

**Site Visit Report  
Reapproval**

**PARALEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM  
Cuyamaca College  
El Cajon, California  
December 5-6, 2023**

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Cuyamaca College (“CC”) has applied to the American Bar Association for reapproval of its Paralegal Studies Program. The site visit was conducted on December 5 and 6, 2023, by Robyn Ice, J.D., M.F.A., ABA Approval Commission Chair and Site Visit Team Chair and Director of the General Legal Studies Program at Tulane College School of Professional Advancement in New Orleans, LA; and Melissa Hamilton, Site Team Member and Approval Commission Member and Paralegal in the North Dakota Office of Attorney General in Bismarck, ND.

CC’s Program began in 1992, and it received its initial ABA approval in February 2002. The Program was most recently approved effective February 2016.

The Standing Committee has adopted a policy for the use of virtual visits. In accordance with the Approval Commission’s Guidelines for Conducting Virtual Site Visits, the Program Director has elected to hold a virtual site visit. This visit was conducted in accordance with the Standing Committee’s policy and the Approval Commission’s Guidelines.

The site visit consisted of the following virtual activities:

- Video tour of Campus;
- Video tour of Library;
- Meeting via Zoom with Joan Rettinger, Program Director;
- Meeting via Zoom with Dr. Jessica Robinson, MSW, Cuyamaca College President;
- Meeting via Zoom with Jeanie Machado Tyler, MSOL, Vice President of Instruction; and George Dowden M.Ed., Dean of Career Education;
- Meeting via Zoom with Librarian Matthew Chase, MASP, MLIS, Instruction Librarian and Department Chair;
- Meeting via Zoom with Brianna C. Hayes, M.S., Interim Vice President of Student Services;
- Meeting via Zoom with Admissions & Records Specialist, Sr. Vanessa Saenz;
- Meeting via Zoom with two current students: Maryna Danial and Cinthya Barron;
- Meeting via Zoom with five alumni: Jacob Finnell, Yvonne Hunt, Ana McMahon, Tiffany Tucker, and TJ Wilson;
- Meeting via Zoom with 10 members of the Advisory Committee: Brandon Baker, Dave Britton, Lori Hinton, Tomas Huerta, Suzie Johnson, Garrison (Bud) Kuleck, Susie Johnson, Monica Rosas, Ariane San Miguel, and Judge Edward Sturgeon;
- Meeting via Zoom with faculty: Judge Eddie Sturgeon, Brandon Baker, and Frantz Farreau;

- Meeting via Zoom with Charlene Alsbaugh, MA. Ed. Program Manager; Agustin Orozco Counseling Dean; Sade Burrell, Dean Student Services; Lauren Vaknin, Ed.D. Dean, Student Affairs; Kevin Brown, Career Center Supervisor; and Donna Hajj, Counselor;
- Meeting via Zoom with IT Staff: Jessica Hurtado Soto, Dean Learning & Technology Resources; Fred Geoola and Eva Zaharia, Technical Support/Help Desk; Jerry Williamson, Director, Computer Services Information Technology GCCCD; and Eugene Davis, District Networking Manager;
- Meeting via Zoom with Learning Design Staff: Bri Brown, Ed.D.; Amber Toland Perry, Distance Education Coordinator; Instructional Design Technology Specialist, Nicole G. Hernandez, HyFlex Coordinator; and Jessica Hurtado Soto, Dean Learning & Technology Resources;
- Review of PARA 130 – Legal Research, offered in a synchronous format;
- Review of Para 170 – Workers’ Compensation in a remote synchronous hybrid and PARA 100 – Intro to Paralegal Studies, in Hy-flex blended- format;
- Review of PARA 140 – Intro to Criminal Law & Procedures, in an asynchronous online format;
- Examination of student files, student practical assignments, course and faculty evaluations, and graduate and employer surveys; and
- An exit meeting via Zoom with Joan Rettinger, J.D., Program Director; and George Dowden M.Ed., Dean of Career Education.

**SECTION I**  
**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**G-101 – 107**

**Institution**

CC is a publicly supported community college serving primarily the east county region of San Diego County, California. It is one of two community colleges in the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District. Total enrollment is approximately 10,000 students on one campus, which is located at 900 Rancho San Diego Parkway, El Cajon, California.

CC is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. It was most recently reaccredited in January 2019.

CC offers an Associate of Science (AS) Degree in Paralegal Studies. Paralegal specialty classes are offered primarily online.

**Program**

CC offers an Associate of Science Degree in Paralegal Studies. In addition to providing classes in a traditional format, the Program offers courses in asynchronous online, blended/hybrid, compressed, and remote synchronous formats. The in-person, blended/hybrid, and synchronous remote classes are offered in the evening. All formats are described more fully below.

Enrollments have fluctuated during the reapproval period, with 137 students enrolled in the degree program in the 2018 to 2019 academic year; 129 in 2019 to 2020; 159 in 2020 to 2021; and 96 in 2021. During this reporting period (August 2018 through October 2021), 111 Paralegal Studies students earned the AS degree.

The institution, including the Paralegal Program, offers dual enrollment to high school students. Classes are offered on the Cuyamaca College campus and online in blended-hybrid format, with no alterations to the coursework offered to college-age students. On examination, the Site Team confirmed that the Program's participation in CC's dual enrollment program meets all requirements for awarding credit to high school students as set forth in G- 103.F, G-501(a).

## SECTION II ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

### G-201

#### Goals and Objectives

The Program has clear goals and objectives stated in measurable terms. These goals and objectives are published online in the college catalog and on the Program's webpage.

The Program seeks to prepare and provide students with the analytical skills and written abilities necessary to assist attorneys in the practice of law, emphasizing three primary areas: legal research, analysis, and writing; ethics and the mechanics of law; and the integration of substantive and procedural law.

The Program's Goals are:

This degree program is specifically designed to prepare and provide students with the analytical skills and written abilities necessary to assist attorneys in the practice of law. The technical curriculum goals and objectives emphasize three primary areas:

1. Legal Research, Analysis and Writing
2. Ethics and the Mechanics of Law
3. Integration of Substantive and Procedural Law

The successful paralegal degree candidate will possess a broad educational background with an opportunity to gain specialized skills in specific areas of law.

