution in both commercial and personal lines. Jury and Court trial experience. Participated in all types of ADR including arbitration, mediation, and settlement negotiations. Developed a proactive and effective working relationship with clients to determine and implement litigation strategy. Cases litigated include premises liability, products liability, automobile liability, subrogation, contractual indemnity and construction defect. Provided clients with insurance coverage analysis. Supervised legal assistant assignments and reviewed their work product.

Guest lecturer in Torts at California State Hayward in the Legal Assistant Program for three years. Conducted legal seminars for clients and insurance representatives.

ADMISSIONS

Member of the Bar, State of Michigan, May 2001
Member of the Bar, State of California, December 1992
United States District Court, Northern District of California
Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Attorney, Joseph Costella & Associates, Walnut Creek, CA	1992 to 2000
Law Clerk, Maloney & Associates, Walnut Creek, CA	1990 to 1992
Sr. Claim Rep., Aetna Casualty & Surety Co., Walnut Creek, CA	1986 to 1989
Legal Assistant, William Harper, P.C., Big Rapids, MI	1985
Legal Assistant, Scholten & Fant, Grand Haven, MI	1984

GAYLE S. LOPEZ
4367 Creekside Drive
Whitehall, Michigan 49461
(231) 894-2889

REFERENCES

Grace M. Madonia, Attorney
Joseph Costella & Associates
215 Lennon Lane Suite 200
Walnut Creek, CA 94598
(925) 945-4491

Karen Bergman Reimus
Associate Director of California Bar Bri Bar Review
3990 Old Town Ave. Suite A-111
San Diego, CA 92110
(619) 298-3240

Steven Kesten, Attorney and Adjunct Professor
Kesten, Colton & Brandt
3100 Kerner
San Rafael, CA 94901
(415) 457-2668

I. **Vita**

A. **Name:** John A. Kane, Jr.

Rank: Professor

Tenure/Non-Tenure: Tenured

Department or Division: College of Business/Management Department

Teaching Experience:

1990 to present: Professor and Legal Assistant Program Coordinator, Ferris State University.

1985 to 1990: Associate Professor and Legal Assistant Program Coordinator, Ferris State University.

1981 to 1985: Assistant Professor and Assistant Coordinator of the Legal Assistant Program, Ferris State University.

1980 to 1981: Part-time Instructor, Institute for Paralegal Training

B. Educational Background

1974 J.D., Wayne State University College of Law

1971 B.S., Western Michigan University
Major: Group Social Science major in Economics, Political Science, Sociology, and History.
Minor: Philosophy

C. Prior Experience not in Education

1974 – 1981: Practice law as a full-time occupation.

D. Professional Memberships:

Member of the Michigan Bar Association
Member of the American Bar Association
Member of the American Association for Paralegal Education
Executive Board Member, Ferris Faculty Association
Member, Omicron Delta Kappa, The National Leadership Honor Society

E. Professional Meetings Attended

American Association for Paralegal Education Annual Conference on 10 different occasions. 1986 to present.

FSU Faculty Institute. 1996

Michigan Bar Annual Conference. 1996

Institute of Continuing Legal Education. Attended conferences on a regular basis on various legal topics. 1974-present.

F. Papers Presented:

The Litigation Explosion. Ferris Seminar 1995

G. Publications:

H. Other research activity:

Extensive activity, as a teacher of legal research, for over 16 years.

Conduct surveys of students, graduates, and advisory board members of the Legal Assistant Program on a regular basis.

Conduct employer surveys for legal assistant employers on a regular basis.

I. Consulting

Have practiced law on a part-time basis while teaching.

Served on two bargaining teams for the Ferris Faculty Association and presently serve as FFA grievance chair.

Have served as a program evaluator for the American Bar Association on four different occasions.

Served as a program evaluator for the Ohio Board of Regents.

J. Professional Growth Activities.

Attendance at ICLE conferences on a regular basis

Participated in 1996 Faculty Institute

I read the following Journals on a regular basis.

American Bar Association Journal
Michigan Bar Journal
The Michigan Business Law Journal
Michigan Lawyers Weekly
National Law Week
Paralegal Educator
Chronicle of Higher Education

I have participated in the American Association for Paralegal Education Annual conference on 10 different occasions.

Visited the Japan Center for Michigan Universities on two different occasions to participate in educational activities. 1997 and 1998

Visited Russia with other representative of the College of Business to establish contacts with business, government, and educational partners in Moscow. 1997

Attended two 3-day training sessions presented by the Michigan Education Association on team building. 1989 & 1993

Attended three-day session on Process performance training as College of Business Representative. 1999

Attended one-day session on post-tenure review at Central Michigan University. 1998

K. Seminars, Training Programs, etc. conducted for Business and Industry.

Series of 12 three-hour training sessions for the support staff of Dow Chemical Company Legal Department in 1985

Michigan Education 2000 Bargaining Conference. Presented on Higher Education Bargaining.

M. Institutional Services Performed.

Administration of A Program

Coordinator of the Legal Assistant Program. 1985 - present

Duties include:

1. Preparing reports to maintain American Bar Association accreditation of the Legal Assistant Program.
2. Preparing self-evaluation report for the American Bar Association approval sight visit.

3. Coordinating the annual meeting with the Legal Assistant Advisory Committee.
4. Developing courses and curriculum for the program.
5. Meeting with potential students who inquire about the program.
6. Counseling students in the program.
7. Advising the Paralegal Club. I take two or three trips a year to various courts with student groups.

University Committees

1990 -1991: Faculty representative on the FSU ad hoc committee charged with writing the new student code of conduct and university discipline procedures.

1990 -1991: Member, General Counsel Search Committee.

1992 -1993: Faculty representative on the FSU ad hoc Policies Committee. The committee was charged with writing the following University polices.

1. Policy on the use of university property by university employees.
2. Policy on fraud and theft, to include reporting procedures.
3. Conflict of interest policy.

1990 –1992: Member, Library Advisory Committee.

1995-present: College of Business Representative to the Academic Senate

1996-present: Secretary and member of the Executive Board of the Academic Senate

1995-1996: Chair, Program Review panel for the Legal Assistant Program.

1996-present: Member, Library and Archives Advisory Committee

1996-present: Member, Academic Senate Governance Committee

College of Business Committees

1989 -1990: Member, Tenure Policy Review committee

1993 -1994: Chair, College of Business Promotions Committee.

1994: Chair, Off-campus Review Committee

1995: Member, Ad Hoc Committee to update College of Business procedures on all committees. (Co-op, Computer Usage, Promotion/Merit, Sabbatical)

1996: Chair, Ad Hoc Committee to update College of Business Tenure Policy.

1997-present: College of Business faculty representative to finalize College of Business Workload Policy.

1999-present: Member, College of Business Curriculum Committee

1996-present: College of Business Registration specialist.

Management Department Committees

1990 -1994: Chair, Management Department Workload Committee

1992 -1993: Member, Promotions committee.

1991 -1993: Member and Acting Chair, Tenure Committee.

1991 -1995: Member of various Tenure sub-committees.

1993-1994: Member, ad hoc committee to review summer rotation lists.

1996-1997: Member, Management Department Promotions Committee

Ferris Faculty Association Activities

1991 –1995 and

1996 - present: Member, FFA Executive Board.

1989 -1990: Member, FFA Bargaining Team.

1993 –1998: Member and Co-Chief Negotiator, FFA Bargaining Team.

1991 -1994: Member, FFA Grievance Committee

1997-present: FFA Grievance Chair

1990 -1991: Chair, Ad hoc Committee to draft a new FFA Constitution and By-laws.

1993: Member, Ad hoc Committee to determine validity of requests of Bargaining Unit Member to not pay FFA association fees on religious grounds.

1993: Member, Ad hoc committee to review alleged budget problems at FSU.

1992: Member, Ad hoc committee to determine seniority of returning administrator.

1989 -1995: Faculty representative on 4 different Workload Review Committees. Three for individual faculty reviews and one for Seniority group.

1993-1994: Member, FFA ad hoc bargaining team to negotiate alternatives to the implementation of the Fiscal Restructuring Plan.

2000: Presented at training conference on Collective Bargaining. Michigan Education Association Annual Bargaining Conference.

N. Recognition and Honors.

Finalist, Distinguished Teacher Award, 1989

Merit pay award. 1995

O. Professionally Related Community Activities.

Member, Good Neighbors of Big Rapids

Member and volunteer, Recycle Mecosta

Coach and past vice-president, Big Rapids Youth Soccer League

Former Board member, Big Rapids Community Library

Member, Big Rapids Property Maintenance Board of Appeals.

II. Educational Background to document graduate course work in the field of law to support doctoral level preparation.

Transcript for Juris Doctor degree is on file.

Transcript reflects course preparation in areas taught:

Courses include: Contracts and Sales, Real and Personal Property, Torts, Legal Research, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Civil Procedure, Commercial Paper, Secured Transactions, Tax, Agency and Partnerships, Corporate law, and Labor Law

Passed Michigan Bar Exam in 1974

III. Teaching Experience sufficient to document doctoral level expertise.

Curriculum development activities include:

Primarily responsible for curriculum of the FSU Legal Assistant Program for 15 years. Have guided the program through the last three re-approval visits and written the reapproval reports.

Developed BLAW 301, Legal Environment of Business.

Chaired the Program review panel for the 1996 Program Review of the Legal Assistant Program.

Member of the Academic Senate that reviews all program changes. 1994 to present.

Member, College of Business Curriculum Committee that reviews all curriculum changes in the College of Business.

Courses taught include:

BLAW 221 – Elementary Business Law

BLAW 301 – Legal Environment of Business

BLAW 321 – Contracts and Sales

BLAW 322 – Negotiable Instruments, Secured Transactions, and Bankruptcy

BLAW 323, Agency, Partnerships, and Corporations.

BLAW 325 – Real and Personal Property

LLAW 160 – Law in the United States I

LLAW 161 – Law in the United States II

LLAW 260 – Real Estate Law

LLAW 261 – Probate and Estate Planning

LLAW 280 – Civil Litigation

LLAW 253 – Advanced Legal Research and Writing

LLAW 291 – Legal Assistant Internship

REAL 210 – Principals of Real Estate

IV. Documented Practical Experience.

I have been a practicing attorney licensed in the State of Michigan for over 25 years. For five years my duties included the supervision and training of new attorneys and legal assistants. I have used my legal skills and training on campus in assisting in the development of numerous policies including post-tenure review procedures, workload policies, and tenure policies. I have also served on two faculty bargaining teams for the Ferris Faculty Association and have been the Grievance Chair or on the Grievance Committee for many years. As Grievance chair, besides assisting faculty with

grievances, I assist in all other contract maintenance for the members of the Ferris Faculty Association. All of these experiences assist me in my primary duties of teaching law courses.

IV. Consulting Experiences.

I regularly review textbooks for publishers.

I have assisted in bargaining training for the Michigan Education Association.

I have practiced law as a part-time occupation since 1981.

VI. Scholarly Activity

Development of survey instruments for Academic Program Review and American Bar Association approval of legal assistant program.

Developed survey instruments for faculty surveys to prepare for collective bargaining.

I do legal research on a regular basis in the law area in order to teach law courses.

VITA

I. Name: James R. White

Rank: Adjunct Instructor

Tenure/Non-tenure: Non-tenure

Department or Division: College of Business/Management Dept.

Year Joined the Institution: 1982

Teaching Experience:

Areas of involvement (in teaching)

1982 - Present Ferris State University-Big Rapids, Business Law
and Legal Assistant

II. Education Background (include fields of specialization):

Admitted to the Bar in Minnesota and Michigan

1977 J.D., William Mitchell College of Law, St. Cloud, MN

1973 B.S., Ferris State College, Business Administration

III. Prior Experience not in Education:

1982 - Present Porteous & White, PC, Attorney-at-Law,
Reed City, MI

1977 - 1982 White and Thompson, Attorney-at-Law,
Litchfield, MN

IV. Professional Memberships (include offices held):

State Bar of Michigan

V. Community Activities:

Society for Advancement of Management - President - 1972-73
Ferris State College

Minnesota Lions Club - Treasurer - 1978-82

Reed City Area Lions Club - President - 1984-85

Lions Club International - Zone Chairman - 1985-87
District 11-E-1

Mecosta-Osceola Bar Association - Treasurer - 1985-86
V.P. - 1986-87
President - 1987-88

Reed City Parent-Teacher Organization - President - 1987-88

Home Hopsice, Inc. - Board of Directors - 1987-92

Reed City Public Schools - Board of Education - 1988 - Present
President - 1990 - Present

VITA

I. **Name:** John E. Vermeer

Rank: Professor

Tenure/Non-tenure: Tenure

Department or Division: College of Business/Management Dept.

Year Joined the Institution: 1985

Teaching Experience:

Areas of involvement (in teaching)

Business Law

Legal Assistant

1985 - Present Assistant/Associate/Professor

1979 - 1985 Part-Time Instructor, Ferris State
College

1977 - 1979 Part-Time Instructor, Lansing Community
College

II. **Education Background (include fields of specialization):**

1979 J.D., Cooley Law School

1974 B.S., Ferris State University

III. **Prior Experience not in Education:**

1985 Private Practice of Law, Criminal, Domestic, Real
Property and Contracts

1982 - 1984 Mecosta County Prosecutor

1979 - 1982 Private Practice of Law

IV. **Professional Memberships (include offices held):**

Michigan State Bar

U.S. District Court, Western District

Mecosta-Osceola Bar Association

V. **Consulting:**

Wildlife Reserve, Inc., Big Rapids Airport, Trinity Fellowship
Church.

VI. **Professional Growth Activities:**

Mediation training through the Community Reconciliation Center,
Inc., Feb. 94 through April 94.

"Teaching Thinking Skills" training seminar, 1990.

VII. Professional Presentations, Speeches, etc.:

Numerous Seminars presented to student groups regarding Michigan Landlord/Tenant relations and responsibilities.

VIII. Institutional Services Performed:

Computer Usage Committee Chair, 1994 - Present
Assist the Coordinator to the Legal Assistant Program
Develop courses for the Legal Assistant Program
Student Advising for those in the Legal Assisting Program
Advisor to the Paralegal Club
Recruiting & Retention Committee, 1994 - Present

IX. Professionally Related Community Activities:

Taught the Boy Scout "LAW" Merit Badge.

FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Memorandum

To: American Bar Association Legal Assistants Department

From: Professor John Kane^{JK}, Coordinator, Ferris State University Legal Assistant Program

RE: Faculty work experience with Legal Assistants.

Date: January 26, 1999

The three faculty teaching in the Ferris State University Legal Assistant Program are:

Professor John A. Kane
Professor John Vermeer
Adjunct Instructor James White

Mr. Kane has been an attorney for 25 years and has taught in the Legal Assistant program at FSU since 1981 and been the Coordinator since 1985. While practicing law he utilized legal assistants on a regular basis.

Mr. Vermeer has been an attorney for 20 years and has taught in the Legal Assistant program at FSU since 1985. While practicing law he utilized legal assistants on a regular basis.

Mr. White has been an attorney for 23 years and has taught as an adjunct at FSU for ten years, primarily in the Legal Assistant program. He maintains a private law practice and employs a graduate of the program. He also utilizes legal assistant interns on a regular basis.

MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

119 South Street, Big Rapids, MI 49307-2284
Phone 616 592-2427 Fax 616 592-3521 E-Mail MGMT@BUS02.FERRIS.EDU

I. VITA

A. Name: John E. Vermeer

Rank: Professor

Tenure/Non-tenure: Tenure

Department or Division: College of Business/Management Dept.

Year Joined the Institution: 1985

Teaching Experience:

Areas of involvement (in teaching)

Business Law

Legal Assistant

1985 - Present Assistant/Associate/Professor

1979 - 1985 Part-Time Instructor, Ferris State College – College of Business and Criminal Justice Program

1977 - 1979 Part-Time Instructor, Lansing Community College - Legal Assisting Program

II. Education Background (include fields of specialization):

1979 J.D., Cooley Law School

1974 B.S., Ferris State University

III. Prior Experience not in Education:

1985 Private Practice of Law, Criminal, Domestic, Real Property and Contracts

1982 - 1984 Mecosta County Prosecutor

1979 - 1982 Private Practice of Law

IV. Professional Memberships (include offices held):

Michigan State Bar

Member of the Criminal Law Section

Member of the Computer Law Section

U.S. District Court, Western District

Mecosta-Osceola Bar Association

V. Consulting:

Wildlife Reserve, Inc.,

Big Rapids Airport,

Trinity Fellowship Church.

Hamtech Inc. of Big Rapids (Machining and Fabrication Business)

VI. Professional Growth Activities:

Attended the "Legal Issues and Teaching in Higher Education" forum – 1999

Attended the "Looking to the Future Conference" on the use of Information Technologies in Education – 1999.

Participated in the trial run of "The Business Strategy Game – A Global Industry Simulation" - 1999

Microsoft Higher Education Seminar in Lansing. (1999)

Attended a Lotus Notes training session (1998) and as a consequence am one of a handful of faculty who use the Lotus calendar.

Attended the "THINKPAD-U" seminar held in Southfield, Michigan – 1998.

Attended development forum entitled: "Lectures: Interactive vs. Unilateral and Frames for taking Notes." 1997

Attended the training session on "Hyper Studio" – 1997

Attended a panel discussion on "On-line Education" – 1997.

Participated in the "Choice of Entity Seminar" –1997.

Attended the WebCT software workshop – 1997

Attended the showing of the videoconference, "Teaching With Style" – 1997.

ISYS 105 Ferris computer course - 1996. A second follow-up course taken in 1997.

Microsoft Higher Education Seminar in Detroit. (1995)

Inservice training on "The administration and interpretation of the Holland Career Inventory. (1995)

Forty hour training on "Dispute Resolution" in Grand Rapids at the Dispute Resolution Center of West Michigan. (1994)

"Teaching Thinking Skills" training seminar, 1990.

Keep current through reading of, among others:

The Michigan Lawyers Weekly

Legal Assisting Today Magazine

The Michigan Advance Sheets

Computer Law Journal

Case and Comment

The Michigan Bar Journal

The Hospitality Law Journal

The Chronicle of Higher Education

The Paralegal Educator

T.H.E. Journal

Law Office Computing

VII. Professional Presentations, Speeches, etc.:

Guest Speaker at the Reed City High School in March of 1999.
Presenter at the panel discussion for new FSU faculty "Understanding Our Student Population: Teaching and Advising at Ferris State." 1998
Presenter at the American Culinary Federation, All State Meeting, held in Traverse City, Nov., 1997 Topic: Hospitality Law – Potential Liabilities
Presented a "Tenant's Rights Seminar" held in Pickell Hall – 1997
Guest Speaker for the BUSN 122 Career Day 1997.
Numerous Seminars presented to student groups regarding Michigan Landlord/Tenant relations and responsibilities.