The Program's Learning Outcomes are as follows:

Upon successful completion of this program, students will be able to:

- Apply the research, analytical skills, and college-level writing abilities necessary to assist attorneys in the practice of law.
- Conduct oneself in an ethical and professional manner when confronted with a law office related conflict scenario.

The Site Team confirmed that the Program's goals and objectives are published and readily available to students and prospective students. The Site Team also confirmed that the Program is assessing its published goals and objectives. G-201.A, G-301.E

The Program Director is delegated the authority necessary for developing and implementing the Program. The Program is part of the Business and Professional Studies Department in the Career Education Division. The Program Director reports to the Dean of Career Education, who reports to the Vice President for Instruction, who in turn reports to the Cuyamaca College President.

The Site Visit Team met with George Dowden, Dean of Career Education; Dr. Jessica Robinson, MSW President; and Jeanie Machado Tyler, MSOL, Vice President of Instruction. These and all other administrators were knowledgeable about the Program and supportive of its goals. They are

enthusiastic about the Program and dedicated to its continuing success. The organizational structure of the Program and its place within the institution ensure that the Program can achieve its goals. Communication and coordination are facilitated smoothly among faculty members, administrators, and students.

### **Program Director Authority and Administration Support**

The Program Director is delegated the authority necessary for developing and implementing the Program. The Site Team met with MSW President Dr. Jessica Robinson; Dean of Career Education George Dowden M.Ed.; and others in the upper levels of administration. All administrators who met with the Site Team were extremely knowledgeable about the Program and supportive of its goals.

### **Organizational Structure**

The organizational structure of the Program and its place within the institution allows the Program to achieve its goals. The team also met with Brianna C. Hays, M.S. Interim Vice President of Student Services; Vanessa Saenz, Admissions & Records Specialist, Sr.; Matthew Chase, MASP, MLIS Instruction Librarian and Department Chair; Agustin Orozco, Counseling Dean; Sade Burrell, Dean of Student Services; Lauren Vaknin, Ed.D., Dean of Student Affairs; Kevin Brown, Career Center Supervisor; and Jessica Hurtado Soto Dean of Learning & Technology Resources, all of whom assist the Program Director in fulfilling the leadership functions required in the Guidelines.

### **Planning**

The Program engages in both short-term and long-term planning. The Program Director leads planning for the Program Director, with input and assistance from the Dean, Advisory Committee, faculty, and students. Such planning encompasses the matters set forth in the Guidelines.

### **G-202**

#### **Comparability**

The Paralegal Program Director, who also serves as director of the Career Education Department's Real Estate Program, has duties and resources similar to those of the heads of other academic programs within the Career Education Department, including curriculum and program development, hiring adjunct instructors, and overseeing budget requests. Employment conditions are uniform for similar programs within the department. All program directors and full-time instructors have similar office accommodations and technical and secretarial assistance. The Program Director has access to professional development funds; adjunct faculty has numerous opportunities for professional development training, provided by Cuyamaca College.

In discussing the Program Director's duties and workload, the Site Team determined that, although the College provides the Program Director with funding for administrative support in the form of a Teaching Assistant (TA) around the mid-point of each semester, the Program Director is most in need of this assistance earlier in the semester. In addition, the Program Director received a reduced teaching load (reassign time) to allow time to compile and submit the Program's reapproval report and prepare for the site visit but not to complete the other tasks necessary for maintaining the Program's ABA approval status.

- *To ensure that the Program Director has adequate support to perform the duties necessary for the position, the Site Team suggests that the College consider providing the Provide the Director with TA support early in each semester. G-202*
- *To allow the Program Director adequate time to perform the ongoing administrative tasks necessary to maintain ABA approval, specifically when reapproval and interim reports are due and assessment surveys are performed, the Site Team suggests that the College may wish to allow the Program Director additional reassign time. G-202*

## **G-203**

### **Advisory Committee Composition**

The Program Director appoints the members, soliciting suggestions from current committee members and faculty. The Site Team confirmed that all categories required by the Guidelines are represented: practicing lawyers, paralegals from the private and public sector, managers of paralegals, faculty and school administrators, and members of the general public. Currently there are 30 members. A majority of the members are appointed from the community the Program serves and are not currently affiliated with the institution. As several employees of CC serve on the Advisory Committee, the Site Team confirmed that insiders do not dominate the meetings.

### **Advisory Committee Meetings**

The Advisory Committee meets two times each year, in the fall and spring semesters. The Advisory Committee meets as a whole; there are no subcommittees. Meetings include attendance by a majority of all required constituencies. The Site Team confirmed that the minutes of the meetings include (1) a list of those in attendance along with the constituency they represent; (2) a list of the absent members; (3) the topics discussed; and (4) the actions taken; and that the meeting attendees include a majority of all required constituents.

### **Advisory Committee Responsibilities**

The Site Team confirmed that the Program Director and Advisory Committee are aware of the changes made to the Guidelines relating to the Advisory Committee and its areas of responsibility. as set forth in G-203.D and E and have implemented the changes. The minutes of the meetings demonstrate that the Advisory Committee offers guidance with respect to (1) changes and trends in the field; (2) the job market; and (3) assessing the effectiveness of the total Program in terms of its curriculum and objectives, the needs of the legal community, and graduate performance. The Advisory Committee also provides guidance in the areas of developing career opportunities for students, publicizing the Program, and evaluating the adequacy of the library resources. The members are familiar with the objectives of the Program and are dedicated to the continued excellence of the Program.

## **G-204**

### **Equality of Opportunity**

CC and the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District have non-discrimination policies, which are disseminated online in the College catalog and website. These policies are supported and enforced by CC Administrators at all levels, including but not limited to the College President, Vice President of Instruction, Dean of Career Education, and Vice President of Student Services; and at the District level by the EEO Officer, the EEO Advisory Committee, and others. The CC catalog contains non-discrimination statements regarding gender, sexual harassment, equal employment, affirmative action, and disabilities. The racial composition of the faculty and student body reflects the general population in the region the Colleges serves.

## **G-205**

### **Financial Resources**

CC is part of California's community college system. It receives financial support from annual appropriations from the state's legislature, student tuition payments, and fees, among other sources. The Paralegal Program receives sufficient resources and funding from the college to accomplish its goals. The college provides sufficient support for student success, including student services, support for instructional activities, and library resources.

As the Program reported no or minimal expenditures for technical and support services, assessment and advisory committee/faculty meetings, the Site Team confirmed that the Program receives sufficient funding for all required categories listed in the Guidelines. Further, because the Program offers legal specialty classes through remote synchronous and/or asynchronous online instruction, the Site Team confirmed that the College provides sufficient support, including access to student services, instructional activities, administrative resources, faculty, and library resources.

## **G-206**

### **Type of Institution**

Cuyamaca College is a publicly supported two-year institution.

## **SECTION III** **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

## **G-301**

### **Professional Competence**

Cuyamaca College offers an Associate in Science degree in Paralegal Studies for which students are required to complete sixty credits hours, including at least 21 credits of legal specialty courses and 25 credits of general education courses.



Based upon discussions with students, graduates, and faculty, the legal specialty courses combine theory with practical application. Students were complimentary about the faculty, who are readily available to answer questions and address concerns.

### **Instructional Methodology**

The Site Team observed two classes, PARA 170 – Workers’ Compensation in a synchronous remote/hybrid format; PARA 100 – Intro to Paralegal Studies, in Hy-flex blended/hybrid format; PARA 130 – Legal Research, offered in a synchronous format; and PARA 140 – Intro to Criminal Law & Procedures, in an asynchronous online format. In each, the Site Team observed the interaction of the instructors and the students. Practical assignments are required in all legal specialty classes. Based on their observations, discussions with students, and on their examination of student work, the Site Team concluded that the instructors emphasize the skills and knowledge required for success in the paralegal profession. The Program covers all critical paralegal skills needed in the local community.

In PARA 100- Intro to Paralegal Studies, , offered in the Hy-flex blended/hybrid format, the Site Team observed a lecture addressing negotiations and legal correspondence that was enhanced with screen-shared forms and other examples. Students were fully engaged, asking questions, and interacting with one another via the chat and the microphones and cameras available in the well-equipped classrooms. Students were similarly engaged in PARA 170 – Workers’ Compensation, in which students completed multiple practical assignments, such as evaluating and calculating Workers Compensation benefits for a variety of scenarios. The online group discussions were entitled “You’re the Judge.”

In PARA 130 – Legal Research, the Site Team observed hands-on instruction in researching case law in the library. The lecture was enhanced by the use of PowerPoint slides, and the students were engaged in the presentation, answering questions posed by the instructor, and asking questions about the material.

In PARA 140 – Intro to Criminal Law & Procedures, offered in asynchronous online format, the Site Team reviewed course content and discussions from the Fall 2023 semester, which included preparation of a direct examination of a witness, drafting a memorandum of law addressing the legality of law enforcement’s searches of a car and briefcase, and several other practical assignments. Students participated actively and enthusiastically in online discussion assignments, interacting easily with the instructor and other students.

Students and graduates reported that all faculty are personable and accessible and bring valuable professional experience to the classroom. Several graduates remarked on the hands-on manner in which faculty assisted them in their successful job searches. When not in class or logged into Canvas, students communicate easily with faculty via email or telephone. Students remarked that the Program Director, who also teaches in the program, is always accessible.

### **Further Education**

Cuyamaca College is a California Community College, and its students are guaranteed admission into a California State University if they opt to participate and successfully complete the necessary courses for transfer. The College has agreements with two private institutions: National University (NU) for

the B.S. in Paralegal Studies Pathway and Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) for the Bachelor of Business Administration, Organizational Leadership.

CC encourages students and graduates to earn higher or additional degrees or certificates after completing the Program. All students have access to the Transfer Center, including e-Transfer Counseling, and virtual appointments. CC also offers Counseling 150 Transfer Success Class, a course designed to support students in the transfer process to CSU and UC institutions. In addition, representatives from PLNU and NU are invited to present directly to Paralegal Studies students in the classroom. Faculty announce these events to students via electronic announcements through Canvas.

### **Assessment**

The Program has a written plan for evaluation, review, and improvement that aligns with the Program's goals and objectives. The plan includes all the elements contained in G-301.E including (1) the program's stated goals and objectives; (2) the assessment tools with the specific questions/activities aligned to measure each stated goal and objective; (3) the way in which input is obtained from graduates and employers of graduates to assess how the program meets its stated goals and objectives; and (4) the frequency with which each assessment tool will be conducted.

The Program has clear goals and objectives stated in measurable terms. These goals and objectives are published online in the college catalog and on the Program's webpage. The Program seeks to prepare and provide students with the analytical skills and written abilities necessary to assist attorneys in the practice of law, emphasizing three primary areas: legal research, analysis, and writing; ethics and the mechanics of law; and the integration of substantive and procedural law.

The Plan includes tools to assess Program Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes. Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) are assessed at least every four years. Each SLO is mapped to a Program Learning Outcome (PLO), and the response of each student participating in the assessment is recorded. All SLO assessment data is entered into the Trac Dat database, which the Program uses to compile the Comprehensive or Annual Update to Program Review – Paralegal Studies, capturing progress on the preceding year's goals and objectives and setting goals for the next year. The Program Director monitors the status of the SLOs from each class, and instructors adjust and improve their course content.

Students complete course and faculty surveys via a college-wide instrument, which is circulated when an instructor teaches their first course at CC and when a current instructor teaches a new course, and every sixth semester thereafter. The survey results become part of the faculty member's personnel file. In addition, every semester, students evaluate each of their paralegal courses via the Canvas Learning Management System. These evaluations are available to the instructors the following semester. Individual instructor's evaluations result in either positive or improvement comments to that instructor by either the program director or the dean.