VIII. Institutional Services Performed:

Management Department Faculty Search Committee (2000)
College of Business – Dean Search Committee (1999-2000)
Recruiting and Retention Committee for the College of Business (1995-present)
Co-Chair, criteria five, NCA re-accreditation committee 1999.
Committee to develop the Student Assessment of Instruction – 1998/99. Continue to serve on the oversight committee.
Summer Session Review Committee - 1998 -2000
College Of Business representative to the Teaching, Learning and Technology Roundtable – 1999-2000.
Information Technology Council Committee – 1998/99
Distinguished Teacher Award Committee for the academic years 1997/98 and again in 1998/99.
College of Business Promotion/Merit Committee – 1998/99.
Core Review Committee – 1998-99.
Dept. Standards for Post-tenure Review Committee – 1998/99.
College of Business Management Program Review – 1997/98
College of Business Legal Assisting Program Review – 1997/98
Pride Day Committee (1995 to present)
Computer Usage Committee (1990-1999)
Chair, CUC (1994/95) & (1995/96)
Recorder, CUC (1996/97)
Management 2000 Committee (1994-present) One of four who, in summer of 1997, put on the successful Management 2000 Advisory Committee Meeting held in Grand Rapids at the Applied Technology Center
Search Committee for the C.O.B. Computer Lab Director (1995)
Search Committee for the Computer Lab Technician (1996)
College of Business Graduate Committee (1996-1997)
Assist the Coordinator to the Legal Assistant Program
Develop courses for the Legal Assistant Program
Student Advising for those in the Legal Assisting Program

Advisor to the Paralegal Club
Recruiting & Retention Committee, 1994 - Present

IX. Professionally Related Community Activities:

Provision of Pro Bono legal services to a number of indigent individuals.

Provision of Pro Bono legal services to a number of non-profit organizations, including
but not limited to: Wildlife Rescue, Spring Hill (Christian Camp), Trinity
Fellowship Church.

Taught the Boy Scout "LAW" Merit Badge.

Legal Assistant

APRC 2001-2002

section 3 of 4

**Ferris State University - College of Business
ASSOCIATE IN APPLIED SCIENCE DEGREE**

LEGAL ASSISTANT - 64/65 Credits

NAME: _____ **SS#:** _____

REQUIRED	COURSE TITLE - PREREQUISITES SHOWN IN BRACKETS ()		S.H.	GRADE
COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE - 9 Credits Required				
COMM	121	Fundamentals of Public Speaking - (None)	3	
ENGL	150	English 1 - (None)	3	
ENGL	250	English 2 - (ENGL 150 or equivalent)	3	
SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING - 3-4 Credits Required				
Select one course from the following subject areas: ASTR, BIOL, CHEM, GEOG 111, GEOG 121, GEOL, PHSC, PHYS				
			3-4	
QUANTITATIVE SKILLS - 3 Credits Required				
MATH	115	Inter. Algebra - (MATH 110) - If MATH ACT score is 24 or higher, substitute a free elective.	3	
CULTURAL ENRICHMENT - 3 Credits Required				
Select one course from the following subject areas: ARTS, FREN, GERM, HIST, HUMN (except 217), LITR, MUSI, SPAN, THTR				
			3	
SOCIAL AWARENESS - 3 Credits Required				
Select one course from the following subject areas: ANTH, ECON, GEOG (except 111 & 121), PLSC, PSYC, SOCY, SSCI				
			3	
LEGAL ASSISTANT MAJOR - 22 Credits Required				
LLAW	160	Law in the United States 1 - (Legal assisting students only)	3	
LLAW	161	Law in the United States 2 - (LLAW 160)	4	
LLAW	251	Criminal Law and Procedures - (LLAW 160)	3	
LLAW	260	Real Estate Law - (LLAW 161)	3	
LLAW	261	Probate and Estate Planning - (LLAW 260)	3	
LLAW	280	Civil Litigation - (LLAW 161)	4	
LLAW		LLAW 253 Ad. Legal Research/Writing or LLAW 291 Practice Studies - (Both require LLAW 280)	2	
RELATED COURSES - 21 Credits Required				
ACCT	201	Principles of Accounting 1 - (MATH 110 with a grade of C- or better)	3	
BLAW	321	Contracts and Sales - (None)	3	
ISYS	105	Microcomputer Applications - (None) - Turns into free elective with proficiency.	3	
		Elective - If pursuing a BS degree in bus., you should take gen. ed. or bus. core requirements.	3	
		Elective - If pursuing a BS degree in bus., you should take gen. ed. or bus. core requirements.	3	
		Elective - If pursuing a BS degree in bus., you should take gen. ed. or bus. core requirements.	3	
		Elective - If pursuing a BS degree in bus., you should take gen. ed. or bus. core requirements.	3	
NOTICE REGARDING WITHDRAWAL, RE-ADMISSION AND INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES				
Students who return to the university after an interrupted enrollment (not including summer semester) must normally meet the requirements of the curriculum which are in effect at the time of their return, not the requirements which were in effect when they were originally admitted.				

NOTE: A 2.00 GPA is required for the major and a 2.00 cumulative GPA is required for completion of the Legal Assistant degree.

**Ferris State University - College of Business
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN BUSINESS**

**BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION with an AAS in LEGAL ASSISTING
128/129 Credits**

NAME: _____ **SS#:** _____

REQUIRED	COURSE TITLE - PREREQUISITES SHOWN IN BRACKETS ()	S.H.	GRADE	G.P.
----------	--	------	-------	------

COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE-- 15 Credits Required

COMM	121	Fundamentals of Public Speaking - (None)	3		
COMM		Select one of the following: COMM 221, 251 or 322 - (COMM 121 or equivalent)	3		
ENGL	150	English 1 - (None)	3		
ENGL	250	English 2 - (ENGL 150 or equivalent)	3		
ENGL	325	Advanced Writing For Business- (Engl 250)	3		

SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING -- 7/8 Credits Required

Select two courses from the following subject areas (one must be a lab course):

ASTR, BIOL, CHEM, GEOG 111, GEOG 121, GEOL, PHSC, PHYS

		Lab Science Elective	4		
		Science Elective	3/4		

QUANTITATIVE SKILLS - - 3 Credits Required

MATH	115	Inter. Algebra - (MATH 110) - If MATH ACT is 24 or above, substitute a free elective.	3		
------	-----	---	---	--	--

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT - - 9 Credits Required

Select three courses from the following subject areas, including one at the 200 level or above.

ARCH 244, ARTH, ARTS, COMM 231, ENGL 322, FREN, GERM, HIST, HUMN, LITR, MUSI, SPAN, THTR

		Cultural Enrichment Elective	3		
		Cultural Enrichment Elective	3		
		Cultural Enrichment Elective at the 200/300/400 level.	3		

SOCIAL AWARENESS -- 9 Credits Required

ECON	221	Principles of Economics 1 - (MATH 110 or proficiency)	3		
ECON	222	Principles of Economics 2 - (ECON 221)	3		
PLSC		Select one of the following: PLSC 323, 331, 341 - (None)	3		

General Education Electives - 6 Credits Required

		General Education Elective - See your advisor for assistance	3		
		General Education Elective - See your advisor for assistance	3		

NOTICE REGARDING WITHDRAWAL, RE-ADMISSION AND INTERRUPTION OF STUDIES
Students who return to the university after an interrupted enrollment (not including summer semester) must normally meet the requirements of the curriculum which are in effect at the time of their return, not the requirements which were in effect when they were originally admitted.

NOTE: A 2.00 cumulative GPA is required for the completion of these degrees.

Ferris State University - College of Business
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION with an AAS in LEGAL ASSISTING

REQUIRED		COURSE TITLE - PREREQUISITES SHOWN IN BRACKETS ()	S.H.	GRADE	GR.	J.
MAJORS						
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (BS) - 24 Credits Required						
ACCT	305/321	Intermediate Accounting Concepts or Cost Accounting	3			
FINC		FINC Elective 300 level or higher-Prior approval of advisor required	3			
INTB	310	International Business Systems (ECON 221)-G	3			
ISYS	200	Database Design & Implementation (ISYS 105 or course competency)	3			
MGMT	302	Organizational Behavior (MGMT 301 or instructor consent)	3			
MGMT	373	Human Resource Management (Junior Standing or instructor consent)	3			
MGMT	447	Business Ethics & Social Responsibility (Senior Standing)	3			
MGMT	488	Advanced Management Cases & Problems (FINC 322, MGMT 370 & MKTG 321)	3			
LEGAL ASSISTING (AAS) - 22 Credits Required						
LLAW	160	Law in the United States 1 (Legal Assisting Students Only)	3			
LLAW	161	Law in the United States 1 (LLAW 160)	4			
LLAW	251	Criminal Law & Procedures (LLAW 160)	3			
LLAW	260	Real Estate Law (LLAW 161)	3			
LLAW	261	Probate & Estate Planning (LLAW 260)	3			
LLAW	280	Civil Litigation (LLAW 161)	4			
LLAW		LLAW 253 Ad.Legal Research/Writing or LLAW 291 Practice Studies (LLAW 280)	2			
BUSINESS CORE-- 30 Credits Required						
ACCT	201	Principles of Accounting 1 - (MATH 110 with a grade of C- or better)	3			
ACCT	202	Principles of Accounting 2 - (ACCT 201 with a grade of C- or better)	3			
BLAW	321	Contracts and Sales (none)	3			
BUSN	499	Interdisp Intergrating Exper (Finc 322, ISYS 321, MGMT 370 & MKTG 321)	3			
FINC	322	Financial Management 1 (ACCT 202, MATH 115 or 116)	3			
ISYS	321	Business Information Systems (ACCT 202, MGMT 301, MKTG 321 & BLAW 321)	3			
MGMT	301	Applied Management (Junior Standing or Instructor consent)	3			
MGMT	370	Quality/Operations Management (STQM 260)	3			
MKTG	321	Principles of Marketing (ECON 221)	3			
STQM	260	Introduction to Statistics (MATH 115, 116 or 117)	3			
ADDITIONAL - 3 Credits Required						
ISYS	105	Microcomputer Appl. or Proficiency - (None - With proficiency, credits are waived)	3			

8/27/01

(G) Meets Global Consciousness Requirement

NOTE 1: A 2.00 GPA is required for both the majors and business core.
2: Upon successful completion of the requirements both the AAS in Legal Assisting and the BS in Business Administration will be granted.

AUTHORITY: PL 101-392
COMPLETION: Voluntary (Consideration for funding will be possible only if form is returned).

Michigan Department of Education
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SERVICES UNIT
 PO Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48909

Direct Questions regarding this form to the Community College Services Unit at (517) 335-0404.

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE SUMMARY REPORT
 FOR SELF-STUDY EVALUATION OF OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS
 July 1, 1998 through June 30, 1999**

SUBMITTING EDUCATIONAL AGENCY	College Ferris State University		
	Contact Person Thomas Oldfield		
	Title Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs		
	Telephone 231-591-2553	Fax 231-591-3592	E-Mail thomas.e.oldfield@ferris.edu

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Complete this Summary Report using the form provided for EACH occupational program to be reviewed according to the college evaluation schedule. Exception: In special circumstances similar programs may be evaluated together, however separate demographic pages (1 and 2 of 6) must be completed for each program. Submit it as the program evaluation is completed, but no later than June 30, 1999.

A complete copy of the total evaluation document for EACH program must be kept on file at the college. This document may be requested at a later date for state or federal audit purposes. Specific definitions, guidelines, program components, and reporting requirements related to this Summary Report are found in Section 5.0 of the Dean's Guide to Federally Reimbursed Community College Occupational and Applied Technology Education Programs.

PROGRAM NAME Legal Assistant
CIP CODE 22.0103 PIN 0027

PART I. SUMMARY REPORT FORMAT

The following data and comments are recorded to summarize the results of the college Self-Study Evaluation. Refer to Section 20, Community College Data Dictionary 1995-96 for definitions.

A. PROGRAM ENROLLMENT (Previous Three-Year Figures)

YEAR	UNDUPLICATED HEADCOUNT	STUDENT CREDIT HOURS FOR SPECIALTY COURSES	STUDENT CONTACT HOURS
96/97	26	267	4005
97/98	29	242	3630
98/99	30	287	4305

B. PROGRAM GRADUATES (Previous Three-Year Figures)

YEAR	DEGREES CONFERRED
96/97	10
97/98	9
98/99	4

C. POSITIVE PLACEMENT OF DEGREES CONFERRED (Previous Three-year Figures)

YEAR	PLACEMENT	HEADCOUNT	WAGE PER HOUR (\$.xx)
1996-7	Related Employment	5	\$ N/A
	Unrelated Employment		\$
	Military/Continuing Education*	3	\$
	Related Employment	3	\$
	Unrelated Employment	1	\$
	Military/Continuing Education*	5	\$
	Related Employment	1	\$
	Unrelated Employment		\$
	Military/Continuing Education*	3	\$

*If a student is employed and attending school, default to report the student as employed.

C-1. SUMMARY OF EVALUATION PERCEPTIONS BY ADMINISTRATORS AND FACULTY

COMMENTS:

**Number of Administrators
and Faculty Participating: [2]**

The faculty rated all areas covered by the survey acceptable to excellent with the exception of program promotion, support staff, and capital budget outlay.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Assure that faculty have at least one student assistant to help with clerical work. Legal Assistant Resource lab that has computers and software for program needs to be upgraded. Present computers cannot run some legal software. Work with admissions to ensure promotion of the program.

C-2. SUMMARY OF EVALUATION PERCEPTIONS BY STUDENTS

COMMENTS:

**Number of Students
Participating: [20]**

Students rated all areas covered by the survey either good or excellent with the exception of the questions relating to instructional equipment, which received a rating of acceptable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Update the Legal Assistant Resource Lab with new computers.

C-3. SUMMARY OF EVALUATION PERCEPTIONS BY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

COMMENTS:

**Number of Advisory Committee
Members Participating: [4]**

The advisory committee rated all areas good or excellent with the exception of the follow-up studies of graduates and equipment, which received ratings of acceptable.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Update the Legal Assistant Resource Lab with new computers.
Develop an effective means to remain in communication with graduates to obtain current information on employment status.

D. COMMUNITY COLLEGE ACTION PLAN

(Include comments on goals and objectives, resources and timelines. Use additional sheets if necessary. See Section 3.2 for Review Criteria)

The mission of the Legal Assistant Program is to equip students with both the technical and human skills necessary to function as Legal Assistants or in similar law related occupations. The curriculum allows the students to continue their education by integrating into Bachelor degree programs at Ferris. Future objectives include:

1. More frequent advisory board meetings. (Twice a year rather than once a year.) Enlist advisory board in recruiting activities.
2. Maintaining American Bar Association approval. They should be conducting a site visit during the coming academic year.
3. Replacing the computers in the Legal Assistant Resource Lab and continue to update legal software.
4. Continue working with the pre-law and Public Administration programs to recruit students.
5. Work with the university in developing an e-mail system for keeping in touch with graduates.

NOTE: THIS DOES NOT CONSTITUTE THE FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT OR THE FINAL EXPENDITURE REPORT FOR THE EVALUATION ACTIVITY.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the information submitted on this report is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.

PROJECT EVALUATOR _____ DATE _____
(Signature)

OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION
CONTACT PERSON _____ DATE _____
(Signature)

ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW: 2000

Program/Department: MGMT Dept: Legal Assistant (A.A.S.) Date Submitted: 12/1/00

Dean: James Maas

Please provide the following information:

Enrollment

	Fall 1996	Fall 1997	Fall 1998	Fall 1999	Fall 2000
Tenure Track FTE	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.08	N/A
Overload/Supplemental FTEF					
Adjunct/Clinical FTEF (unpaid)					
Enrollment on-campus*	26	29	30	37	21
Freshman					
Sophomore					
Junior					
Senior					
Masters					
Doctoral					
Pre-Professional Students					
Enrollment off-campus*					
Traverse City					
Grand Rapids					
Southwest					
Southeast					

*Use official count (7-day)

If there has been a change in enrollment, explain why:

Capacity:

Estimate program capacity considering current number of faculty, classroom/laboratory capacity, current equipment, and current levels of S&E. 60 students

What factors limit capacity? All of the above.

What factors limit program capacity? All of the above.

Financial (See Management Department)

Expenditures*	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00
Supply & Expense					
Equipment					
Voc. Ed. Funds					
General Fund					
In-Kind					
Non-General Fund					
Revenues					
Net Clinic Revenue					
Scholarship Donations					
Gifts, Grants & Cash Donations					
Endowment Earnings					
Institute Programs/Services					

*Use end of fiscal year expenditures.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW: 2000

Other

	AY 95/96	AY 96/97	AY 97/98	AY 98/99	AY 99/00
Number of Graduates* - Total	17	10	9	4	8
- On campus					
- Off campus					
Placement of Graduates					2
Average Starting Salary					
Productivity - Academic Year Average	237.4	175.6	152.4	220.7	317.8
- Summer					
Summer Enrollment	5	8	4	8	5

* Use total for full year (S, F, W)

1. a) Areas of Strength:

- Approved by the American Bar Association
- Excellent legal collection in library and Lexis-Nexis available in the library in the College of Business
- Faculty
- New computer lab and dedicated teaching area in the College of Business
- Curriculum allows students to attain a B.S. in various business degrees in two more years

b) Areas of Concern and Proposed Action to Address Them:

- Lack of resources for software and continuous education of faculty
- Need for stronger internship program
- Enrollment

2. Future goals (please give time frame)

- Integration of computers in all legal specialty courses (continuous)
- Attracted qualified students (continuous)
- More assistance with internships (continuous)

3. Other Recommendations:

- Continue support of program and faculty in the program by following suggestions of ABA evaluation team

4. Does the program have an advisory committee? Yes

- a) If yes, when did it last meet? October 2000
- b) If no, why not? By what other means do faculty receive advice from employers and outside professionals?
- c) When were new members last appointed? Fall 2000
- d) Are there non-alumni/ae on the committee? How many? Four-non-alumni

5. Does the program have an internship or other cooperative or experiential learning course? Yes

- a) If yes, is the internship required or recommended? Strongly recommended
- b) If no, what is the reason for not requiring such an experience?

ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW: 2000

6. Does the program offer courses through the web? No

- a) Please list the web-based (fully delivered through the internet) courses the program offered last year?
- b) Please list the web-assisted (e.g., WebCT) courses the program offered last year.

7. Is this a program with state, regional, and/or national recognition? Yes

- a) For what special strengths or characteristics is it recognized? Approved by the ABA
- b) If not, what are some strategies that could lead to recognition?

Form Completed by John C. Valas, Management Department Chair
Name and Title

Reviewed by Dean _____
Date



FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

TO: Selected graduates of the FSU Legal Assistant Program

FROM: Professor John Kane & Professor John Vermeer, Ferris State University

SUBJECT: Graduate and Employer Surveys

DATE: October 27, 1998

We need your help. Periodically we survey graduates of the Legal Assistant Program to gather information that will help us to better prepare students in the future. This fall we are sending surveys to about 10% of the program graduates. You are among the lucky few. Congratulations.

We ask you to do two things.

First, complete the graduate survey and return it in the enclosed envelope. If you lose the envelope, send it to us at the **FSU College of Business, 119 South Street, Big Rapids, MI 49307**. Better yet, fax it to us at **616-592-3548**.

Second, help us obtain feedback from employers of legal assistants. We need employer surveys to be completed by anyone who supervises or is instrumental in hiring legal assistants. It is not necessary that the legal assistant they supervise be a FSU graduate. Feel free to make copies of the enclosed survey if you have more than one supervisor who is willing to complete the form. Send the survey with the graduate survey or fax it to the above address.

Your cooperation is appreciated. If you have any questions, please give us a call at 616-592-2416. You may also send e-mail to us at the addresses listed below. We would like to hear from you.

Thank you for your assistance with these surveys.

Kanej@ferris.edu

Vermeerj@ferris.edu

14. Briefly describe the computer skills you use in your position:

14a. List the specific computer software that is used in your office. (E.g. Word, Excel, Lotus, etc.) _____

15. Do you have Westlaw or Lexus available in your office? ____ Yes? ____ No?

16. The objective of the Legal Assistant Program at Ferris State University is to prepare students to become competent Legal Assistants by providing them with a curriculum that emphasizes communication skills and a strong liberal arts background along with the more traditional legal assistant classes. Based on your experiences, rate, using the scale below, the importance of requiring classes in the listed areas

1. Very Important
2. Important
3. Moderately Important
4. Of Little Importance
5. Eliminate

• Math	1	2	3	4	5
• Accounting	1	2	3	4	5
• Speech	1	2	3	4	5
• English & Communication	1	2	3	4	5
• Computer Skills	1	2	3	4	5
• Legal Research & Writing	1	2	3	4	5
• Civil Litigation	1	2	3	4	5
• Drafting Legal Documents	1	2	3	4	5
• Internship	1	2	3	4	5

17. Do you feel your education adequately prepared you for entry into the Legal Assistant profession? ____ Yes ____ No (If no, please explain)

18. How do you feel the quality of the Ferris Legal Assistant Program compares with the quality of other Legal Assistant Programs? ____ Much Better, ____ About the Same, ____ Worse, ____ Don't Know

19. How advantageous is it to have a Bachelor's degree in order to obtain employment as a Legal Assistant? ____ Very Important, ____ Important, ____ No Difference, ____ A Disadvantage

20. Do you feel a Bachelor's degree is beneficial in obtaining advancement in the Legal Assistant profession? ___ Very Important, ___ Important, ___ No Difference, ___ A Disadvantage

21. What recommendations do you have for improving the Ferris State University Legal Assistant Program? _____

QUESTIONS 22 THROUGH 25 -- TO BE ANSWERED BY GRADUATES WHO ARE NOT PRESENTLY WORKING AS LEGAL ASSISTANTS

22. Has your Legal Assistant education benefited you in your current position? ___ Yes ___ No
Explain: _____

23. Do you believe your Legal Assistant education was a positive factor in your employer's decision to hire you? ___ Yes ___ No ___ Don't know

24. What are the reasons you are not presently working as a Legal Assistant?

25. Have you worked as a Legal Assistant at any time since graduating from Ferris State University? ___ Yes, (please state dates of employment _____)
___ No **If you answered yes, please complete questions 16 through 21.**

Thank you for taking time to complete this survey. Please write any further comments on the back of this page and return the survey in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope or fax the survey to me at (616) 592-3548 or mail to: *Professor John Kane, FSU College of Business, Room 124, 119 South Street, Big Rapids, MI 49307-2284*

Graduate Summary Survey December, 1998

Following is a summary of the survey of Legal Assistant Graduates done in October and November of 1998. The survey was sent to graduates of the Legal Assistant Program who graduated in 1983, 1988, 1993, and 1996. In total, 66 surveys were mailed to graduates and 18 completed surveys were returned.

Job Title of Graduates

Paralegal	1
Victim Rights Coordinator	1
Litigation Assistant	1
Legal Assistant	1
Supervisor	1
Administrative Secretary	1
Production Worker	1
Office Manager	1
President -- Owner	1
Admissions Assistant	1
Clinical Research Associate	1
Manager of Temporary Staffing	1
Inside Sales Supervisor	1
No Title Indicated	1
Associate Attorney	1
Attorney	1
Lawyer	1
Personal Lines Underwriter	1

Bachelor Degree Earned

Business	3
None	6
Education	1
Health Information Management	1
Business Administration	5
Science	1
Business Management	1

Graduate Degree Earned

Juris Doctor	3
--------------	---

Salary Range of those graduates working in the legal field.

Starting Salary: \$12,000 - \$27,000

Ending Salary: \$25,000 - \$39,500 *

* One returned survey indicated that a percent of salary was paid as a bonus.

Skills That Need Improvement.

More computer research	1
Longer, in-depth internship	1
More discovery practice	1
Better communication skills	1
More exposure to legal practice	1

Fringe Benefits Received

Medical	3
Dental	3
Pension	3
Life Insurance	3
Bonus	3
Paid Vacation	3
Vision Care	2
Dependent Care Reimbursement	1
On-Site Child Care	1
Paid Sick Leave	2
Paid Personal/Bereavement Leave	1
401k with matching funds	2

Rate the importance of requiring classes in the listed areas. The scale is as follows:

1. Very Important
2. Important
3. Moderately Important
4. Of Little Importance
5. Eliminate

	Response Average
• Math	2.6
• Accounting	3.3
• Speech	1.5
• English and Communication	1.25
• Computer Skills	1.0
• Legal Research & Writing	1.0
• Civil Litigation	1.5
• Drafting Legal Documents	1.75
• Internship	1.5

Graduate Survey Summary 1997

Following is a summary of the survey of Legal Assistant Graduates done in the summer of 1997. This survey was limited to graduates of the Legal Assistant Program who also received BS degrees in a program in the Management Department. Graduates who received surveys were those that received their BS degrees two, five, ten or fifteen years ago.

Job Title of Graduates

Legal Assistant	3
Paralegal	1
Attorney	1
Assistant Superintendent	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Owner	2
Sales Representative	1
Office Administrator	1
Accountant	1
Teacher	1
Underwriting Representative	1
Real Estate Sales Broker	1
Senior Loan Officer	1
Area Parts Manager	1
Homemaker	1

Bachelor Degree Earned

Business Administration	14
Business Management	1
Computer Information Systems Management	1
International Business	1

Minor

Business Administration	1
Management	2
Marketing	1
Computer Information Systems Management	1

Graduate Degree Earned

Computer Information Systems (Masters Degree)	1
Juris Doctor	1

Present Salary Compared to Starting Salary

Year of graduation

1996 -	
1994 – Three times more	1
1993 – Same 1; Twice as much	1
1992 – Twice as much	3
One and a half more	1
Four times more	1
Three times more	1
1987 – Four times more	1
Twice as much	3
1983 – Twice as much	1
1982 – Three times more	2
Ten times more	1

What skills need strengthening?

Problem-solving skills	4
Foreign Language Skills	4
Accounting Skills	5
Finance Skills	8
Statistics Skills	1
Computer Skills	11
Management Skills	1
Interpersonal Skills	4
Verbal Communication Skills	6
Writing Skills	4

Favorite Business Class

Production Management	1
Small Business Management	1
Statistics	1
Policy	3
Accounting	1
Business Management	2
Management Courses	1
Business Law	1
Contracts and Sales	1
Computer Science	1
Law Courses	1
Prof. Smith's Classes	1
Legal Research & Writing	1
Personal Management	1

**MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
EXIT SURVEY**

Name: _____ Major: _____ Date _____

ENTERING YOUR PROGRAM:

How did you enter your major at Ferris State University? (Circle your response)

- a. As a freshman
- b. As a transfer from another college or university (non-degree)
- c. With an associate's degree from Ferris State University
- d. With an associate's degree from another college or university
- e. From another program at Ferris State University
- f. Other: _____

EMPLOYMENT PLANS:

1. Have you secured a job that reflects the completion of your degree? ___ Yes ___ No
 - a. If the answer to 1 is "yes," is this position with your current employer? ___ Yes ___ No
 - b. If the answer to 1 is "no", have you had a job offer that you are presently considering? ___ Yes ___ No
 - (1) If the answer to (b) is "yes," do you plan to stay with your present employer? ___ Yes ___ No
 - (2) If the answer to (b) is "no," do you plan to stay with your present employer? ___ Yes ___ No
2. If you have not secured a job that reflects the completion of your degree, what are your job search plans?
3. Did you use the services of the Placement Office in your job search? ___ Yes ___ No
4. If you have secured a job that reflects the completion of your degree, what is the title of the position?

EVALUATION OF YOUR DEGREE PROGRAM:

On a scale of 1 (Poor) to 5 (Outstanding), how do you rate your business degree in terms of (circle your response):

- a. preparation for a career? 1 2 3 4 5
- b. intellectual challenge? 1 2 3 4 5

What single business course do you feel will be most beneficial to you in your business career?

Why? _____

What single business course do you feel will be least beneficial to you in your business career?

Why? _____

**Results Of 1994 Legal Assistant Survey
Ferris State University**

In November of 1994, 65 surveys were mailed to a representative group of legal assistants who graduated between 1984 and 1994. 36 responses were received. Following are the results.

1. Graduates with Associates Degree

15 students have an Associates Degree.

2. Graduates with a Bachelors Degree

24 graduates have a Bachelors Degree.

20 received their Bachelors Degree from FSU.

4 received their Bachelors Degree from other universities.

3. Graduates with other degrees

1 graduate with a Masters Degree.

2 graduates with a J. D. Degree.

4. Job Titles - Law related

14 Legal Assistants

1 Legal Secretary

1 Case Developer

1 Legal Advocate

1 Law Clerk

2 Attorneys

20 Total

13 graduates were in non-law related occupations.

3 graduates were not working.

The following questions were asked of graduates presently employed as Legal Assistants.

5. Area of practice

7 Civil Litigation

3 Probate

1 Corporate

2 Criminal

3 Family Law

4 General Practice

6. Average hourly billing rate

\$55.00

7. Average 1994 salary for Legal Assistants

\$26,337 Legal Assistants

8. Fringe benefits for Legal Assistants

14 Medical 8 Dental 8 Pension
10 Life Insurance 12 Paid Vacation
7 Bonus

Other benefits listed included: optical, education, expense account, maternity and family leave time, deferred compensation.

9. How helpful was ABA approval in acquiring your position?

7 Very Helpful
2 Somewhat Helpful
3 Did Not Matter
3 Don't Know
5 No Response

10. Do you have Westlaw or Lexis available in your office?

50% Yes
50% No

In addition to the Legal Assistants, one Legal Secretary and one Law Clerk had access to Westlaw or Lexis.

11. Graduates who are presently working as Legal Assistants and graduates who have worked as Legal Assistants since their graduation were asked to evaluate the following areas of study as:

1. Very Important
2. Important
3. Moderately Important
4. Of Little Importance
5. Eliminate

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
Business Math	2	5	8	3	2
Accounting	2	8	7	2	1
Speech	11	3	2	3	1
English & Communications	16	3	0	0	1
Computer Skills	17	2	0	0	1
Legal Research & Writing	12	5	2	1	0
Civil Litigation	11	8	1	0	0
Criminal Litigation	6	9	2	3	0
Drafting Legal Documents	17	1	1	1	0
Investigative Techniques	10	5	4	1	0
Internship	13	4	2	0	1
Social Sciences (Pol. Sci., Soc, Psych.)	1	4	11	4	0

20 graduates participated in this section of the survey out of the 36 responses that we received.

12. Did your education adequately prepare you for entry into the Legal Assistant Profession?

- 17 Yes
- 3 No

13. How do you feel the quality of the Ferris Legal Assistant Program compares with the quality of other Legal Assistant Programs?

- 8 Much Better
- 2 About The Same
- 0 Worse
- 10 Don't Know

14. How advantageous is it to have a Bachelors Degree in order to obtain employment as a Legal Assistant?

- 7 Very Important
- 7 Important
- 4 No Difference
- 0 A Disadvantage
- 2 Graduates did not respond to this question.

15. Do you feel a Bachelors Degree is beneficial in obtaining advancement in the Legal Assistant Profession?

- 9 Very Important
- 7 Important
- 4 No Difference
- 2 Graduates did not respond to this question.

Questions 16 and 17 were answered by graduates who are not presently working as Legal Assistants.

16. Do you believe your Legal Assistant education was a positive factor in your employer's decision to hire you?

- 14 Yes
- 5 No
- 2 Don't Know

17. Have you worked as a Legal Assistant at any time since graduating from Ferris?

- 11 Yes
- 5 No
- 6 No Response

Other Interesting Data

The most commonly used computer software programs were:

Word Perfect
Lotus\Quattro Pro

The most frequently mentioned ideas for improving the Ferris Legal Assistant Program, were:

Longer and Mandatory Internship
More Document Drafting
More Computer Skills
More Factual Summary Writing

And the Survey Says...

By Linda A. Potter, CLA

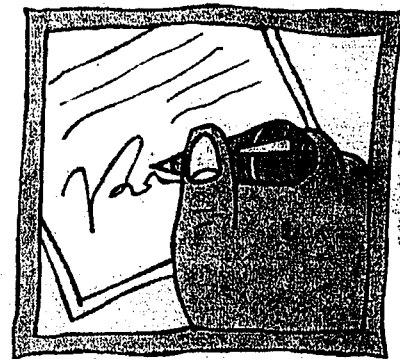
In 1998, the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Legal Assistants (ABA) conducted a survey of ABA members regarding legal assistant utilization. One of the purposes of the study was to determine whether most firms utilize legal assistants. The survey also addressed issues such as responsibilities delegated to legal assistants, skills evaluation, billable rates of legal assistants and educational requirements. The statistics were reduced to a written report and I found the results very informative. The scope of the report is too broad for this article; however, I do want to share some of the information that I found most interesting.

The committee sent a questionnaire to 2230 ABA members that were identified as private practitioners. There were 645 responses. The ABA admits that the statistics presented in the report may be faulty, in part because of an alleged under representation of small firms and sole practitioners. However, the authors of the report did not feel that the small number of responses skewed the statistics to make them unreliable. As I was reviewing the report I noticed that small firms (*i.e.*, 1-3 attorneys) represented over one-third of the respondents. Another 145 responses were attributed to firms with 4-10 lawyers.

Of the 645 attorneys who responded, 425 employ legal assistants; 220 (or approximately one-third) do not employ legal assistants. Almost one half (44.1%) of the firms/attorneys who do not hire legal assistants rely on secretarial staff members to provide paralegal support; another 13.2% delegated paralegal responsibilities to law clerks and/or associates. To me this indicates that many attorneys are unaware of the advantages of utilizing experienced, educated legal assistants to handle substantive matters that would otherwise require an attorney. The results also help explain the proliferation of hybrid legal support professional (*i.e.* legal secretary/legal assistant) jobs in the face of a declining number of paralegal positions in many regions of the country.

Of the firms who do utilize legal assistants, those with practices emphasizing business/corporate law, probate/estate planning and general litigation reported the highest utilization rates. Firms that practice family law, bankruptcy and real estate also reported higher than average utilization of legal assistants.

The survey questioned firms about general responsibilities delegated to legal assistants. At least 70% of the responding firms regularly utilize legal assistants to maintain client files, draft correspondence and perform factual research. Other responsibilities that are delegated to paralegals in a higher percentage (60%-70%) of firms are: maintaining calendars and tickler systems, performing factual investigation, filing documents with appropriate courts, drafting legal documents and acting as a liaison with clients. Less than one-third of the firms who employ legal assistants utilize these individuals to conduct legal research or interview clients. These percentages vary slightly across the various substantive practice areas, however it appears performing legal research and interviewing are less likely to be delegated to a legal assistant in most practice areas.



Many of the firms responding to the survey bill clients for legal assistant's time. In nearly 80% of the smaller firms the billable rate of the paralegal's time is less than 50% of an attorney with comparable experience. However, in larger firms the billable rate tends to be at least 50% or more of the billable rate of an attorney with comparable experience. Less than 2% of the responding firms bill out paralegal time at the same rate as an associate attorney.

Although responsibilities vary from one firm to another and across practice areas, there are some skills that are considered as requisite for all legal assistants. Respondents to the survey were asked to rate eleven pre-identified skills on a scale of 1 to 5, with a rating of 1 being very important and a 5 being not important at all. Following is a list of the skills in order of importance (the number in parenthesis indicates the average rating): Organizational Skills (1.23); Oral Communication Skills (1.40); Written Communication Skills (1.41); Interpersonal Skills (1.50); Computer Literacy (1.56); Knowledge of a Particular Area of Law (2.07); Coordination of Legal

Procedural function (2.43); Drafting of Legal Documents and Related Correspondence (2.76); Law Office Administration (3.05); Conducting Legal Research (3.41); and Preparing Legal Memoranda (3.61).

The education v. experience debate is one that has strong feelings on both sides and this was addressed in the survey. Without filtering for firm size, 72.5% of firms prefer to hire legal assistants with prior relevant work experience. When adjusting for firm size, small firms are more likely to require experience (87.6% of firms with 4-10 attorneys require relevant work experience) than large firms with 100 or more attorneys (53.7% of large firms require experience). However when asked about education, less than one-third of smaller firms (1-25) attorneys require a degree or a paralegal certificate. More than 60% of larger firms require paralegals to have a bachelors degree.