Graduates' employers and the legal community are surveyed formally every two years via a focus group, with a representative number of various members of the legal community attending. The Paralegal Program has also conducted focus groups of the local legal community in partnership with other community colleges in the area. With the exception of the Pandemic period, focus

groups are conducted every two years. Panel participants include working paralegals, attorneys from governmental entities, and attorneys in private practice. A facilitator poses questions addressing the skill levels the employers expect of paralegals, the schools' curricula, and other factors. Participating schools receive transcripts of the discussions, which the Program Director shares with the Advisory Committee and faculty at their respective meetings.

The results of the program review and student learning outcomes assessment findings are summarized and analyzed according to the template provided by the Cuyamaca Program Review Steering Committee.

Graduates are surveyed within 6 months of their graduation via a survey instrument circulated via email after the Fall (December) and Spring (June) semesters of every academic year, with separate sets of questions designed to elicit (a) the graduate placement information required in G-502.D and (b) the graduates' input as to how the program is meeting its goals and learning objectives, as required in G- 301.E.3.

The graduate surveys results are compiled into a single exhibit, shared with faculty and the Advisory Committee via email, and discussed at the meetings of each stakeholder group.

Graduate Surveys have informed the Program Director of changes that may be necessary to improve or update individual courses, to ensure that content meets the needs of the legal community. Survey results are compiled on a spreadsheet, allowing the Program Director, faculty, and administration to compare their students' paths against those of the state and national average. Among other improvements, the survey data, together with the specific comments of the graduates, have led to the Program's decision to offer additional electives in online formats.

The Program gathers input from the employers of its graduates through Employers' Focus Groups, which have provided valuable feedback that has caused the Program to recognize the need for specific changes. For example, when employers expressed a need for soft skills as well as reading/writing skills, each Paralegal Program instructor incorporated additional instruction into those areas. The Program also added a recommended program-wide prerequisite of ENG 109. When employers stressed the need for additional technology skills, the Program updated the curriculum to add Business Office Technology courses as alternatives to straight Word courses.

After a 2021 focus group expressed a need for increased competency with technology, which was further bolstered by Advisory Committee discussions, the Program added a new course to the curriculum and encouraged students to complete the NSLT legal office technology training. To update instructors, the Program offered a legal technology training class to teach the Paralegal faculty how to modernize their Canvas shells and incorporate more technology into their courses.

With input from the Advisory Committee and focus groups, CC also has developed specialization tracks to help guide students as they select courses from paralegal electives and general education areas, to ensure our students thrive in the legal specialty of their preference when entering the workforce.

When a student learning objective (SLO) assessment indicates that students are not grasping a concept, that instructor reviews the specific instruction or assessment tool to identify necessary changes. For example, when an SLO in PARA 170 - Worker's Compensation indicated students were failing because they could not perform the basic math computations necessary to ascertain a client's disability rating, the faculty discussed met with math faculty to consider the development of handouts to instruct students in the calculation methods.

The Program Director works closely with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, which supports the Program in the collection, analysis, and reporting of assessment data.

The legal specialty course syllabi include measurable student learning outcomes for each course. The student learning outcomes are mapped to the Program outcomes. Therefore, the course level assessment is used as part of the program-level assessment. Individual courses and the Program are continuously evaluated using the results of the assessments. The Program Director determines the effectiveness and whether the stated goals of the Program are being met, and constantly seeks informal feedback regarding the Program from administrators, faculty, and students.

The Program Director prepares a written analysis of the assessment data, which is synthesized and analyzed to demonstrate that the Program is meeting each of its stated goals and objectives. This information is shared with the faculty, administration, and the Advisory Committee. Adjustments and changes to the Program are made based on the direct results of the assessment activities.

The Site Team confirmed that the Program Director is aware of the information that must now be included as part of the Program's assessment plan under the revised Guidelines and has revised the plan accordingly to include the four elements listed in G- 301.E. The Site Team confirmed that the Program is summarizing the assessment data to demonstrate how the Program is meeting its goals and objectives. The Site Team also confirmed that the Program is synthesizing and analyzing the assessment findings and demonstrating how the Program is meeting each of its stated goals and objectives. The Program is sharing the assessment results with the relevant constituencies and using the assessment results to make changes to the Program.

- *Suggestion: Six months after students graduate, the Program perform two separate surveys of graduates, using separate instruments and questions, including (1) the G-502.D "placement surveys" to determine employment status; and (2) the G-301.E.3 surveys to obtain graduates' input as to how the program is meeting its LOs. To obtain more informed responses from graduates in the workforce, the Site Team suggests that the Program consider performing the 301.E.3 graduate survey one to two years after students graduate. G- 301.E.3, G-502.D*

## **G-302**

### **Post-Secondary Education/Accreditation**

CC is a post-secondary program and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. It was most recently accredited in 2013.

### **Curriculum Requirements**

To earn the Associate in Science degree, students must complete 60 credits, including 15 semester credits of legal specialty required (LS-R) coursework, 6 semester credits of Legal Specialty Elective (LS-E) coursework, 25 credits of general education (GE) coursework in at least three disciplines, and 14 credits of other program requirements (OPR).

The legal specialty courses required for the Associate in Science degree are as follows:

Course #	Course Name	Credits	Type
PARA-100	Introduction to Paralegal Studies	3	LS-R
PARA-110	Civil Litigation Practice and Procedures	3	LS-R
PARA-130	Legal Research and Writing	3	LS-R
PARA-132	Computer Assisted Legal Research (CALR)	3	LS-R
PARA-135	Bankruptcy Law	3	LS-R
Select at least six units from the following:		6	LS-E
PARA-120	Introduction to Administrative Law		LS-E
PARA-121	Social Security Disability Law		LS-E
PARA-125	Business Organizations		LS-E
PARA-140	Introduction to Criminal Law and Procedures		LS-E
PARA-146	Probate and Administration of Estates		LS-E
PARA-150	Family Law (Divorce, Separation, Nullity, and Paternity)		LS-E
PARA-151	Family Law (Custody, Visitation, Support)		LS-E
PARA-160	Personal Injury		LS-E
PARA-170	Workers' Compensation		LS-E
PARA-175	Electronic Discovery: Fundamentals and Procedure		LS-E
PARA-176	Electronic Discovery: Advanced Practice		LS-E
PARA-250	Internship (Student must complete 18 units within the major to be eligible for this course.)		LS-E
	TOTAL LEGAL SPECIALTY CREDITS	21	

### **General Education/Total Unit Requirements**

Students in the A.S. degree option must complete a minimum of 25 semester credits of general education courses in at least three disciplines. The general education courses are rationally sequenced. There are no exemptions to the general education or total unit requirements.