The information gathered in the ABA survey indicates several things about our profession. There is no such thing as the "average" paralegal; firm size and substantive practice area play a substantial role in determining how legal assistants are utilized; and the dividing line between legal assistants and legal secretaries is not as concrete as many of us would like to believe.

Note: If any one would like to read the report in its entirety, a copy can be purchased for \$25 from ABA's Division for Media Relations and Communication Services, 750 North Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611.

Linda A. Potter, CLA, is a Council Member-State Bar of Michigan, Legal Assistants Section; CLA Study Group Committee Chair-Legal Assistants Association of Michigan (LAAM). She is the owner of Superior Paralegal and Administrative Services in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

First Legal Assistant Survey conducted in Michigan

By JILL R. PACE
& SHELEY DEGRW

Keeping abreast of changes and trends in the legal job market is vital to the pursuit of a successful legal career. Therefore, it is with great enthusiasm that we report the findings of the first Legal Assistant (Paralegal) Survey conducted in Michigan.

The survey explored the trends in salaries, benefits, specialties, educational background, firm requirements and career goals of Legal Assistants throughout the state.

Four hundred ninety seven (497) legal assistants responded to the survey. Most of the respondents are well educated, with almost three-quarters (71%) holding a Bachelor's degree and 29% an Associate degree.

The majority are female (94%) and consider themselves "career legal assistants" (78%).

Only a small percentage of the legal assistants are certified by either of the two national legal assistant associations.

Seven percent (7%) of the legal assistants surveyed are Certified Legal Assistants by the National Association of Legal Assistants.

Less than 1% of respondents are PACE (Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam) Registered Paralegals by the National Federation of Paralegal Associations.

Hours

Billable Hour Requirements: Surprisingly, 68% of legal assistants reported having a minimum billable hours quota of less than 1400 hours annually.

The remainder of those surveyed indicated various billable requirements: 3% required over 1800 hours, 5% must bill between 1701 and 1800 hours, 2% face a quota of 1601 to 1700 hours, and 9% have a requirement of 1501 to 1600 hours.



Jill R. Pace

Only 12% have a quota of 1400 to 1500 hours per year.

Time Spent on Non-Billables: Approximately one-third (38%) of billing legal assistants spend less than 10% of their time on non-billable matters.

Thirty-one percent (31%) spend an average of 10-30% of their time doing non-billable tasks; 11% devote anywhere from 30-50% of their time on non-billable work, while only 1% spend between 50-70% of their time on non-billable items.

Of those surveyed, 18% of respondents spend over 70% of their time on non-billable tasks.

(Note: included in the 18% are legal assistants employed by corporations which typically do not track billables).

Hours Worked: The majority of legal assistants spend an average of 36-40 hours per week at work (48% of respondents).

Twenty-three percent reported an average workweek of 40-45 hours, while 11% average 45-50 hours per week.

Only 5% of legal assistants report working over 50 hours per week, and 1% report an average of a 55-hour workweek. The remaining 14% of all respondents work less than 35 hours per week.

Overtime: Although many



Sheley L. DeGraw

legal assistants work over 40 hours a week, only 38% of our respondents receive overtime pay for their additional hours worked each week. All others are treated as "Exempt" employees by their employers.

Benefits

Vacation: Over one-half of legal assistants are entitled to three or more weeks of vacation each year. Three weeks of vacation is common for 33% of legal assistants, while 26% receive 2 weeks. Twenty-two percent (22%) receive 4 weeks out of the office. A few (6%) receive only 1 week of vacation per year.

The remaining 13% have worked out other arrangements with their employers.

Raises: Almost all legal assistants (84%) receive an annual raise. In addition, most raises (64%) fall into the 3-5% range.

Job Market

Number of Jobs Held: Contrary to some employers' concern about a high turnover rate amongst legal assistants, our survey indicates that just over one-quarter of respondents (27%) have had only one legal employer in their career. Almost one-half of legal assistants (47%) reported holding two or

three jobs in the profession.

Twenty-eight percent (28%) have changed jobs four or more times.

It should be noted that 87% of respondents had at least four years of experience as a legal assistant.

Numbers of years in each job: Consistent with the above results, almost one out of every ten legal assistants (9%) stayed 15 or more years in their first job.

Thirty-one percent (31%) of respondents stayed in their first job from 5 to 14 years. Of those remaining we found the following: 21% of all respondents remained 3 to 4 years in their first position; 28% stayed 2 years; and 12% changed jobs within one year.

Job Satisfaction

A vast majority (78%) of respondents chose salary as the most critical factor in job satisfaction.

A distant second was benefits (44%). Flexible hours and the partner they reported to were important to 34% and 33% of respondents respectively.

Only five percent or less of those responding identified bonus and prestige as important to job satisfaction.

Sixty-six percent (66%) of those surveyed identified "other" things as being important in ensuring job satisfaction.

Those things included: environment, the people they worked with, the respect given to them by the attorneys, the type of legal work they were performing, and simply being able to enjoy their time at the office.

Salary

Finally, the answer we've all been waiting for...what are legal assistants earning these days?

The following table details the different salary ranges offered to most legal assistants

in Michigan:

Salary Range and % of Legal Assistants —

- \$20,000-\$25,000 - 7%
- \$25,000-\$30,000 - 12%
- \$30,000-\$35,000 - 21%
- \$35,000-\$40,000 - 23%
- \$40,000-\$50,000 - 25%
- \$50,000-\$60,000 - 11%
- Over \$60,000 - 2%

Bonus: Over one-half (59%) of all respondents receive a merit-based or discretionary bonus.

Thirty-three percent (33%) receive a formula or structured bonus.

Demographics

Legal assistants employed by law firms accounted for 59% of the respondents. Corporations employed 24% of the respondents. Seven percent (7%) of those surveyed work for government agencies, while 2% are freelance legal assistants.

Special thanks must be given to all who responded to our survey, as well as to the Legal Assistants Section of the State Bar of Michigan.

We also give thanks to the Legal Assistant Programs of Eastern Michigan University, Madonna University and Oakland University for their assistance.

Without everyone's cooperation, we never would have received such a high response rate.

For a more detailed copy of the survey results please contact the authors of this report at Special Counsel at (248) 593-6999 or e-mail the request to jill.pace@specialcounsel.com.

Included in the detailed results are salary levels linked to: type of employer, years of service, and practice area.

Jill R. Pace is the Executive Director of Special Counsel's Detroit Office. She practiced law for 15 years prior to entering

the legal placement profession.

She has worked with legal assistants for the past two and a half years and opened Special

Counsel's office in January 1999.

Sheley L. DeGraw was a Senior Associate with Kitch, Drutchas, Wagner DeNardis &

Valitutti P.C. for four years prior to becoming Special Counsel's Placement Director in 1999.




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FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Employer Survey for the Legal Assistant Program

1. What is your title or position with your organization? _____
 - Law firm or company with _____ attorneys.
 - Law department of a corporation.
 - Law department of a public agency. (Please Describe: _____)
 - Other _____
2. Number of Legal Assistants/Paralegals employed: _____
3. What are the minimum qualifications for entry level Legal Assistants in your organization? (Check all that apply.)
 - Associates Degree
 - Bachelors Degree
 - Experience as a Legal Assistant _____ years
 - Graduation from an American Bar Association approved program.
 - Other (Please specify): _____
4. In what areas of law do you employ Legal Assistants? (Check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/> Criminal
<input type="checkbox"/> Probate	<input type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcy
<input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Property	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate
<input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate	<input type="checkbox"/> Family
<input type="checkbox"/> Civil Litigation	<input type="checkbox"/> Taxation
<input type="checkbox"/> Labor	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify.) _____	
5. What is the salary range for the Legal Assistants in your organization? \$ _____ /yr. To \$ _____ /yr. Are additional benefits provided? (Check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/> Health Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Paid Vacation
<input type="checkbox"/> Dental Insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Retirement
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	

Employer Survey of Legal Assistant Graduate Ferris State University

Enclosed in each graduate survey sent was an “**Employer Survey for the Legal Assistant Program**”. Each graduate was asked to forward this survey to his or her supervisor or employer. Eleven of these surveys were returned.

Title or Position of Person Completing Survey

Attorney	7
Counsel	2
Assistant Prosecutor	1
Legal Assistant Coordinator	1

Minimum Qualifications for entry level Legal Assistants in organization.

Associates Degree	3
Bachelors Degree	3
Graduation from an ABA Accredited Program	5
High GPA	2

Areas of law where Legal Assistants are employed.

Probate	1
Real Estate	2
Civil Litigation	6
Criminal	1
Administrative – SSI Disability	2
Intellectual Property	4
Environmental	3
Labor	3
Bankruptcy	2
Corporate	3
Taxation	2
Financial Services	1
Advertising	1
Marketing	1
International	1
Product Litigation	1
Discovery	1
Family	1
Banking	1
Municipal Finance	1

Salary Range

\$19,000 - \$80,000

<u>Additional Benefits</u>	<u>No. of Firms Providing Benefit</u>
Health Insurance	9
Paid Vacation	9
Dental Insurance	7
Retirement	6
Profit Sharing	2
401k	2
Tuition Reimbursement	1
Personal Days	1
Paid Holidays	1
Life Insurance	2
Vision Insurance	1

<u>Non-legal skills most necessary</u>	<u>No. of Firms responding</u>
Computer Literacy	10
Interpersonal Skills	8
Management Skills	6
Verbal Communication Skills	10
Writing Skills	10
Problem Solving Skills	7
Organizational Skills	2
Analytical Skills	2
Accounting Skills	1
Finance Skills	1
Statistical Skills	1

Shortcomings of Legal Assistants now being hired.

Poor research skills
 Poor writing skills
 Lack of professionalism
 Lack of practical experience
 Unable to prioritize
 Unwilling to take additional responsibility
 Lack of confidence
 Fear of conflict
 Unable to exercise independent judgement
 Poor "people skills"
 Poor communication skills

What computer skills are expected?

Word

Word Perfect

Case Management software

All Microsoft Applications

Westlaw

Internet literacy

Online Research ability (competency: familiarity)

Database applications

Lexis

Nexis

Windows 95, 98

Other Comments

“Legal Assistants must be flexible in taking multiple tasks. They should be willing to go the extra mile. Dedication and a high quality work product are invaluable.”

“The Legal Assistants we hire all possess the requisite technical skills. Ability to prioritize work and formulate independent judgements seem to separate the exceptional from the merely satisfactory.”

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF
FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM

INSTRUCTIONS: Rate each item using the following guide:

- E = EXCELLENT - nearly ideal, top 5 to 10%;
- G = GOOD - a strong rating, top one third;
- A = ACCEPTABLE - average, the middle-third;
- BE = BELOW EXPECTATIONS - only fair, bottom one-third;
- P = POOR - seriously inadequate, bottom 5 to 10%
- DK = DON'T KNOW

A comment column has been provided if you wish to explain your rating.

Please Rate Each Item Below	E	G	A	BE	P	DK	Comments
1. Courses in the Legal Assistant Program are:							
▪ Available and conveniently located.	14	3	5				
▪ Based on realistic prerequisites.	14	5	3				
2. Written objectives for courses in your program:							
▪ Are available to students.	10	10	2				
▪ Describe what will be covered in the course.	10	10	2				
3. Teaching methods, procedures and course content:							
Meet your occupational needs, interests and objectives.	12	6	4				
▪ Provide practice for developing job skills.	12	6	2	1		1	
4. Related courses (such as English, Math, Accounting, Economics, etc.) are:							
▪ Pertinent to occupational instruction.	3	6	10	1		2	
▪ Current and meaningful to you.	3	8	9		2		
5. Work experience (internship) is:							
▪ Readily available at convenient locations.	2	2	3	2		13	
▪ Coordinated with faculty.	3	4	3	1		11	
▪ Considered by you to be a valuable introduction to a legal field.	9	3	4			6	
6. Career planning information or assistance:							
▪ Meets your needs and interests.	6	7	7			2	
▪ Helps you make career decisions and choices.	6	7	7			2	
7. Placement services are available to:							
Help you find employment opportunities.	4	6	3		1	7	
▪ Prepare you to apply for a job.	4	9	3		1	6	

**STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF
FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

Please Rate Each Item Below	E	G	A	BE	P	DK	Comments
8. Instructors in the program:							
▪ Know the subject matter and occupational requirements.	15	6	1				
▪ Are available to provide help when you need it.	14	6	1			1	
▪ Provide instruction so it is interesting and understandable.	14	6	2				
9. Instructional support services (such as tutoring, library resources) are:							
▪ Available to meet your needs and interests.	11	5	2		1	3	
▪ Available to all students on an equal basis.	11	6	1		1	3	
10. Instructional equipment is:							
▪ Current and representative of industry.	12	4	4		1	1	
▪ In sufficient quantity to avoid long delays in use.	7	8	4	2		1	
▪ Current and in good condition.	10	6	4		1	1	
11. Instructional materials (such as textbooks and reference books) are:							
▪ Available and conveniently located for use as needed.	11	7	3	1	1		
▪ Current and meaningful to the subject.	11	7	2	1	1		
▪ Not biased toward "traditional" sex roles.	8	9	2	1		1	
▪ Available at reasonable cost.	4	7	6	2	3		

**FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF
FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

INSTRUCTIONS: Rate each item using the following guide:

- E = EXCELLENT** - nearly ideal, top 5 to 10%:
G = GOOD - a strong rating, top one third:
A = ACCEPTABLE - average, the middle-third:
BE = BELOW EXPECTATIONS - only fair, bottom one-third:
P = POOR - seriously inadequate, bottom 5 to 10%
DK = DON'T KNOW

A comment column has been provided if you wish to explain your rating.

Please Rate Each Item Below	E	G	A	BE	P	DK	Comments
1. Participation in Development of Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> - Administrators and others involved in developing and revising the college plan for this occupational program seek and respond to faculty, student and community input. ▪ <i>Poor</i> - Development of the program does not take into consideration needs or requirements outside of the immediate programmatic needs. 	8	5	1			2	
2. Course Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> - Objectives have been developed for the courses in the legal assisting program and are used to plan and organize instruction. ▪ <i>Poor</i> - No objectives have been developed for the courses in the program. 	13	1				2	
3. Use of Information on Labor Market Needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> - Current data on labor market needs and emerging trends in the job market are used in developing and evaluating this program. ▪ <i>Poor</i> - Labor market data is not used in planning or evaluation. 	11	2				3	
4. Use of American Bar Association Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> - The ABA standards for approval are used in planning and evaluating this program and content of its courses. ▪ <i>Poor</i> - No recognition is given to ABA standards in planning and evaluating this program and content of its courses. 	13	2				1	
5. Use of Student Follow-Up Information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> - Current follow-up on graduates and those who do not complete the entire program are consistently used in evaluating this program. ▪ <i>Poor</i> - Student follow-up information has not been used in evaluating this program. 	2	5	4			5	
6. Relevance of Supportive Courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> - Applicable supportive courses (such as communications, computer usage, accounting, etc.) are relevant to program goals and current to the needs of students. ▪ <i>Poor</i> - Supportive course content reflects no planned approach to meeting needs of students in this program. 	7	8	1				

**FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF
FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

Please Rate Each Item Below	E	G	A	BE	P	DK	Comments
7. Provision for Work Experience/Cooperative Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> –Ample opportunities are provided for related work or co-op experience is available for students. ▪ <i>Poor</i> – Few opportunities are provided to students for related work or co-op experience. 	6	5				5	
8. Program Availability and Accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> –Students and potential students desiring enrollment in this program are identified through recruitment activities treated equally in enrollment selection, and not discouraged by unrealistic prerequisites. The program is readily available and accessible at convenient times and locations. ▪ <i>Poor</i> – The program is not available or accessible to most students seeking enrollment. Improper discriminatory selection procedures are practiced. 	5	5	3	1		2	
9. Efforts to Achieve a Bias Free Environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> –Emphasis is given to assuring that no illegal or improper bias (whether it be sex, race or other) occurs in this program. ▪ <i>Poor</i> – Improper bias appears to be the norm. 	14	1				1	
10. Provision for Program Advisement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> –Instructors in the program advise students on program and course selection. Registration procedures facilitate course selection and sequencing. ▪ <i>Poor</i> – Instructors make no provision for advising students on course and program selection. 	13	3					
11. Provision for Career Planning and Guidance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> –Students in this program have ready access to career planning and guidance services. ▪ <i>Poor</i> – Little or no provision is made for career planning and guidance services for students enrolled in this program. 	9	6	1				
12. Current and meaningful to the subject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> –Instructional Facilities and equipment meet the program objectives and student needs. ▪ <i>Poor</i> – Facilities and equipment for this program generally are restrictive, dysfunctional or overcrowded. 	12	2	1			1	
13. Use of Advisory Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> –The advisory committee for this program is active and representative of the occupation. ▪ <i>Poor</i> – The advisory committee for this program is not representative of the occupation and is not functional. 	11	2				3	
14. Perception of Students Who Go On for a B.S.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Excellent</i> –Legal assisting students going on for a Bachelors Degree are some of the better students in the College of Bus. ▪ <i>Poor</i> – Legal assisting students going for a Bachelors Degree are generally poor students. 	12	1				3	

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE PERCEPTIONS OF
FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

INSTRUCTIONS: Rate each item using the following guide:

- E = EXCELLENT** - nearly ideal, top 5 to 10%;
- G = GOOD** - a strong rating, top one third;
- A = ACCEPTABLE** - average, the middle-third;
- BE = BELOW EXPECTATIONS** - only fair, bottom one-third;
- P = POOR** - seriously inadequate, bottom 5 to 10%
- DK = DON'T KNOW**

A comment column has been provided if you wish to explain your rating.

Please Rate Each Item Below	E	G	A	BE	P	DK	Comments
1. Instructional program content and quality are:							
▪ Based on performance objectives that represent job skills and knowledge required for successful entry-level employment.	9					1	
▪ Designed to provide students with practical job application experience.	9	1					
▪ Periodically reviewed and revised to keep current with changing job practices and technology.	9	1					
2. Instructional equipment and library resources are:							
▪ Well maintained.	10						
▪ Current and representative of that used on the job.	7	2				1	
3. Instructional facilities:							
▪ Provide adequate lighting, ventilation, heating, power, and other utilities.	7	3					
▪ Allocate sufficient space to support quality instruction.	7	3					
▪ Meet essential health and safety standards.	7	3				1	
4. Placement:							
▪ Services are available to students completing the program.	2	3	2	1		2	
▪ Job opportunities exist for students completing the program or leaving with marketable skills.	7	2	1				
5. Follow-up studies on program completers and leavers							
(Students with marketable skills):							
▪ Demonstrate that students are prepared for entry-level employment.	5	4	1				
▪ Collect information on job success and failure of former students.	2	4	3			1	
▪ Provide information used to review and, where warranted, revise the program.	5	2	2			1	

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE PERCEPTIONS OF
FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY
LEGAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM**

Please answer the following:

1. What are the major strengths of the Legal Assistant Program?

Great research facilities
Dedicated, professional faculty members
Ability to obtain BS degree
Small Classrooms
ABA approved curriculum

2. What are the major needs for improvement in the Legal Assistant Program?

Recruitment of Students
Support Staff for Faculty
Release Time for Program Coordinator
Marketing of Program
Follow-up on Program Graduates
Internship and/or on the job training

3. Do you have additional comments or suggestions for the program or for utilization of the advisory committee? If so, please state.