Students fulfill the Guideline requirements for General Education by completing 6 units from Area A - Language and Rationality, 4 units from Area B - Natural Sciences, 3 units from Area C - Humanities, 3 units from Area D - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 3 units from Area E - Cultural Diversity, and an additional 6 units of coursework from two different areas: Area B, Area C, or Area D. Together, these requirements total 25 credits of General Education.

Area A - Language and Rationality is comprised of written and oral communication and analytical thinking. Area B - Natural Sciences includes a laboratory course. The Area E - Cultural Diversity Graduation Requirement is fulfilled by completing 3 units from Area E.

Students also must demonstrate Math and English competency requirements and maintain at least a 2.0 GPA in all college work counted toward GE requirements. Students may count a maximum of 12 "Pass" semester units toward graduation.

### **Writing Proficiency and Oral Communication Competency**

Degree students must complete English 120 – College Composition and Reading with a grade of P or C or better. Students may fulfill CC's Oral Communication and Analytical Thinking requirement by completing one of the following courses with a grade of "P" or "C" or better:

- COMM 120 – Interpersonal Communication, 122 – Public Speaking; 137 – Critical Thinking in Group Communication; or 145 – Argumentation;
- ENGR 100 – Intro to Engineering & Design;
- MATH 110 - Intermediate Algebra for Business, Math, Science and Engineering Majors; 120 - Quantitative Reasoning; 125 - Structure and Concepts of Elementary Mathematics I; 160 - Elementary Statistics; 170 - Analytic Trigonometry; 175 – College Algebra; 176 – Pre-Calculus: Functions and Graphs; 178 - Calculus for Business, Social and Behavioral Sciences; 180 - Analytic Geometry and Calculus I; 245 - Discrete Mathematics; 280 - Analytic Geometry and Calculus II; 281 - Multivariable Calculus, 284 - Linear Algebra;
- PHIL 125 – Critical Thinking or 130 - Logic; or
- PSY 215 - Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences.

### **General Education Transfer**

General education courses are accepted in transfer. Cuyamaca College will accept credits transferred from accredited colleges. Certified transcripts of all previous records must be sent to the College at the time of the application.

Transcripts from currently enrolled students are reviewed to determine the number of units that will be accepted and applied toward degree & certificate goals and are then incorporated into the overall GPA. The Counseling Office initiates a course-by-course evaluation to award course equivalencies, and to determine the fulfillment of degree and/or certificate requirements, after which transfer students receive an official evaluation report.

Transcripts issued in foreign countries from non-American system institutions and those in languages other than English must be translated into English and submitted to either Academic Credentials Evaluation Institute, Inc. (ACEI) or International Education Research Foundation, Inc. (IERF) below for an official evaluation.

### **Technology Skills**

To ensure that they have sufficient technology skills for employment as paralegals, students are required to complete two Business Office Technology (BOT) courses, BOT 120 - Comprehensive Word, Level I and 121 - Comprehensive Word Level II, plus one of 3 additional courses: BOT 122 - Comprehensive Word Level III, BOT 151 - Using Microsoft Outlook, or BOT 115 - Essential Excel. In addition, after completing their second BOT course, paralegal students may request access to National Society for Legal Technology memberships to complete both the Legal Technology Certificate and eDiscovery Technology Certificate, which the College funds.

Based on these procedures and on observations and discussions with students and graduates during the site visit, the Site Team determined that that the program provides students with the necessary technology skills to work as paralegals.

### **Legal Specialty Courses**

The Site Team reviewed the practical assignments provided by the Program for each legal specialty course and confirmed that the legal specialty courses emphasize practical skills and not only include but actually focus upon appropriate practical assignments. The faculty has designed the legal specialty courses to provide students with the paralegal skills they need to succeed in their careers and to meet the instructional requirements of the Guidelines. There are no exemptions to the legal specialty course requirements.

### **Ethical and Professional Responsibility**

The Program has incorporated ethics and professional responsibility into every Paralegal Studies course. Beginning with a heavy emphasis in PARA 100 and PARA 130, each course builds upon and reinforces the standards and expectations to which paralegals and others in the legal profession must adhere.

Approximately 10 hours in class time are dedicated to teaching legal ethics in PARA 100 – Intro to Paralegal Studies, with an additional 5 to 10 hours in all other legal specialty courses. Students who complete the program spend approximately 105 hours in the study of ethics.

### **Instruction in Legal Research**

In PARA 130 - Legal Research, students learn to perform legal research using print and electronic resources. All students have Westlaw passwords, which they can use to log into the service at any

computer on campus or at home. PARA 132 - Computer Assisted Legal Research expands on the foundation provided in PARA 130 and provides upper-level instruction in electronic research.

### **Legal Specialty Internship**

Students in the AS degree program perform internships and take the internship class, a legal specialty course. Before participating in the internship experience, paralegal students engage in self-reflection, completing a quiz to identify areas of law in which they are interested and confirm whether they have identified a host attorney. Students also complete a self-assessment in which they reflect on the skills and values of the profession and confirm anticipated areas of professional growth and skills development.

Based upon this information, the instructor locates the appropriate contacts to gauge interest and discusses with the law office the steps required to establish the internship relationship, including execution of the internship contract, assignment of appropriate paralegal assignments, the need for frequent and direct feedback to facilitate growth, completion of the evaluation form, verifying time sheets, and meeting with the instructor during the semester. After these discussions, paralegal students are assigned to their internships. The instructor introduces the students to the attorneys, who conduct interviews to confirm that the internship is a good match. If the students and attorneys reach agreement, they sign and return the internship contact to the instructor and Dean's Office.