Assist with marketing of program



Smart career decisions
start here

HOME	ABOUT US	PARTNERS	LINK TO US	PRIVACY	FEEDBACK
GENERAL OUTLOOK -Fastest Growing	WAGES & TRENDS	WHAT IT TAKES -Most Openings	STATE INFO -Largest Employment	JOBS EMPLOYERS	CAREER TRENDS -Declining Employment
					CAREER RESOURCES -High

Fastest Growing Occupations

Overall - Michigan

Listed below are the 25 occupations projected to grow the fastest during the 1998-2008 time period. Click on an occupation about it, including state data.

Occupation	Employment		Perce
	1998	2008	
Computer Engineers	8,900	17,900	
Systems Analysts, Electronic Data Processing	23,200	44,650	
Computer Support Specialists	11,550	21,950	
All Other Computer Scientists	3,350	5,900	
Electronic Pagination System Operators	850	1,450	
Data Base Administrators	2,150	3,400	
Laborers, Landscaping and Groundskeeping	13,300	19,900	
Paralegal Personnel	2,050	2,850	
Hand Packers and Packagers	46,850	64,300	
Respiratory Therapists	3,100	4,250	
Engineering, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences Managers	13,150	17,850	
Cardiology Technologists	1,000	1,350	
Amusement and Recreation Attendants	7,000	9,350	
Lawn Service Managers	1,750	2,350	
Painting, Coating, and Decorating Workers, Hand	2,050	2,700	
Electrical and Electronic Engineers	8,550	11,150	
Data Processing Equipment Repairers	1,400	1,800	
Medical Assistants	12,350	16,000	
Medical Records Technicians	2,600	3,350	
Adjustment Clerks	16,350	20,950	
Sales Agents, Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services	5,650	7,200	
Human Services Workers	13,750	17,500	
Opticians, Dispensing and Measuring	3,350	4,250	
Surveying and Mapping Technicians	1,800	2,300	
Bicycle Repairers	500	650	

* Note: The national average percent change is 14%.

Source: Michigan Department of Career Development



Smart career decision
start h

HOME	ABOUT US	PARTNERS	LINK TO US	PRIVACY	FEEDBACK
GENERAL OUTLOOK -Fastest Growing	WAGES & TRENDS	WHAT IT TAKES -Most Openings	STATE INFO -Largest Employment	JOBS EMPLOYERS	CAREER TOOLS -Declining Employment
					CAREER RESOURCES -High

Fastest Growing Occupations

Overall

Listed below are the 25 occupations projected to grow the fastest during the 1998-2008 time period. Click on an occupation about it, including state data.

Occupation	Employment		Perc
	1998	2008	
All Other Computer Scientists	97,500	212,100	
Computer Engineers	299,300	622,100	
Computer Support Specialists	429,300	868,700	
Systems Analysts, Electronic Data Processing	616,900	1,194,200	
Data Base Administrators	87,400	154,900	
Electronic Pagination System Operators	25,600	44,200	
Paralegal Personnel	136,000	220,400	
Medical Assistants	252,200	398,000	
Human Services Workers	268,400	409,900	
Physician Assistants	66,300	98,100	
Data Processing Equipment Repairers	79,300	116,600	
Residential Counselors	189,900	277,800	
Electronic Semiconductor Processors	63,400	92,000	
Engineering, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences Managers	326,200	468,000	
Medical Records Technicians	92,400	132,900	
Physical and Corrective Therapy Assistants and Aides	82,100	118,000	
Respiratory Therapists	86,400	123,200	
Dental Assistants	228,900	325,400	
Surgical Technologists and Technicians	54,000	76,600	
Dental Hygienists	143,300	201,400	
Sales Agents, Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services	303,100	427,400	
Occupational Therapy Assistants and Aides	18,600	26,000	
Cardiology Technologists	20,800	29,000	
Correction Officers and Jailers	383,400	531,800	
Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists	105,000	145,400	

* Note: The national average percent change is 14%.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Office of Employment Projections

Legal Assistant

APRC 2001-2007

section 4 of 4

NFPA Suggested Curriculum for Paralegal Studies

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

24 Semester Hours at the college level encompassing the following areas:

- English Composition/Grammar *
- Mathematics
- Logic/Philosophy
- Speech/Communication
- Earth or Natural Science
- Political Science/History
- Sociology
- Humanities, including Philosophy

The following areas are desirable electives:

- Business **
- Computer Science/Literacy
- Foreign Language
- Psychology
- Economics

* Extensive experience in grammar and composition is important for paralegals.

**Only Accounting, Business Communication and Personnel Management courses are desirable.

LEGAL SPECIALTY REQUIREMENTS

24 Semester Hours* Students need to have exposure to the following theory/practice areas as follows:

- Litigation/Civil Procedure
- Legal Research and Writing
- Real Property Transaction
- Business and Corporate Law
- Wills, Trust and Estate Planning
- Family Law
- Torts
- Contracts

Exposure to the following theory/practice areas may be beneficial, depending on the legal market **:

- Advanced Legal Research and Writing
- Advanced Litigation/Civil Procedure
- Bankruptcy, Debtor/Creditor Rights
- Administrative Law
- Pension/Profit Sharing
- Law Office Economics and Management
- Tax Law
- Labor Relations/Employment Law
- Intellectual Property
- Criminal Law
- Immigration Law
- Social Security Law
- Constitutional Law
- Environmental Law
- Elder Law



The Legal Assistant Career

- Legal Services Entities**
- Legal Assistants Home**
- Approval Commission**
- Model Guidelines**
- ABA Approved Legal Assistant Education Programs**
- History**
- Publications**
- Career**
- Email**

Educational Programs

At the present time the American Bar Association has identified more than 600 institutions across the United States which offer formal legal assistant education programs leading to either a degree or certificate. However, the listing below includes only the 241 programs that are ABA approved.

Directory of ABA Approved Legal Assistant Education Programs

[Available On Line](#)

Programs are offered by two-year community and junior colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and business and proprietary schools devoted solely to providing this type of training. Since entry into the legal assistant field is open to a wide range of individuals educational backgrounds and previous work experiences, the length of programs and their requirements vary considerably from one institution to another.

A candidate's personal qualifications for admission into a legal assistant program are varied. Applicants must be able to write clearly and communicate effectively and must possess a degree of motivation and analytical reasoning capability. Candidates should also be responsible individuals who are sincerely interested in pursuing a career as a legal assistant.

Prospective students should be informed that paralegal education is not the equivalent of law school education. Graduates of legal assistant programs are not qualified or eligible to take the bar examination. Academic credit for legal assistant courses is not transferable for advanced law school.

You may obtain additional information on paralegal education by contacting the American Bar Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE) at 8826 Santa Fe Drive, Suite 208, Overland Park, Kansas. Visit AAfPE's website at <http://www.aafpe.org>. The telephone number is (913) 381-4458 (913) 381-9308.

Brief descriptions of the most common types of programs available follow.

Associate Degree Programs

Two-year associate degree programs are offered by comprehensive community colleges and four-year degree-granting institutions. Although a substantial majority of community colleges have an open-door admissions policy, many of the legal assistant education programs offered have adopted more selective admission criteria for entry into paralegal studies. These programs require a considerable amount of study and outside class assignments and are taught at a sophisticated level. Additional screening methods which may be utilized include scores on college-level entrance examinations, special verbal aptitude tests, writing samples, and recommendations and personal interviews. The curriculum in an associate degree program is a combination of general education, electives and legal specialty courses. The legal courses are selected by educational administrators and faculty members in consultation with members of the legal community. Trends, needs, and changes in the local legal community affect course requirements in legal specialty areas. Ordinarily, an associate degree program prepares students with the requisite skills to perform in the legal environment as generalists. Students receive instruction in several different legal specialty areas. Legal specialty courses commonly include legal research and writing, introduction to paralegalism and law, torts and business law, estate planning and probate, corporate law, litigation, criminal law, family

business law, estate planning and probate, corporate law, litigation, criminal law, family estate. Paralegal programs in community colleges may lead to an Associate in Arts, As Science, or Associate in Applied Science Degree. A growing number of community coll certificate option for four-year college graduates.

Baccalaureate Degree Programs

A number of colleges and universities have developed four-year baccalaureate degree a major or minor in paralegal studies. Curriculum requirements include general educati and legal specialty courses. The four-year program normally encompasses both gener specialist courses. The generalist courses are similar to the offerings in an associate d Usually the courses taken during the last two years of the program are more in-depth a and allow a student to concentrate in one or more areas of legal specialization, thereby special expertise in those selected areas. Some of the four-year programs offer or requ the management and administration of a law office. In general, a four-year program pro with a sound liberal arts education and legal specialty training in several areas, thereby to choose from a wide number of employment opportunities in various legal settings as law firms. Paralegal programs in four-year colleges may lead to a B.S. or B.A. degree. in many different disciplines, including Political Science, Criminal Justice, Human Servi Business and are sometimes in separate Paralegal or Legal Studies Departments.

Certificate Programs

Non-degree certificate programs are offered by universities, colleges, business and pro schools. Some certificate programs are offered for academic college credit and some a are operated through the Continuing Education or Extension Division of a college. A ce program usually offers only legal specialty training. If the general education component as a part of the program, such programs require applicants for admission to have comp one-half years of college or more. Some certificate programs are restricted to only colle whose academic record displays a high level of achievement. Classes may be offered f the day or on a part-time evening basis. The length of the program may range from fou months to two years. Some programs offer legal specialty training and some have a ge curriculum that includes specialty training. Legal specialty concentrations most often off litigation, estate planning and administration, real estate, and corporations.

Internships

Many legal assistant education programs include an internship as a part of the curricul internship enables a student to utilize skills acquired in the program and to gain practic experience. Internships are available in a variety of settings, including private law firms, public defender or attorney general, banks, corporate legal departments, legal aid orga many government agencies.

Home Study Programs

The American Bar Association does not approve correspondence or home study progr not provide information on home study programs. Please contact the Distance Educati Council, the accrediting agency authorized by the U.S. Department of Education to eva study programs, for information at 1601 18th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009, (2

ABA Approval of Legal Assistant Education Programs

In 1974 the American Bar Association established the first Guidelines for the Approval Assistant Education Programs and in 1975 approved the first group of paralegal progra Guidelines were developed to promote high standards of quality for the education of le The Guidelines have been revised several times since their initial adoption to keep pac in the utilization of paralegals and in higher education.

To become eligible for ABA approval, a program must have been in operation for at lea academic years and have graduated students and must fully satisfy all requirements of Guidelines. Approved programs are listed on the following pages. New programs are a annually, in February and August.

Programs seeking ABA approval are required to submit a self-evaluation report which i provide a comprehensive description of all program components with emphasis on the areas: organization and administration, financial and other resources, advisory committ educational program, faculty and program leadership, admissions and student services library and physical plant. As part of the ABA evaluation process, an on-site visit is con three-member team comprised of a representative of the ABA Standing Committee on Assistants, an experienced legal assistant and an educator from another paralegal pro

Assistants, an experienced legal assistant and an educator from another paralegal program inspection provides an opportunity to verify information provided in the self-evaluation and to acquire supplementary information essential to making an evaluation. Each inspection includes the following activities: meetings with the program director, administrative officials of the school, members of the advisory committee, faculty members, students and graduates, and staff of the school; admissions and counseling offices, review of various documents such as course outlines, evaluations, placement records, student files, observation of classes in session, and an inspection of the library, off-campus sites, and facilities.

Seeking approval from the American Bar Association is a voluntary process initiated by the school offering the program. Therefore, the lack of approval does not necessarily mean a program is not of good quality and reputable.

Employment Opportunities

In view of the fact that the utilization of legal assistants improves the efficiency, economy, and availability of legal services, increased emphasis is being placed on the hiring of legal assistants in a variety of legal and law-related settings. Although private law firms continue to be the single largest employer of legal assistants, good job opportunities also exist in several other markets in both the private and public sectors.

In addition to private law firms, other organizations in the private sector currently employing legal assistants include corporate legal departments, insurance companies, estate and trust departments, large banks, hospitals and health care organizations, real estate and title insurance companies, and professional trade associations. Job opportunities in the public sector are available in consumer services programs, consumer organizations, offices of public defenders, prosecutors and judges, city attorneys, a wide array of state and federal government agencies and the judicial system.

If you enroll in a legal assistant education program, you should avail yourself of the assistance of the school's program director and placement officer for help in securing appropriate employment. These individuals are in contact with members of the surrounding legal and business community and should be able to furnish information about current job openings within the community. They should also be able to assist you in preparing resumes and application forms and arranging for interviews. Most programs also offer seminars on job search, interviewing and resume preparation.

Another source of information on current job openings is your local or state paralegal association. Many paralegal associations maintain job data banks or referral services and can provide a listing of firms and agencies in which legal assistant positions are available.

Compensation

Earnings vary considerably depending upon such factors as size of the community, geographic location, size of firm, nature of practice, and the legal assistant's educational background and experience. Some legal assistants work on a part-time or freelance basis handling over and over in private law firms and legal departments and are normally paid on an hourly or project basis.

The American Bar Association has no information currently available on the starting salaries of legal assistants in different geographical areas of the United States. However, many legal associations survey their members to gather this and other statistical data of importance to legal assistants. This survey data is generally published in pamphlet form and available for purchase by association members and non-members alike.

Duties

Since legal assistants are trained as both generalists and specialists, the duties delegated to them greatly and depend to a large extent upon the size of the law firm and the nature of the practice. Responsibilities most often assigned to legal assistants are maintaining client files, correspondence, performing factual research, monitoring deadlines, drafting and reviewing documents, and acting as liaison with clients and others. Some legal assistants have extensive client contact, and some do not. The most common area of practice for paralegals is litigation although paralegal services are utilized in virtually all areas of practice, including probate, real estate, family law, bankruptcy, and intellectual property.

Certification

Certification is a process by which a non-governmental agency or association grants recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications specified by that agency or association.

individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications specified by that agency or usually involves passing an examination drawn up by the sponsoring organization and specified educational and/or experiential requirements.

Presently, there is no mandatory certification examination for legal assistants anywhere States. However, the certification issue has been a subject of considerable interest and past several years among legal assistant associations, bar associations and some legi variety of reasons some of these organizations are opposed to certification while others

The National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc., (NALA) headquartered in Tulsa, Okl sponsoring a certification examination (Certified Legal Assistant) in 1976. NALA also of specialty exams. For information on the exam, test dates, eligibility requirements, etc., NALA at 1516 South Boston Avenue, Suite 200, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119. You may con its website location which is www.nala.org or e-mail NALA at nanet@nala.org. The tel number to call is (918) 587-6828.

The National Federation of Paralegal Associations, Inc.(NFPA) offers the Paralegal Ad Competency Examination (PACE). For more information, please write NFPA at P.O. Bo Kansas City, MO 64114. Or visit NFPA's website at <http://www.paralegals.org>. The e-m info@paralegals.org. The telephone number is (816) 941-4000.

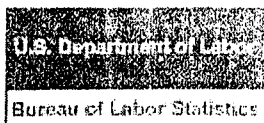
Financial Aid and Placement

The American Bar Association does not provide financial assistance to individuals inter enrolling in legal assistant education programs. Inquiries pertaining to financial aid, suc scholarships, loans, and grants, should be directed to the program director or financial institution you plan to attend. The American Bar Association does not provide placeme to legal assistants, nor does it maintain lists of law firms or other agencies that employ l assistants.

Publications/Associate Membership

Order information for current publications by the ABA Standing Committee on Legal As obtained by browsing the ABA's website location at www.abanet.org. You may also obt complete a membership application for associate membership in the ABA Member Cen

[ABA Copyright Statement](#) [ABA Privacy Statement](#)



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Construction

Production

Transportation and Material Moving

Laborers and Helpers

Job Opportunities in the Armed Forces

Career Outlook

Occupational Outlook

Employment Projections

Publications

FAQ



Occupations | A-Z Index | Other Content | Cross

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[Search Tips](#)

Paralegals

[Nature of the Work](#) | [Working Conditions](#) | [Employment](#) | [Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement](#) | [Job Outlook](#) | [Earnings](#) | [Related Occupations](#) | [Sources of Additional Information](#)

Significant Points

[Download a printer-friendly version \(PDF 91K\)](#)

- While some paralegals train on the job, employers increasingly prefer graduates of postsecondary paralegal training programs.
- Paralegals are projected to rank among the fastest growing occupations in the economy as they increasingly perform many legal tasks formerly carried out by lawyers.
- Stiff competition is expected as the number of graduates of paralegal training programs and others seeking to enter the profession outpaces job growth.

Nature of the Work

[\[About this section\]](#)

[Top](#)

While lawyers assume ultimate responsibility for legal work, they often delegate many of their tasks to paralegals. In fact, paralegals continue to assume a growing range of tasks in the Nation's legal offices and perform many of the same tasks as lawyers. Nevertheless, they are still explicitly prohibited from carrying out duties which are considered to be the practice of law, such as setting legal fees, giving legal advice, and presenting cases in court.

One of a paralegal's most important tasks is helping lawyers prepare for closings, hearings, trials, and corporate meetings. Paralegals investigate the facts of cases and ensure all relevant information is considered. They also identify appropriate laws, judicial decisions, legal articles, and other materials that are relevant to assigned cases. After they analyze and organize the information, paralegals may prepare written reports that attorneys use in determining how cases should be handled. Should attorneys decide to file lawsuits on behalf of clients, paralegals may help prepare the legal arguments, draft pleadings and motions to be filed with the court, obtain affidavits, and assist attorneys during trials. Paralegals also organize and track files of all important case documents and make them available and easily accessible to attorneys.

In addition to this preparatory work, paralegals also perform a number of other vital functions. For example, they help draft contracts, mortgages, separation agreements, and trust instruments. They may also assist in preparing tax returns and planning estates. Some paralegals coordinate the activities of other law office employees and maintain financial records for the office. Various additional tasks may differ, depending on the employer.

Paralegals are found in all types of organizations, but most are employed by law firms, corporate legal departments, and various levels of

by law firms, corporate legal departments, and various levels of government. In these organizations, they may work in all areas of the law, including litigation, personal injury, corporate law, criminal law, employee benefits, intellectual property, labor law, and real estate. Within specialties, functions often are broken down further so paralegals may deal with a specific area. For example, paralegals specializing in labor law may deal exclusively with employee benefits.

The duties of paralegals also differ widely based on the type of organization in which they are employed. Paralegals who work for corporations often assist attorneys with employee contracts, shareholder agreements, stock option plans, and employee benefit plans. They may also help prepare and file annual financial reports, maintain corporate minute books and resolutions, and secure loans for the corporation. Paralegals also occasionally review government regulations to ensure the corporation operates within the law.

The duties of paralegals who work in the public sector usually vary in each agency. In general, they analyze legal material for internal use, maintain reference files, conduct research for attorneys, and collect and analyze evidence for agency hearings. They may then prepare informative or explanatory material on laws, agency regulations, and agency policy for general use by the agency and the public. Paralegals employed in community legal service projects help the poor, the aged, and others in need of legal assistance. They file forms, conduct research, prepare documents, and when authorized by law, may represent clients at administrative hearings.

Paralegals in small and medium-sized law firms usually perform a variety of duties that require a general knowledge of the law. For example, they may research judicial decisions on improper police arrests or help prepare a mortgage contract. Paralegals employed by large law firms, government agencies, and corporations, however, are more likely to specialize in one aspect of the law.

A growing number of paralegals use computers in their work. Computer software packages and the Internet are increasingly used to search legal literature stored in computer databases and on CD-ROM. In litigation involving many supporting documents, paralegals may use computer databases to retrieve, organize, and index various materials. Imaging software allows paralegals to scan documents directly into a database, while billing programs help them to track hours billed to clients. Computer software packages may also be used to perform tax computations and explore the consequences of possible tax strategies for clients.

Working Conditions

[\[About this section\]](#)

[Top](#)

Paralegals employed by corporations and government usually work a standard 40-hour week. Although most paralegals work year round, some are temporarily employed during busy times of the year, then released when the workload diminishes. Paralegals who work for law firms sometimes work very long hours when they are under pressure to meet deadlines. Some law firms reward such loyalty with bonuses and additional time off.

These workers handle many routine assignments, particularly when they are inexperienced. As they gain experience, Paralegals usually assume more varied tasks with additional responsibility. Paralegals do most of their work at desks in offices and law libraries. Occasionally, they travel to gather information and perform other duties.

Employment

[\[About this section\]](#)

[Top](#)

Paralegals held about 136,000 jobs in 1998. Private law firms employed the vast majority; most of the remainder worked for corporate legal

the vast majority; most of the remainder worked for corporate legal departments and the various levels of government. Within the Federal Government, the Department of Justice is the largest employer, followed by the Departments of Treasury and Defense, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Other employers include State and local governments, publicly funded legal service centers, banks, real estate development companies, and insurance companies. A small number of paralegals own their own businesses and work as freelance legal assistants, contracting their services to attorneys or corporate legal departments.

Training, Other Qualifications, [About this section] and Advancement

[Top](#)

There are several ways to become a paralegal. Employers usually require formal paralegal training obtained through associate or bachelor's degree programs or through a certification program. Increasingly, employers prefer graduates of 4-year paralegal programs or college graduates who have completed paralegal certificate programs. Some employers prefer to train paralegals on the job, hiring college graduates with no legal experience or promoting experienced legal secretaries. Other entrants have experience in a technical field that is useful to law firms, such as a background in tax preparation for tax and estate practice or nursing or health administration for personal injury practice.

Over 800 formal paralegal training programs are offered by 4-year colleges and universities, law schools, community and junior colleges, business schools, and proprietary schools. There are currently 232 programs approved by the American Bar Association (ABA). Although this approval is neither required nor sought by many programs, graduation from an ABA-approved program can enhance one's employment opportunities. The requirements for admission to these programs vary. Some require certain college courses or a bachelor's degree; others accept high school graduates or those with legal experience; and a few schools require standardized tests and personal interviews.

Paralegal programs include 2-year associate's degree programs, 4-year bachelor's degree programs, and certificate programs that take only a few months to complete. Many certificate programs only require a high school diploma or GED for admission. Programs typically include courses on law and legal research techniques, in addition to courses covering specialized areas of law, such as real estate, estate planning and probate, litigation, family law, contracts, and criminal law. Many employers prefer applicants with specialized training.

The quality of paralegal training programs varies; the better programs usually include job placement. Programs increasingly include courses introducing students to the legal applications of computers. Many paralegal training programs include an internship in which students gain practical experience by working for several months in a law office, corporate legal department, or government agency. Experience gained in internships is an asset when seeking a job after graduation. Prospective students should examine the experiences of recent graduates before enrolling in those programs.

Although most employers do not require certification, earning a voluntary certificate from a professional society may offer advantages in the labor market. The National Association of Legal Assistants, for example, has established standards for certification requiring various combinations of education and experience. Paralegals who meet these standards are eligible to take a 2-day examination, given three times each year at several regional testing centers. Those who pass this examination may use the designation Certified Legal Assistant (CLA). In addition, the Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam, established in 1996 and administered through the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, offers professional recognition to paralegals with a bachelor's degree and

at least 2 years of experience. Those who pass this examination may use the designation Registered Paralegal (RP).

Paralegals must be able to document and present their findings and opinions to their supervising attorney. They need to understand legal terminology and have good research and investigative skills. Familiarity with the operation and applications of computers in legal research and litigation support is also increasingly important. Paralegals should stay informed of new developments in the laws that affect their area of practice. Participation in continuing legal education seminars allows paralegals to maintain and expand their legal knowledge.

Because paralegals frequently deal with the public, they should be courteous and uphold the ethical standards of the legal profession. The National Association of Legal Assistants, the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, and a few States have established ethical guidelines for paralegals to follow.

Paralegals are usually given more responsibilities and less supervision as they gain work experience. Experienced paralegals who work in large law firms, corporate legal departments, and government agencies may supervise and delegate assignments to other paralegals and clerical staff. Advancement opportunities also include promotion to managerial and other law-related positions within the firm or corporate legal department. However, some paralegals find it easier to move to another law firm when seeking increased responsibility or advancement.

Job Outlook

[\[About this section\]](#)

[Top](#)

Paralegals are projected to rank among the fastest growing occupations in the economy through 2008. However, stiff competition for jobs should continue as the number of graduates of paralegal training programs and others seeking to enter the profession outpaces job growth. Employment growth stems from law firms and other employers with legal staffs increasingly hiring paralegals to lower the cost and increase the availability and efficiency of legal services. The majority of job openings for paralegals in the future will be new jobs created by rapid employment growth; other job openings will arise as people leave the occupation.

Private law firms will continue to be the largest employers of paralegals, but a growing array of other organizations, such as corporate legal departments, insurance companies, real estate and title insurance firms, and banks will also continue to hire paralegals. These organizations are expected to grow as an increasing population requires additional legal services, especially in areas such as intellectual property, health care, international, elder, sexual harassment, and environmental law. The growth of prepaid legal plans should also contribute to the demand for legal services. Paralegal employment in these organizations is expected to increase as paralegals are assigned a growing range of tasks and are increasingly employed in small and medium-sized establishments.

Job opportunities for paralegals will expand in the public sector as well. Community legal service programs, which provide assistance to the poor, aged, minorities, and middle-income families, will employ additional paralegals to minimize expenses and serve the most people. Federal, State, and local government agencies, consumer organizations, and the courts should also continue to hire paralegals in increasing numbers.

To a limited extent, paralegal jobs are affected by the business cycle. During recessions, demand declines for some discretionary legal services, such as planning estates, drafting wills, and handling real estate transactions. Corporations are less inclined to initiate litigation when falling sales and profits lead to fiscal belt tightening. As a result, full-time paralegals employed in offices adversely affected by a recession may be laid off or have their work hours reduced. On the other hand, during

laid off or have their work hours reduced. On the other hand, during recessions, corporations and individuals are more likely to face other problems that require legal assistance, such as bankruptcies, foreclosures, and divorces. Paralegals, who provide many of the same legal services as lawyers at a lower cost, tend to fare relatively better in difficult economic conditions.

Earnings

[\[About this section\]](#)

[▲ Top](#)

Earnings of paralegals vary greatly. Salaries depend on education, training, experience, type and size of employer, and the geographic location of the job. In general, paralegals who work for large law firms or in large metropolitan areas earn more than those who work for smaller firms or in less populated regions. In 1998, full-time, wage and salary paralegals had median annual earnings of \$32,760. The middle 50 percent earned between \$26,240 and 40,960. The top 10 percent earned more than \$50,290, while the bottom 10 percent earned less than \$21,770. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of paralegals in 1997 are shown below:

Federal government	\$43,900
Local government	32,200
Legal services	30,300

According to the National Association of Legal Assistants, paralegals had an average salary of \$34,000 in 1997. In addition to a salary, many paralegals received a bonus, which averaged about \$2,100. According to the National Federation of Paralegal Associations, starting salaries of paralegals with 1 year or less experience averaged \$30,700 in 1997.

Related Occupations

[\[About this section\]](#)

[▲ Top](#)

Several other occupations call for a specialized understanding of the law and the legal system, but do not require the extensive training of a lawyer. These include [abstractors](#), [claim examiners](#), [compliance and enforcement inspectors](#), [occupational safety and health workers](#), [patent agents](#), and [title examiners](#).

Sources of Additional Information

[\[About this section\]](#)

[▲ Top](#)

Disclaimer: Links to non-BLS Internet sites are provided for your convenience and do not constitute an endorsement.

General information on a career as a paralegal can be obtained from:

- Standing Committee on Legal Assistants, American Bar Association, 750 North Lake Shore Dr., Chicago, IL 60611. Internet: <http://www.abanet.org/legalassts>

For information on the Certified Legal Assistant exam, schools that offer training programs in a specific State, and standards and guidelines for paralegals, contact:

- National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc., 1516 South Boston St., Suite 200, Tulsa, OK 74119. Internet: <http://www.nala.org>

Information on a career as a paralegal, schools that offer training programs, job postings for paralegals, the Paralegal Advanced Competency Exam, and local paralegal associations can be obtained from:

- National Federation of Paralegal Associations, P.O. Box 33108, Kansas City, MO 64114. Internet: <http://www.paralegals.org>

Information on paralegal training programs, including the pamphlet "How to Choose a Paralegal Education Program," may be obtained from:


- American Association for Paralegal Education, P.O. Box 40244, Overland Park, KS 66204. Internet: <http://www.aafpe.org>

Information on acquiring a job as a paralegal specialist with the Federal Government may be obtained from the Office of Personnel Management through a telephone-based system. Consult your telephone directory under U.S. Government for a local number or call (912) 757-3000; TDD (912) 744-2299. This call is not toll-free, and charges may result.

Information also is available from their Internet site:

<http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>

O*NET Code: 28305 [About the O*NET codes](#)

 [Top of Page](#)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor.

E-Mail: ooinfo@bls.gov

Last Updated: July 31, 2000

Page URL: <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos114.htm>

Timme Library Summary for the ABA Accreditation of the FSU Paralegal Program
February 1998

The Legal Collection of the Timme Library at Ferris State University continues to grow in its need for more shelf space at a pace which seems to be geometric rather than arithmetic. This is despite the rising costs for these materials which has caused us to discontinue some titles which were not heavily used in order to continue to pay for the legal resources which are most necessary for the Legal Assisting program and the other Ferris programs which use the legal collection. To have enough space for the active subscriptions to grow we have removed those titles which we no longer continue to support from the first floor location to the same location as the circulating monographic collection in the open stacks on the second floor. This is reflected in the location information shown in the online catalog entries. In the Legal Reference area on the first floor, the ends of each aisle have a list of those titles located in each row (range) of the shelves. This area includes a copy of all the latest editions in the West Nutshell Series and some other monographic titles which are used heavily for reference such as *Black's law dictionary*.

The materials shown on the lists of legal services and journal titles attached to this report are those for which we have paid or expect to pay in the 1997-98 fiscal year, FY98. On the list of legal periodical titles are those to which we have access in full text through our contracts or through the contracts of the state of Michigan in this current year as well as those we receive in either print or microform. Those titles available in the full text databases as well as those in Westlaw are always subject to the whim of a publisher who decides not to continue to allow a vendor to contract for publishing the electronic format of a particular title. This would be true of Lexis as well which was tested by the library for a month in the fall while the Michigan Library Consortium was negotiating a price for consortial access. Sadly nothing more has been heard of that venture for which we would have been charged at a cost per head of all the students enrolled by FSU. For this fiscal year the library has paid 4,667.88 dollars for journals, either directly or through Faxon or UMI with the cost for titles in microfiche being 1122.60 dollars and the cost for titles in print 3544.88 dollars.

For the legal services during the past five years we have paid the following amounts:

FY 94	\$33,158
FY 95	\$52,756
FY 96	\$48,375.36
FY 97	\$41801.21
FY 98	\$49,000. Estimated
	\$37,321.15 to date with an additional 12,000.00 dollars anticipated

During this time period we have implemented an online acquisitions payment system for these materials which is used for the figures in FY96, 97 and 98 while the earlier figures are based on our paper invoices. We believe that due to cash flow in the library budget some of the fiscal 94 materials received were paid for in FY 95 which would be an average of about 42,000 dollars per year for FY 94 and 95.

Some services which are no longer received are the RIA tax materials, the CCH Labor titles

and some health related law materials which were not receiving enough use to justify continued purchase as well as the CCH international materials which were useful during the period of the Soviet dissolution and the opening of the European Union but for which the information requested is not primarily legal but related to international trade.

The figures listed above represent monies paid to CCH, BNA, PIA, ICLE, Matthew Bender, Shepard's, Lexis/Michie, Callaghan's, West, Lawyer's Cooperative, Clark/Boardman, Oceana, and Little Brown. The access to Westlaw on two terminals located in the Library is paid by another fiscal area of the University.

Access to the materials in the circulating collection is by using the online catalog which is a PALS system which allows you to browse the list of materials as they appear on the shelf in the Library of Congress classification system, by subject as assigned by the Library of Congress, and by title and author. The same information is available for the materials in the Reference Collection. Access to the journal articles is by using the computerized indices which are listed on the Library computer menu and by using the CURRENT LAW INDEX on section F in the Index Area of the first floor of the Timme Library.

Legal reference materials and journals are used by students in the Criminal Justice, Automotive and Heavy Equipment Management, Occupational Safety and Health, Surveying, Medical Record Information Systems, Accountancy, and Pharmacy programs as well as individual classes in Arts & Sciences such as Military History, as well as required law classes offered in the College of Business which are also taken by students in the Colleges of Technology and Allied Health Sciences. The law collection is also used by local practitioners of law and accountancy and any other persons who wish to look up information for their personal use.

UNITED STATES SERVICES

AMERICAN JURISPRUDENCE

ACCOUNTING ARTICLES

AMERICAN LAW REPORTS: ALR FEDERAL

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL LAW CASES

ALR 2D

ALR 3D

ALR 4TH

ALR 5TH

ANNUAL REVIEW OF UNITED NATIONS AFFAIRS

BENDER'S IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS SERVICE

CCH FEDERAL TAX SERVICE

COPYRIGHT LAW DECISIONS

COPYRIGHT LAW REPORTER

CORPUS JURIS SECUNDUM

DECISIONS OF THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT, LAWYERS EDITION

EDUCATION LAW

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES DECISIONS

EMPLOYMENT TAX FORMS

FEDERAL ESTATE AND GIFT TAX REPORTS

FEDERAL EXCISE TAX REPORTER

FEDERAL TAX FORMS

GUIDE TO AMERICAN LAW

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: COMPENSATION

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: OSHA COMPLIANCE

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: PERSONNEL PRACTICES

INHERITANCE, ESTATE AND GIFT TAX REPORTS

IRS PUBLICATIONS

LABOR CASES

MIOSHA REPORTER

NICHOLS CYCLOPEDIA OF LEGAL FORMS ANNOTATED

PAYROLL MANAGEMENT GUIDE

SECURITY TRANSACTIONS

SECTION 504 COMPLIANCE HANDBOOK

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS, INCLUDING MEDICARE

STANDARD FEDERAL TAX REPORTS

STATE TAX GUIDE

UNIFORM COMMERCIAL CODE DIGEST

UNIFORM COMMERCIAL CODE REPORTER SERVICE

UNITED STATES CODE ANNOTATED

UNITED STATES CODE SERVICE ANNOTATED

UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT DIGEST, 1754 TO DATE

UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT REPORTS

WEST'S FEDERAL PRACTICE DIGEST 4TH

WEST'S FEDERAL SUPPLEMENT

WEST'S FEDERAL REPORTER 3D

WEST'S SUPREME COURT REPORTER

WEST'S UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT DIGEST

WEST'S NORTH WESTERN REPORTER

WORDS AND PHRASES

MICHIGAN LEGAL SERVICES

BANKRUPTCY LAW AND PRACTICE IN MICHIGAN, 2D

BUYING AND SELLING A BUSINESS IN MICHIGAN

CLARK BOARDMAN CALLAGHANS...