The instructor monitors each internship. Students participate in weekly discussion boards, posting the number of hours completed and progress reports. The instructor meets with the host attorneys twice during the semester. The instructor meets with the students four times over the course of the semester: at the beginning of the term, to explain internship requirements; after the intern has completed approximately 1/3 of the total hours; when the student has completed approximately 2/3 of the total hours; and after the internship is completed, to debrief the experience and prepare the final report. Throughout the internship, the instructor is available to address issues or concerns via the discussion board or other channels.

At the end of the internship, the supervising attorney provides an overall evaluation and signs the time sheet validating the hours worked. The student meets with the instructor to discuss their performance and progress toward their goals. Students then prepare a memo reviewing their goals and summarizing their work experience and accomplishments.

During the self- assessment, students are reminded of California paralegal skills and competencies as a reference for appropriate activities. The program ensures that the students interact with the supervisor and co-workers on a regular basis through the discussion posts and Zoom meetings. Students report on the frequency of feedback and the overall law office experience.

### **Legal Specialty Independent Study Courses**

The Program offers no legal specialty courses as independent study courses.

### **Legal Specialty Transfer**

Students must complete a minimum of 12 semester units of Legal Specialty courses in the Paralegal Program at CC. Students requesting credit by transfer must present official transcripts from the awarding institutions to the CC student records office, along with course descriptions and



syllabi The Program Director reviews the materials and determines whether (1) the institution that awarded the credits is accredited at a level equivalent to CC; (2) the credits were awarded as part of a paralegal program substantially the equivalent to the CC Paralegal Studies Program; and (3) each course is substantially equivalent to the CC course, including practical assignments and semester hours.

If the Program Director finds that the courses meet the legal transfer criteria, the Program Director generates a course substitution form indicating the source of the credits, the equivalent legal specialty course, and the basis for the recommendation. All course substitutions are also approved by the Division Dean, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and the Student Records office. This policy is in writing and is published in the catalog where it is readily accessible to all students and prospective students.

Based on the above, Site Team confirmed that the Paralegal Program has in place a policy for the transfer of legal specialty coursework that limits the number of legal specialty credits accepted in transfer and is published and available to prospective students and current students, as required in G-302.I.7.

### **Asynchronous Online Legal Specialty Courses**

The Program offers the following legal specialty classes in asynchronous format:

- PARA 100-Introduction to Paralegal Studies
- PARA 110-Civil Litigation
- PARA 120-Introduction to Administrative Law
- PARA 121-Social Security Disability Law
- PARA 125-Business Organizations
- PARA 130-Legal Research & Writing
- PARA 132-Computer Assisted Legal Research
- PARA 135-Bankruptcy Law
- PARA 145-Estate Planning
- PARA 146-Probate and Administration of Estates
- PARA 150-Family Law (Divorce, Separation, Nullity, and Paternity)
- PARA 151-Family Law (Custody, Visitation, and Support)
- PARA 160-Personal Injury
- PARA 170-Worker's Compensation
- PARA 175-Electronic Discovery: Fundamentals & Procedure
- PARA 176-Electronic Discovery: Advanced Practice
- PARA 250-Internship

The Site Team reviewed PARA 140 – Intro to Criminal Law & Procedure in asynchronous format. In reviewing the modules and other features of the course in the Canvas platform, the Site Team verified the use of appropriate structured instructional activities, as well as systematic interaction throughout the course between students and between students and the instructor. The assignments, tests, and projects are similar to those provided in the traditional class format. Faculty provide prompt responses to student questions and prompt feedback on assignments. Students log in using individual student IDs.

The Site Team also met with Jessica Hurtado Soto, Dean of Learning & Technology Resources and Jerry Williamson, District Director of Computer Services Information Technology GCCCD, who confirmed that all courses were designed in accordance with the policies and practices in place at the College for asynchronous online courses. Among other requirements, CC requires that all instructors seeking to teach courses in any non-traditional format complete a training course and become certified for online instruction.

CC Canvas support includes local staff and external help from Canvas. The local Technology Help Desk provides in-person, email, and phone support for students, faculty, and staff. Canvas support is available 24/7 via chat, email, and phone. The Site Team met with Fred Geoola, Eva Zakaria, and Amal Odesh, all of whom work as Technical Support/Help Desk.

The College has a system for assessing the effectiveness of the online asynchronous format using student surveys taken online during the course. The Site Team reviewed sample survey instruments which revealed overall student satisfaction. The students and alumni present during the visit also indicated overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the online asynchronous classes

The Site Team confirmed that all students take a minimum of 9 semester credits of legal specialty credits in synchronous instruction and that the Program's process and procedure for ensuring that students who are awarded transfer credit for legal specialty coursework fulfill this requirement.

### **Blended/Hybrid Legal Specialty Courses**

The Program offers one legal specialty courses in a blended/hybrid format:

- PARA 100-Introduction to Paralegal Studies
- PARA 110-Civil Litigation
- PARA 120-Introduction to Administrative Law
- PARA 121-Social Security Disability Law
- PARA 125-Business Organizations
- PARA 130-Legal Research & Writing
- PARA 132-Computer Assisted Legal Research
- PARA 135-Bankruptcy Law
- PARA 140-Introduction to Criminal Law & Procedures
- PARA 145-Estate Planning
- PARA 146-Probate and Administration of Estates
- PARA 150-Family Law (Divorce, Separation, Nullity, and Paternity)
- PARA 151-Family Law (Custody, Visitation, and Support)
- PARA 160-Personal Injury
- PARA 170-Worker's Compensation
- PARA 175-Electronic Discovery: Fundamentals & Procedure
- PARA 176-Electronic Discovery: Advanced Practice
- PARA 250-Internship

The Site Team observed PARA 170 – Workers 'Compensation and PARA 100 – Intro to Paralegal Studies, which are offered in Hy-flex blended/hybrid format.

These and the other blended/hybrid courses include 30 hours of face-to-face instruction and 15 hours of online instruction. The Site Team also met with the Dean of Learning & Technology Resources, who confirmed that the courses were designed in accordance with the policies and practices in place at the College for blended/hybrid courses. The Site Team verified the use of appropriate structured instructional activities for the online portion of the course. The assignments, tests, and projects are similar to those provided in the traditional class format. Faculty provide prompt responses to student questions and prompt feedback on assignments. Students log in using individual student IDs.

The Site Team met with the Director of Instructional Design confirmed that formal training and assistance for faculty training and assistance for faculty teaching blended/hybrid is not only available through the Department of Instructional Design but also required, as all instructors who teach in any online format must receive training and certification in online instruction.

The College provides technology support to both faculty and students. Students are screened through the advising and registration process to ensure success in the blended/hybrid format.

The College has a system for assessment of the effectiveness of the blended/hybrid format using student surveys taken during the course. The Site Team reviewed sample survey instruments which revealed overall student satisfaction. The students and alumni present during the visit also indicated overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the blended/hybrid classes.

### **Compressed Legal Specialty Courses**

In its initial reapproval report, the Program identified several classes as being presented in the accelerated format. As the Guidelines no longer include accelerated courses, the Site Team discussed the courses with the Program Director and determined that the courses previously designated as accelerated in the report are now properly reclassified as compressed.

The compressed courses are offered during summer sessions. Assignments are scheduled to span six or eight weeks, to allow students time to reflect, read, study, and complete assignments. The modules for the courses are released one week at a time so students are still working in a paced environment even when outside of the regular Fall and Spring semesters. Students engage with one another through discussion boards and with the instructor through discussion boards, emails, office hours, feedback on assignments, comments on posts, and replies.

The compressed courses meet two days each week for 3 hours over an 8-week mini-semester, while courses in traditional format meet one day per week for 3 hours over a 15-week semester. CC's Compressed courses meet for the stated hour requirements set forth in G-302.D and are taught in a synchronous face-to-face or remote synchronous format, but the length of time from the first class meeting and last class meeting is shorter than that of a traditional semester. Thus, the Site Team also confirmed that the compressed courses meet for the required number of hours and that scheduling permits sufficient time for students to reflect, read, study and complete assignments.

The Program currently offers the following legal specialty courses in a compressed format:

- PARA 100 – Intro to Paralegal Studies
- PARA 110 – Civil Litigation
- PARA 120 - Introduction to Administrative Law
- PARA 121 - Social Security Disability Law
- PARA 125 – Business Organizations
- PARA 130 – Legal Research & Writing
- PARA 132 – Computer Assisted Legal Research
- PARA 135 – Bankruptcy Law & Procedures
- PARA 140 - Introduction to Criminal Law & Procedures
- PARA 145 - Estate Planning
- PARA 146 - Probate and Administration of Estates
- PARA 150 - Family Law (Divorce, Separation, Nullity, and Paternity)
- PARA 125 - Business Organizations
- PARA 151 - Family Law (Custody, Visitation, and Support)
- PARA 160 - Personal Injury
- PARA 170 - Worker's Compensation
- PARA 175 - Electronic Discovery: Fundamentals & Procedures
- PARA 176 – Electronic Discovery: Advanced Practice
- PARA 250 – Internship

The College has a system for assessment of the effectiveness of the compressed format using student surveys taken during the course. The Site Team reviewed sample survey instruments which revealed overall student satisfaction. The students and alumni present during the visit also indicated overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the compressed classes.

### **Remote Synchronous Instruction Legal Specialty Courses**

The Program requires that students complete PARA 100, PARA 110, PARA 130, PARA 132, and PARA 135, all of which are offered with synchronous or traditional face-to-face instruction. Instructors in the remote synchronous sections of PARA 110 require that students turn on their cameras during lectures offered in remote instruction. PARA 130 and PARA 132 were only offered remotely during the Pandemic. In PARA 100, the instructor explains the synchronous requirement to students, shows them how to set up virtual backgrounds, and strongly encourages their use.

Instructors in remote synchronous PARA 110, PARA 130, and PARA 132 added language to their syllabus stressing the essential nature of live synchronous audio and visual student participation in 9 units of paralegal courses, per ABA requirement G-302(J)(3).

The Program offers several legal specialty courses through remote synchronous instruction. The Program currently offers the following courses through remote synchronous instruction:

- PARA 100 – Introduction to Paralegal Studies
- PARA 110 – Civil Litigation
- PARA 120 – Introduction to Administrative Law
- PARA 121 – Social Security Disability Law

- PARA 125 – Business Organizations
- PARA 130 – Legal Research & Writing
- PARA 135 – Bankruptcy Law
- PARA 132 – Computer Assisted Legal Research
- PARA 140 – Introduction to Criminal Law & Procedures
- PARA 145 – Estate Planning
- PARA 146 – Probate and Administration of Estates
- PARA 150 – Family Law (Divorce, Separation, Nullity, and Paternity)
- PARA 151 – Family Law (Custody, Visitation, and Support)
- PARA 160 – Personal Injury
- PARA 170 – Worker's Compensation
- PARA 175 – Electronic Discovery: Fundamentals & Procedure
- PARA 176 – Electronic Discovery: Advanced Practice
- PARA 250 – Internship

The Site Team observed PARA 130 – Legal Research, offered in a synchronous remote format, using Zoom. The Site Team verified that courses taught through remote synchronous instruction include in real time faculty-to-student and student-to-student interaction. Therefore, the instruction provided through this interactive video system meets the requirements for synchronous instruction.

The Site Team met with the Dean of Learning & Technology Resources and confirmed that the courses were designed in accordance with the policies and practices in place at the College for remote synchronous instruction. The Site Team verified the use of appropriate structured instructional activities, as well as systematic interaction throughout the course between students and between students and the instructor. Faculty provide prompt responses to student questions and prompt feedback on assignments.

The Site Team also confirmed that formal training and assistance for faculty training and assistance for faculty teaching remote synchronous courses is available through the Department of Learning & Technology Resources.