COURT RULES OF MICHIGAN ANNOTATED

GILMORE ON MICHIGAN CIVIL PROCEDURE

ICLE FOCUS ON MICHIGAN PRACTICE

INTRODUCING EVIDENCE

MICHIGAN APPROVED COURT FORMS

MICHIGAN ATTORNEY GENERAL

MICHIGAN CIVIL JURISPRUDENCE

MICHIGAN CIVIL PRACTICE FORMS

MICHIGAN CORPORATION LAW

MICHIGAN COURT OF APPEALS REPORTS

MICHIGAN DIGEST

MICHIGAN CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE

MICHIGAN LAW AND PRACTICE IN MICHIGAN

MICHIGAN LAWYER'S MANUAL

MICHIGAN LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES

MICHIGAN LITIGATION FORMS AND ANALYSIS

MICHIGAN PLEADING AND PRACTICE

MICHIGAN REAL ESTATE PRACTICE AND FORMS, 2D

MICHIGAN REAL PROPERTY LAW

MICHIGAN REGISTER

MICHIGAN STATUTES ANNOTATED

MICHIGAN TAX REPORTS

MICHIGAN TORTS

CITATORS

SHEPARD'S ACTS AND CASES BY POPULAR NAMES

SHEPARD'S UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT CASES

SHEPARD'S FEDERAL CITATIONS. FEDERAL REPORTER

SHEPARD'S FEDERAL CITATIONS. FEDERAL SUPPLEMENT

SHEPARD'S FEDERAL STATUTE CITATIONS

SHEPARD'S UNITED STATES CITATIONS

SHEPARD'S SUPREME COURT

SHEPARD'S MICHIGAN CASE NAMES CITATOR

SHEPARD'S MICHIGAN CITATIONS

SHEPARD'S NORTHWESTERN REPORTER CITATIONS

LEGAL JOURNAL TITLES AVAILABLE AT THE TIMME LIBRARY

February 1998

TITLES	FICHE	PRINT
<i>Aba journal</i>	40.60	
<i>Administrative law review****</i>		
<i>Albany law review****</i>		
<i>American business law journal**</i> **** ***** *****	22.70	
<i>American journal of criminal law</i>		30.00
<i>American journal of international law****</i>		
<i>American journal of law & medicine***</i> ****	43.20	
<i>American criminal law review****</i>		35.00
<i>American journal of international law****</i>		
<i>American journal of law and medicine****</i>		
<i>Annual survey of American law****</i>		
<i>Antitrust law & economics review*****</i>		108.00
<i>Antitrust law journal**</i> *****		
<i>Australian business law review*****</i>		
<i>Banking law journal*****</i>		
<i>Berkeley journal of employment and labor law*</i> ****		
<i>Berkeley journal of international law ****</i>		

*Berkeley technology law journal*****
*Boston college environmental affairs law review*****
*Broadcasting & the law*****
*Business lawyer***
*California law review*****
*Canadian business law journal******
Code of federal regulations 1051.00
*Columbia journal of law & social problems*****
*Columbia law review*****
*Commercial law journal******
*Communications & the law*****
*Computer law journal******
*Corporation law review******
Criminal law bulletin 35.40
*Delaware journal of corporate law******
*Denver journal of international law & policy*****

*Ecology law quarterly***** 97.70

*Employee relations law journal***

*Environmental law*****

*Fbi law enforcement bulletin ***** 35.00

*Federal communications law journal*****

	FICHE	PRINT
<i>Federal register</i>	640.40	672.70
<i>Franchise law journal*****</i>		
<i>George washington journal of international law and economics *****</i>		
<i>Harvard civil rights-civil liberties law review****</i>		
<i>Harvard journal of law & public policy****</i>		
<i>Harvard law review****</i>	46.00	
<i>Houston journal of international law****</i>		
<i>Internal revenue bulletin</i>		122.00
<i>Issues in law & medicine ***</i>		
<i>John marshall journal of computer & infomation law*****</i>		
<i>Journal of arts management, law & society****</i>		
<i>Journal of corporation law*****</i>		
<i>Journal of criminal law and criminology****</i>		35.00
<i>Journal of health politics, policy and law</i>		145.00
<i>Journal of law and economics****</i> *****		
<i>Journal of law & education</i>		47.50
<i>Journal of law, medicine & ethics****</i>	43.20	
<i>Journal of world trade*****</i>		
<i>Journal of world trade law*****</i>		
<i>Justice system journal</i>		45.00
<i>Labor law journal*****</i>	24.20	

	<i>Fiche</i>	<i>Print</i>
<i>Law and contemporary problems****</i> *****		53.00
<i>Law & order</i>	32.50	
<i>Law and policy in international business* **</i> ***** *****		
<i>@Law</i>	25.00	
<i>Law & society review****</i>		
<i>Law enforcement news</i>	22.00	
<i>Legal assistant today</i>		52.98
<i>Legal information alert****</i>		
<i>Michigan bar journal</i>		52.95
<i>Michigan law review****</i>		52.00
<i>National black law journal****</i>		
<i>New york university law review****</i>		
<i>News media & the law****</i>		
<i>Oceanic development and international law****</i>		
<i>Pharmacy law digest</i>		70.00
<i>Police journal</i>		93.63
<i>Real estate law journal*****</i>		
<i>Regan report on nursing law****</i>	22.70	
<i>Rutgers computer & technology law journal****</i>		
<i>School law bulletin</i>		35.00

FICHE

PRINT

*Securities regulation law journal**

*Stanford law review******Teaching tolerance**Free**Trial*

27.70

*Trusts & estates****UCLA journal of environmental law & policy******Uniform commercial code law journal **

United states law week

781.22

*University of ch icago law review******University of pennsylvania journal of international business law*******University of pennsylvania journal of international economic law*******University of pennsylvania review******Vanderbilt journal of transnational law******Wayne law review*

28.00

*William & mary law review******Yale law journal *****

*Business cassette

Fulltext in *Business Index**Fulltext in *Health Reference Center*****Fulltext in *Expanded Academic Index******Fulltext in *Reference Center Gold******Fulltext in *Wilsonselect in First Search*

1. **Title:** LLAW 160: Law in the United States I

2. **Course Objectives:**

The objectives of this course are to introduce students to the Legal Assistant Program at Ferris, the Legal Assistant Profession, the roles of various professionals within the American legal system, and to begin a survey of both substantive and procedural law that will enable the student to continue their studies within the Legal Assistant Program. Topics covered include the court systems in Michigan and the United States, sources of law in the United States, an overview of civil litigation and the role of the legal assistant, constitutional law, administrative law, torts, and contracts.

3. **Number of Semester Hours:** 3

4. **Instructional Methods:**

Three hours per week are spent in the classroom on discussion and lecture.

5. **Required Textbook and other Material.**

Understanding the Law, second edition, by Carper, Mietus, Shoemake, and West.

Michigan Constitution

Michigan Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act

Crime and Criminals, Address to the Prisoners in the Cook County Jail, by Clarence Darrow

National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc Model Standards and Guidelines for Utilization of Legal Assistants, September, 1997

Michigan Court System handout

6. **Evaluation of Student Performance:**

Exams, quizzes and written assignments.

7. **Average class size:** 25

Maximum class size: 30

8. **Outline of subject area with breakdown of time devoted to each major topic:**

Hours	Topics
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2	Explanation of the paralegal profession and Legal Assistant Program at Ferris. Review of both the graduation requirements in the Legal Assistant Program and the articulation into Bachelor degree programs at Ferris.
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- 2 Discussion of the various types of Legal Assistant Programs. Review NALA standards for utilization of legal assistants.
- 2 Overview of the U.S. Legal System. Sources of law, classifications of law, and review of how a civil cases develop prior to litigation. Review role of legal assistants and attorneys in case development. Review actual statutes and cases that apply to example being used to illustrate how civil litigation develops.
- 3 Review of state and federal court systems to include subject matter jurisdiction, roles of trial and appellate courts, and jurisdiction over the defendant.
- 3 Overview of civil litigation from filing the complaint to appeals. Discussion of legal assistant's role in litigation.
- 1 Exam one and paper on current legal issue.
- 1 Review of Michigan Constitution by giving each student a copy of the constitution and homework assignment to complete answering questions regarding the document. Introduction to US Constitutional Law.
- 3 View three videos on US constitution. Inside the Supreme Court; The Supreme Court Holy Wars; and History of the Supreme Court.
- 4 Review Federal Constitution includes the concept of constitutionalism, natural law, judicial review, separation of powers, supremacy clause and extensive discussion of the Bill of Rights and 14th Amendment.
- 1 Exam two on federal and Michigan constitutions.
- 3 Administrative Law. Review of role and history of administrative agencies in both state and federal government. Review Administrative Procedures Act, Freedom of Information Act, Open Meetings Act, and enabling statutes creating agencies.
- 3 Review of rule making and investigating powers of agencies. Review of checks on agency actions by courts, legislative and executive branch. Role of legal assistant in administrative law.
- 1 Exam 3.

- 3 Intentional torts to include assault and battery, conversion, false imprisonment, defamation, fraud, invasion of privacy, and interference with business relationships.
- 3 Review elements of negligence to include statutory changes in negligence law, i.e. workers compensation and no-fault automobile insurance. Professional negligence, i.e. malpractice. Duties of landowners.
- 3 Review of strict liability and products liability. Discussion of types of law firms involved in tort litigation and role of legal assistants.
- 1 Exam 4.
- 3 Contracts: Brief overview of contract law to include the requirements for a valid contract and the sources of law when researching contracts and sales.
- 2 Review of course, evaluations, and prepare for final exam.
- 1 Final exam

1. **Title:** LLAW 161: Law in the United States II

2. **Course Objectives:**

The objective of this course is to complete the survey of the law started in LLAW 160 and to teach the basics of legal research and writing. Topics covered include property law, agency, partnerships, corporations, labor and employment, family law, and motor vehicle law. At the conclusion of this course Legal Assistant students should have knowledge of legal terminology and concepts that will allow them to continue in their studies at a more sophisticated level. Students should also be able to utilize the law library to do basic legal research.

3. **Number of semester credit hours:** 4

4. **Required textbook(s) and other material**

Understanding the Law, second edition, by Carper, Mietus, Shoemaker, and West
Basic Legal Research and Writing, by Nolfi and Tepper
West's Law Finder, A Legal Research Manual
Michigan Guide to Business Information
Using WESTMATE for Windows

5. **Instructional methods:**

- (a) Three hours per week are spent in the classroom on discussion and lecture.
- (b) One hour per week is spent in small group instruction in legal research in the law library.
- (c) Each week one of the three hours of classroom discussion is on research and writing. Where possible, research assignments will be on the substantive law topic being covered in class.

5. **Evaluation of student performance:**

Exams and research/writing assignments.

6. **Average class size:** 18

Maximum class size: 25

Average library session class size: 7

7. **Outline of subject area with breakdown of time devoted to each major topic.**

Hours **Topics**

2 Family Law. Review the status and requirements of marriage. Discuss legal consequences of marriage and parenthood to include parental rights.

Hours	Topics
1	Pensions to include developing an understanding of defined benefit and contribution plans.
1	Exam 4

One-half of the time in LLAW 161 is utilized for legal research and writing, including proper methods of citation and writing legal memorandum. Use of WESTLAW to do the research is integrated into the assignments utilizing the books. Assignments include weekly research projects due during each library session. Topics covered include:

Hours	Topics
3	Researching the Michigan Constitution and Michigan Statutes using MCLA and MSA
2	Organization of Michigan Case law in Reporters and researching Michigan Case Law using annotations in the Statutes
1	Researching Michigan Case Law using the Michigan Digest
1	Shepardizing a case
1	Introduction to WESTLAW
2	Researching Michigan Administrative Law in the Michigan Administrative Code and Michigan Register.
2	Using secondary authorities to research Michigan law. Encyclopedias and treatises.
3	Researching the US Constitution and Federal statutes in USCA and USCS
3	Researching the Statutes at Large and Legislative History in the US Code Congressional and Administrative News
2	Researching Federal case law using annotations in USCA and USCS.
2	Researching Federal administrative law in the Code of Federal Regulations and Federal Register.

Hours	Topics
3	Divorce; review Michigan no-fault divorce law, child support, Visitations, alimony, and property settlements.
1	Role of the Friend of the Court in Michigan.
1	Prenuptial and surrogate parent agreements.
1	Exam 1
2	Property Law. Review types of property, concept of ownership, and review of personal property law to include bailments and secured transaction.
	Motor Vehicle Law:
1	Licenses for automobiles and drivers, and registration.
1	Contracts to purchases or lease.
2	Responsibility of vehicle owners. Review types of automobile Insurance and the no-fault statute in Michigan.
1	Traffic laws, points and license suspensions.
1	Exam 2
	Business Organizations:
2	Law of Agency and the doctrine of respondent superior.
5	Business Organizations to include sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited partnerships, Limited liability companies, and corporations.
2	Labor and Employment Law. Rights and duties of unions to include the NLRA, right to work laws, strikes and lockouts, and union elections.
3	Subjects of union bargaining. Review of employment discrimination statutes and recent case law. Review of affirmative action programs. Review of Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Law.
1	American with Disabilities Act

Hours	Topics
3	Using secondary authority to do legal research, encyclopedias, ALR and treatises.
2	Review for exam
1	Research Exam

1. **Title:** LLAW 251: Criminal Law & Procedure

2. **Objectives:** The course is divided into three sections. The first is a short introductory section that introduces the student to the criminal legal system, the power of the Judicial Branch and explains the difference between criminal law and criminal procedure.

The second section covers substantive criminal law. Topics covered include sources of criminal law, intent and the acts (elements) necessary, types of crimes and finally defenses to criminal accusations.

The third and longest section of the course covers criminal procedure. This section begins with a discussion of how the Bill of Rights has been imposed on the States, the power of the courts to impose compliance though the Exclusionary Rule, and the standing necessary to bring the issues before the court. The mechanics of the pretrial, trial, sentencing and appeal process is then covered from the investigation and arrest through filing the appeal and the filing of a writ of habeas corpus. Finally, other specific areas of constitutionally guaranteed defendant rights, and thus government limitations, are covered. These include the areas of searches, seizures, arrests, interrogations, confessions, electronic and other types of surveillance and pretrial identifications.

3. **Number of semester hours:** 3

4. **Instructional method:**

Classroom, lecture and discussion are the primary methods, although visits to the law library and the local courthouse are also included.

5. **Required Textbook and other material:**

Criminal Law & Procedure an Introduction, by Ronald J. Bacigal, West Publishing

Study Guide to Accompany Criminal Law & Procedure an Introduction, prepared by Cindy A Sheaffer, West Publishing

Michigan Constitution

U.S. Constitution

6. **Evaluation of Student Performance:**

Exams, quizzes and written assignments.

7. **Average class size:** 12

Maximum class size: 15

8. **Outline of subject area with breakdown of time devoted to each major topic:**

Hours	Topics
1	<p>Introduction to Criminal Law and Procedure Generally.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The legal system 2. Separation of powers. 3. The structure of the court systems and the people who work in the system. 4. The duties and powers of the Judicial Branch. 5. The distinction between criminal law and criminal procedure
1	<p>Criminal Law.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sources of criminal law. 2. The power of government to regulate. 3. Purposes of punishing criminal behavior
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Essential Elements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Definition of a crime Actus Reus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntariness of the act What constitutes an act What does not Mens Rea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General, specific, and constructive intent Strict liability vicarious liability compare to Model Penal Code Causation
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Parties to Crimes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perpetrators Aiders and Abettors Accessories
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inchoate crimes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicitation Attempts Conspiracy Abandonment Impossibility
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Specific types of crimes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assault and Battery
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal Sexual Conduct
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homicides
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theft crimes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kidnapping and False Imprisonment Arson
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Crimes against the public morality and order <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disorderly conduct Drug crimes

	Nonviolent sex offenses
2	8. Defenses
	Self-Defense and defense of others
	Necessity and duress
	Mistake
	Intoxication
	Insanity
1	Test
	Criminal Procedure
2	1. The pretrial process
	The investigation
	The arrest
	The formal complaint
	The initial appearance and bond
	The preliminary exam
	The formal arraignment
	Discovery
	Motion Practice
	Pretrial conference
	The trial
	Appeal
3	2. The Bill of Rights and its imposition on the individual States
	The Exclusionary rule
	Purpose
	Standing to invoke
	Derivative Evidence
	Collateral Use of illegally seized evidence
	Good faith exception
2	3. Right to Counsel
	When
	Effective assistance
	Ethical obligations of Attorney and staff
	Withdrawal
	4. Arrest and identification
1	With a Warrant
3	Warrantless Arrests
	Consequences of an illegal arrest
2	5. Temporary Detentions
1	6. I.D. procedures
1	Test

	7. Searches and Seizures
1	Right to privacy
1	Probable cause
1	Searches with a warrant
	Requirements to get
	Extent of search available
	Warrantless
1	person
1	places
1	autos
2	8. Government Monitoring
	9. Interrogation, confessions, and Self-incrimination
1	Pre-Miranda
1	Miranda requirements
1	Waiver of rights
1	Current trends
1	Test

1. **Title:** LLAW 253: Advanced Legal Writing

2. **Course Objectives:**

To continue the development of the students' research and writing skills.

3. **Number of semester hours:** 2

4. **Instructional method:**

The first five weeks of the course are a review of research and writing techniques. For the remainder of the semester, the students work independently in the law library on research and writing assignments. They meet on a weekly basis with the instructor to discuss progress, obtain assistance, and turn in assignments.

5. **Evaluation of student performance:**

The students are graded on the papers they write, a final exam on legal research, and homework assignments given during the review period.

6. **Average class size:** 10

Maximum class size: 30

7. **Detailed outline of the subject area:**

At the first meeting, the course requirements are reviewed and initial projects are discussed. Students with an interest in doing research in a particular area may reach an agreement with the instructor on research project(s) to be completed during the semester. The first 10 hours (or more if requested by the students) of course time is devoted to a review of research and writing techniques. After the review, students meet with the instructor individually or in small groups to discuss progress on assignments and/or get assistance in completing assignments. Following is a typical semester. Additional time may be taken on the review portion if students requests or are not doing review assignments in an acceptable manner. Each session is two hours.

Session one: Overview of library and what you should know. State and Federal constitutions, statutes, cases, digests, Shepards, administrative law, ALR, legal encyclopedias and treatises. Students do in class quiz and assignment to assess review needs.

Session Two: Review of West Key number system, state and federal digests and state and federal reporters. Students perform key number searches on Westlaw. Students submit first paper proposal.

Session Three: Review Shepards using books and Westlaw. Review State and Federal Administrative law.

Session Four: Review secondary sources of law to include encyclopedias, law reviews, and treatises.

Session Five: Review ALR and Westlaw searches. Review Michigan Uniform System of Citations.

Session Six: Research and Citation exam.

Sessions Seven through Fifteen: Meet with students individually and in small groups to assist with research assignment and papers.

1. Title: LLAW 260: Real Estate Law

2. Objectives:

The objective for this course is to provide the student with sufficient knowledge of real estate law to allow them to draft documents and perform appropriate legal assistant functions relating to real estate transactions.

3. Number of semester hours: 3

4. Instructional methods:

Three hours per week are spent in the classroom on discussion and lecture, along with substantial homework assignments regarding drafting and reviewing of documents.

5. Required textbook and other material:

Real Estate Principles by Bruce M. Harwood and Charles J. Jacobus

6. Evaluation of student performance:

Exams, quizzes, and substantial drafting of documents and pleadings.

7. Average class size: 12
Maximum class size: 30

8. Outline of subject area with breakdown of time devoted to each major topic:

Hours	Topics
3	Introduction to estates and land. Review of feehold (ie. fee simple, life estate, future interests, fee simple determinable, and fee simple subject to conditions subsequent).
3	Nonfreehold (ie. leaseholds) estates and future interests.
3	Concurrent ownership of land (ie. tenancy by the entirety, tenancy in common, joint tenancy, joint tenancy with full rights of survivorship).
2	Review of condominium ownership, cooperatives and time-share ownership.

Hours	Topics
3	General discussion of surveys and legal descriptions including rectangular survey system, meets and bounds, and land division act.
4	Actual time spent drafting legal descriptions using protractors and rulers.
3	Public and private restrictions on land use (ie. eminent domain, zoning, building codes, and deed restrictions).
2	Easements. Characteristics of easements, types of easements, and methods of creation and termination. Licenses and profits.
3	Deeds. Review of laws relating to drafting warranty and quit claim deeds and requirements for executing deeds in Michigan.
2	Real estate financing to include reviewing and drafting of notes, mortgages, and land contracts.
3	Register of deeds. Review of recording statutes in Michigan and visit to Mecosta County Register of Deeds.
2	Abstracts and title insurance. Review of coverage's of title insurance an how to review abstracts and prepare opinion letter.
3	Real estate closings. Review of purchase agreements and title work to determine documents needed for real estate closing. Preparation of documents to include closing statements.
4	Leases. Review of truth in renting act and security deposit act in Michigan, review and preparation of leases and security deposit documents.
4	Review of Michigan laws on forfeiture, foreclosure, and evictions. Preparation of pleadings in forfeiture and foreclosure proceedings and evictions, transactions. Includes confidentiality issues, client trusts accounts, accounting procedures.
3	Exams

1. Title: LLAW 261: Estate Planning and Probate Law

2. Course Objectives:

The objectives of this course are to introduce students to the area of probate law including intestate succession, wills, trusts, probating of estates, guardianships, conservatorships, adoptions, and various miscellaneous and juvenile and family law matters. Students will learn to draft all of the relevant documents and pleadings relating to estate planning, probate, guardianships and conservatorships, and adoptions.

3. Number of semester hours: 3

4. Instructional methods:

Three hours per week are spent in the classroom on discussion and lecture along with homework assignments and substantial drafting of relevant documents, forms and pleading.

5. Required textbook and other material:

-ICLE MICHIGAN REVISED PROBATE CODE
-Miscellaneous handouts and other instructional material.

6. Evaluation of student performance:

Exams, quizzes, and substantial drafting of documents and pleadings.

**7. Average class size: 12
Maximum class size: 30**

8. Outline of subject area with breakdown of time devoted to each major topic:

Hours	Topics
2	Introduction to the subject matter of jurisdiction and probate court.
2	Review of the law of intestate succession.
3	Laws relating to the preparation of wills and trusts.
3	Discussion of powers of attorney, living wills and patient advocate and related estate planning documents.

Hours	Topics
3	Review and preparation of estate planning documents.
4	Review of probate laws and procedures involved in the probating of a decedents estate.
3	Review of appropriate pleadings and documents involved in probating a decedents estate.
3	Preparing of all pleadings utilized in probating an independent estate.
3	Preparation of all pleadings utilized in probating a supervised estate.
3	Review of Michigan Adoption Code.
3	Review of documents and pleadings involved in a step-parent adoption.
2	Review of the Michigan Adoption Code in relation to private adoptions.
3	Drafting of all relevant documents regarding a step-parent adoption.
3	Review of Michigan Statutes regarding guardianships and conservatorships.
3	Review pleadings and documents in regard to a guardianship and/or conservatorship proceeding.
3	Prepare all relevant pleadings and documents regarding guardianships and conservatorships.
3	Juvenile exams.

1. **Title:** LLAW 280: Civil Litigation

2. **Objectives:**

The objective of this course is to give the student a comprehensive review of civil litigation procedures. This includes pre-litigation tasks such as interviewing, investigation, timekeeping, and data control techniques as well as drafting pleadings in a civil case. Students also continue development of their research skills and 25% of the classes are held in the la library. Students are required to have a working knowledge of the Michigan Court Rules, Code of Professional Responsibility, and the Michigan Rules of Evidence.

3. **Number of semester hours:** 4

4. **Instructional method:**

(a) Three hours per week are spent in the classroom on discussion and lecture.

(b) One hour per week is spent in small group instruction in the law library.

5. **Required Textbook and other material:**

The litigation Paralegal, A Systems Approach; 3rd edition, by James W. H. McCord,
West Publishing

Michigan Court Rules

National Association of Legal Assistant, Inc *Model Standards and Guidelines for
Utilization of Legal Assistants*

6. **Evaluation of Student Performance:**

Exams, quizzes and written assignments.

7. **Average class size:** 12 for classroom sessions
3 for library sessions

Maximum class size: 15 for classroom sessions
4 for library sessions

8. **Outline of subject area with breakdown of time devoted to each major topic:**

Hours	Topics
2	Law office structure. Discussion of roles of law office personnel, types of law firms, timekeeping procedures, docket control, and an introduction to litigation systems.
3	Review of the state and federal court systems. Review Michigan statutes on jurisdiction and venue.
1	Overview of civil case from commencement through trial.

- 3 Interviewing. Developing interview plans and check sheets, drafting correspondence to clients, discussions of ethical problems and review of fee agreements.
- 3 Evidence: Review Michigan Rules of Evidence to include the rules relating to hearsay, relevant evidence, character evidence, authentication of evidence, privilege, impeachment of witnesses, and experts.
- 3 Discussion of planning and organizing investigations and techniques for interviewing witnesses and preparing witness statements, Discussion of attorney work products rule and discussion of ethical considerations in gathering and preserving evidence.
- 3 Drafting complaints. Review of Michigan court rule requirements for complaint drafting, Caption requirements, jurisdiction and venue allegations, stating a cause of action, request for relief, and review of sample pleadings.
- 3 Filing the lawsuit and service of process. Review of procedures for filing documents, proofs of service, review of court rules on service of process to include publication, review of procedures for locating defendants.
- 3 Motions and answers. Review of the various motions to dismiss lawsuits based on lack of jurisdiction over the subject matter or the defendant, insufficiency of service of process, improper venue, or failure to state a cause of action. Also review of motions attacking the complaint (i.e. motion for a more definite statement).
- 2 Review of court rules relating to motions and answers, a review of the structure of an answer to include affirmative defenses, cross claims, and third party practice.
- 3 Discovery. Overview of purpose of discovery and review of the discovery court rules to include procedures for compelling discovery and obtaining protective orders. Review of checklists and drafting techniques for writing interrogatories.
- 3 Review of types of depositions and procedures for setting up depositions. Discussions of legal assistant role in preparing attorneys and witnesses for depositions. Review of procedures for drafting a request for production and examination, request for medical examination, and request for admissions. Review of deposition digesting techniques.
- 3 Settlement and mediation. Review of the use of settlement brochures, uses of mediation in Michigan, review of mediation summary and Michigan's mediation court rules.

- 3 Trial. Review of relevant court rules, subpoenas, jury information and selection, preparation of evidence, and contents of the trial notebook. Preparation of client and witness for trial and assistance at trial.
- 2 Post-trial motions. Review of court rules and documents relating to motion for Judgment Notwithstanding the Verdict and motion for a new trial.
- 2 Appellate practice. Review of Michigan Court Rules relating to appeals, review of appeal procedures, review and preparation of appellate briefs.
- 15 Library sessions. Once each week during the semester the students and instructor meet one class session in the law portion of the FSU library. Three to four students meet in each session. The library sessions focus on hands on tasks that are done each week. Assignments relate to the material being covered in the classroom at that time.

A further breakdown of the typical sessions and assignments include:

- 3 Review of research generally
- 2 Research and writing memorandums on a topic or topics such as jurisdiction, venue, evidence and/or statute of limitation issues.
- 2 Doing mock interviews of clients and witnesses; preparing witness statements; doing legal research assignments relating to litigation issues.
- 1 Review of investigative techniques used in a law office and the preparation of some of the tools; such as medical releases, FOIA requests, etc.
- 3 Learning how to use the resources in the FSU law collection to draft initial pleadings used in litigation and the drafting of those pleadings (i.e. complaints, summons, and answer).
- 2 Review of subsequent pleadings used in litigation and the drafting of those pleadings; motions, orders, mediation summaries, briefs etc.).
- 2 Review of other documents used in the litigation process and the drafting and or use of those documents such as interrogatories, digesting, etc.

1. **Title:** LLAW 291: Practice Studies

2. **Course objectives:**

The objective of this course is to provide work experience for the legal assistant student in a law office or other relevant work environment.

3. **Number of semester hours:** 2

4. **Instructional method:**

The students are required to work a minimum of 60 hours at a law office or with another suitable employer approved by the instructor. At the end of the term, the students must write a report on their work experience. The report must summarize the tasks performed by the intern and include a summary of the computer hardware and software used in the law office as well as the student's assessment of his/her ability to utilize the technology in the office. Prior to doing the internship students must meet with the instructor to discuss reporting requirements and to review ethics.

Employers must verify the interns report and complete an evaluation of the intern.

5. **Evaluation of student performance:**

This course is offered on a credit/no credit basis.

6. **Average and maximum class size:** Not applicable.

7. **Outline of subject area with breakdown of time devoted to each major topic:**

Not applicable.



American Association for Paralegal Education

Core Competencies for Paralegal Programs

Report of the
Task Force on Core Competencies

CORE COMPETENCIES TASK FORCE

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PREAMBLE

In order to be a successful paralegal/legal assistant, a person must not only possess a common core of legal knowledge, but also must have acquired vital critical thinking, organizational, communication, and interpersonal skills. All paralegal education programs, regardless of the specialty areas they choose to emphasize, should provide an integrated set of core courses that develop the following competencies.

This is an aspirational document developed by an AAFPE Task Force for the benefit of paralegal educators. It was approved and adopted by the Board of Directors at their meeting in San Francisco, California, on October 11, 1994.

I. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

A. CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Paralegal education programs should be able to demonstrate that their courses incorporate learning strategies which develop their students' abilities to:

1. analyze a problem by identifying and evaluating alternative solutions;
2. logically formulate and evaluate solutions to problems and arguments in support of specific positions;
3. identify interrelationships among cases, statutes, regulations, and other legal authorities;
4. apply recognized legal authority to a specific factual situation;
5. recognize when and why varied fact situations make it appropriate to apply exceptions to general legal rules;
6. determine which areas of law are relevant to a particular situation;
7. apply principles of professional ethics to specific fact situations;
8. distinguish evidentiary facts from other material and/or controlling facts; and
9. identify factual omissions and inconsistencies.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Paralegal education programs should be able to demonstrate that their courses incorporate learning strategies which develop their students' abilities to:

1. categorize information;
2. prioritize information;

3. organize information; and
4. utilize time efficiently.

C. GENERAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Paralegal education programs should be able to demonstrate that their courses incorporate learning strategies which develop their students' abilities to:

1. read with comprehension;
2. listen effectively and accurately interpret nonverbal communication;
3. write in clear, concise, and grammatically correct English;
4. speak in clear, concise, and grammatically correct English;
5. use language to persuade; and
6. tailor the nature of the communication to maximize understanding in the intended audience, including those with different levels of education and different cultural backgrounds.

D. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Paralegal education programs should be able to demonstrate that their courses incorporate learning strategies which develop their students' abilities to:

1. establish rapport and interact with lawyers, clients, witnesses, court personnel, co-workers, and other business professionals;
2. be diplomatic and tactful;
3. be flexible and adaptable;

4. be assertive without being aggressive;
5. work effectively as part of a team when appropriate.; and
6. work independently and with a minimal amount of supervision when appropriate.

E. LEGAL RESEARCH SKILLS

Legal research involves the application of the critical thinking, organizational, and communications skills listed above. Courses should teach students how to apply these skills to be able to:

1. use the resources available in a standard law library to locate applicable statutes, administrative regulations, constitutional provisions, court cases, and other primary source materials;
2. use LEXIS, WESTLAW, and/or other computer assisted legal research programs to locate applicable statutes, administrative regulations, constitutional provisions, court cases, and other primary source materials;
3. use the resources of a standard law library to locate treatises, law review articles, legal encyclopedia, and other secondary source materials that help to explain the law; and
4. "cite check" legal sources.

F. LEGAL WRITING SKILLS

Legal writing involves the application of the critical thinking, organizational, and communications skills listed above. Courses should teach students how to apply these skills to be able to:

1. report legal research findings in a standard interoffice memo or other appropriate format;
2. use appropriate citations for sources;

3. use the proper format and appropriate content in drafting client correspondence and legal documents; and
4. modify standardized forms found in form books, pleadings files, or a computer data bank.

G. COMPUTER SKILLS

Although it is certainly possible for an individual to perform many paralegal tasks without the use of computers, increasing levels of computer literacy will be demanded in the future. Courses should teach students how to:

1. use the basic features of at least one commonly used word processing program, database program, and spreadsheet program; and
2. use the basic features of a computer assisted legal research program and other electronic resources.

H. INTERVIEWING AND INVESTIGATION SKILLS

Interviewing and investigation involve the application of the critical thinking, organizational, and communications skills listed above. Courses should teach students how to:

1. identify witnesses or potential parties to a suit;
2. conduct an effective interview and record appropriate, accurate statements;
3. gain access to information that is commonly kept by government agencies; and
4. prepare releases and requests to gain access to medical and corporate records.

II. ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE

Although paralegals work in a variety of specialty areas, there is a common core of legal knowledge that all paralegals should possess.

A. ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Paralegal education programs should be able to demonstrate that their curricula include courses or segments of courses which provide their students with an understanding of:

1. the major functions the law serves in modern society;
2. how common law traditions are reflected in today's legal system; how law is classified on the basis of its source and its function; the difference between substantive and procedural law; and the difference between civil and criminal law;
3. the general structure of the U.S. legal system at the federal, state, and local levels;
4. the detailed structure of the state and local courts in the state within which the paralegal program is located;
5. the differences in function and procedure among trial courts, appellate courts, and administrative hearings; and
6. the functions performed by the various officials involved in the court system (e.g., police, lawyers, judges, court clerks, court reporters).

B. ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF LAW OFFICES

Paralegal education programs should be able to demonstrate that their curricula include courses or segments of courses which provide their students with an understanding of:

1. the various types of practice arrangements lawyers use for the delivery of legal services to the general public and the indigent, as well as in corporations and government agencies;
2. the functions performed by the various people typically working in a law office, including attorneys (partners and associates), paralegal/legal assistants, clerical personnel, investigators, and others; and
3. the organizational structure and the administrative procedures (including time-keeping and billing systems) that are commonly used in law offices.

C. THE PARALEGAL PROFESSION AND ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS

Paralegal education programs should be able to demonstrate that their curricula include courses or segments of courses which provide their students with an understanding of:

1. the factors which lead attorneys to employ paralegals/legal assistants;
2. the types of duties paralegal/legal assistants perform when working in various areas of the law;
3. definitions that are most commonly used for the following terms: *paralegal, legal assistant, independent paralegal, legal technician, freelance paralegal, certification, registration, and licensure*;
4. an understanding of the ethical responsibilities that have been established by statutes, court decisions, and court rules affecting paralegals/legal assistants and lawyers

(including conflict of interest, confidentiality, competence, solicitation, fees and billing, obligations of attorneys to clients, and protection of client funds); and

5. the nature of the supervision that must be present in order to avoid situations that constitute the unauthorized practice of law.

D. CONTRACTS

Although it is certainly possible for paralegals/legal assistants to work in some specialty areas without an extensive knowledge of contracts, an understanding of some of the most basic principles of contracts is very useful in a wide variety of specialty areas. Paralegal education programs should be able to demonstrate that their curricula include courses or segments of courses which provide their students with an understanding of:

1. the manner in which contracts are formed and what elements must be present for a contract to be valid;
2. the rights and obligations of the various parties to contract, as well as the rights of third parties; and
3. remedies that are available when contracts are breached and the steps that must be taken to invoke those remedies.

E. TORTS

Although it is certainly possible for paralegals/legal assistants to work in some specialty areas without an extensive knowledge of torts, the basic principles of this area of law are applicable to such a large number of matters as to justify its inclusion among the core competencies needed for quality paralegal programs. Paralegal education programs should be able to demonstrate that their curricula include courses or segments of courses which provide their students with an understanding of:

1. the concepts of negligence, duty, breach, proximate cause, intentional torts, and strict liability; and

2. the various types of damages that can be awarded and what needs to be established to collect such damages.

F. BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

Although it is certainly possible for paralegals/legal assistants to work in some specialty areas without an extensive knowledge of business organizations, the basic principles of this area of law are applicable to a large enough number of matters as to justify its inclusion among the core competencies needed for quality paralegal programs. Paralegal education programs should be able to demonstrate that their curricula include courses or segments of courses which provide their students with an understanding of:

1. the basic forms and functions of business organizations, including sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited partnerships, for profit corporations, and not-for-profit corporations.

G. LITIGATION PROCEDURES

Although it is certainly possible for paralegals/legal assistants to work in jobs where they are not directly involved in litigation, the number of matters that are litigated are great enough to justify its inclusion among the core competencies needed for quality paralegal programs. Paralegal education programs should be able to demonstrate that their curricula include courses or segments of courses which provide their students with an understanding of:

1. the basic differences between civil and criminal procedure;
2. the nature of the remedies that are available through civil litigation;
3. the form, content, and function of the legal documents that are typically prepared as part of the litigation process; and
4. the types of calendaring and tickler systems that are frequently used as part of a "case management" system.

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Legal Assistant Program Enrollment 1996 to 2001.

Following are the enrollment figures for:

LLAW 160, the first course in the Legal Assistant Program;
LLAW 280, the first course in the second year of the program;
the total number of students taking the courses in the program; and
the official count of students in the program.

Year	LLAW 160	LLAW 280	Total	Official Count.
1996	16	10	26	26
1997	18	9	27	29
1998	30	6	36	30
1999	31	12	43	37
2000	27	9	36	21
2001	43	16	59	33*

* This includes 22 Legal Assistant majors and 11 Legal Assistant/Business Administration majors.