The College provides technology support to both faculty and students. Students are screened through the advising and registration process to ensure success in the remote synchronous environment. An online orientation for students is required before students take remote synchronous classes.

The College has a system for assessment of the effectiveness of the remote synchronous format using student surveys taken online during the course. The Site Team reviewed sample survey instruments which revealed overall student satisfaction. The students and alumni present during the visit also indicated overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the remote synchronous classes.

### **Changes in Delivery Method Due to COVID-19**

The Program submitted its COVID-19 Reporting Requirements Template on April 15, 2021.

## Spring 2020

Cuyamaca Paralegal Studies Department complied with the direction of Cuyamaca College in adjusting our Spring 2020 instruction. No traditional in-person courses were held after March 16, 2020. Only one of the previous traditional instruction courses was unable to transition to synchronous online lectures over ConferZoom or Zoom as recommended by Cuyamaca College.

The off-site course PARA-250 Internship had a few changes to support compliance with the mandate for no physical contact after March 16, 2020. One student completed their hours in an office before the outbreak of the pandemic, and two others were able to continue their internships with the original firms through electronic assignments, telephone contact with clients, and virtual appearance support. The fourth student, who was interning at a law firm that closed during the pandemic, was placed in a new virtual internship and completed her hours through electronic assignments.

### The Program offered the following courses in Spring 2020.

Name of Legal Specialty Course	Delivery Method at Start of Spring 2020 Term/Semester*	Delivery Method(s) Used to Complete the Spring 2020 Term/Semester*
PARA 100- Introduction to Paralegal Studies	Blended/Hybrid (traditional and asynchronous online)	Blended- Synchronous Online Interactive Video and Asynchronous Online
PARA 110- Civil Litigation Practice and Procedures	Traditional	Synchronous Online Interactive Video
PARA 120- Introduction to Administrative Law	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed
PARA 125- Business Organizations	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed
PARA 132-Computer Assisted Legal Research	Traditional	Asynchronous Online, plus Zoom and telephone appointments
PARA 145- Estate Planning	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed
PARA 250- Internship	Off site, work experience	Online Off-site work experience
BUS 125- Business Law	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed

## Summer 2020

The Program did not offer any legal specialty courses in Summer 2020.

**Fall 2020**

The Program offered the following courses in Fall 2020:

<b>Name of Legal Specialty Course</b>	<b>Delivery Method at Start of Fall 2020 Term/Semester*</b>	<b>Delivery Method(s) Used to Complete the Fall 2020 Term/Semester*</b>
PARA 100- Introduction to Paralegal Studies	Blended- Synchronous Interactive Video and Asynchronous Online	Blended- Synchronous Interactive Video and Asynchronous Online
PARA 121- Social Security Disability Law	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed
PARA 130- Legal Research and Writing	Synchronous Interactive Video	Synchronous Interactive Video
PARA 135- Bankruptcy Law	Synchronous Interactive Video	Synchronous Interactive Video
PARA 146 Probate and Admin of Estate	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed
PARA 150- Family Law Div	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed
BUS 125- Business Law	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed
RE-193 Real Estate Legal Aspects	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed

**Spring 2021**

The Program offered the following courses in Spring 2021:

<b>Name of Legal Specialty Course</b>	<b>Delivery Method at Start of Spring 2021 Term/Semester*</b>	<b>Delivery Method(s) Used to Complete the Spring 2021 Term/Semester*</b>
PARA 100- Introduction to Paralegal Studies	Blended- Synchronous Interactive Video and Asynchronous Online	Blended- Synchronous Interactive Video and Asynchronous Online
PARA 110- Civil Litigation Practice	Synchronous Interactive Video	Synchronous Interactive Video
PARA 125- Business Organizations	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed
PARA 132-Computer Assist Legal Research	Synchronous Interactive Video	Synchronous Interactive Video
PARA 151- Family Law	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed
PARA 170- Workers' Compensation	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed
BUS 125- Business Law	Asynchronous Online, Compressed	Asynchronous Online, Compressed

Based upon the policy adopted by the Standing Committee on June 9, 2020, and the authority given to the Approval Commission to determine under what circumstances the Guidelines are deemed to be satisfied when a program operates in accordance with its institution's policies addressing changes necessitated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, it appears to the Site Team that the delivery method for all the above-listed courses should be considered the delivery method adopted at the start of the semester.

### **G-303**

#### **Adequacy of Library Resources and Collection Requirements**

The law library collection is in the library on campus. The library is closed Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The library is open 12p.m. noon to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Students may access most library materials online. Students may also use branches of the San Diego Law Library, one of which is located within 5 miles of the campus. The Chula Vista branch is open on Fridays and Sundays; the others have limited hours on weekdays only. Vista and Downtown locations offer remote services during the weekdays.

The Site Team met with Matthew Chase, MASP, MLIS Instruction Librarian and Department Chair and viewed a detailed video of the library. The facility includes numerous stations, six group study rooms, and two designated computer stations for Westlaw access. Students may access most library materials online. The Cuyamaca Library also provides loaner laptops and hotspots for students with need for support in their access to technology with instructor referral. Wi-Fi for students is available on campus.

The library resources are adequate for the courses taught. All materials required by the Guidelines are current and are included in the print collection, except for a resource to check the currency and validity of primary source material, the ABA Journal, and the California Bar Journal. These resources are available solely through electronic access. Additionally, all students have access to CEB OnLaw to conduct research remotely and access to CALI lessons. Students have adequate access to the electronic materials, with hands-on access to Westlaw tools in the computer-assisted legal research class.

This access is sufficient and is of the type used in the legal community served by the program. Out-of-date materials are available in the library for teaching purposes and are clearly labeled as out-of-date and for instructional use only. Out-of-date materials are available in two paralegal studies classrooms for instructional use only. Additional current materials are also available in the Program Director's office and are available to students during office hours or on request.

#### **Library Use and Instruction**

Cuyamaca College Library is available for instruction in legal research in the library instruction lab, which contains an instructor console and 32 computers. The librarian specifically assigned to the law library collection has paralegal experience and is supportive of the Program and its students. Librarians can answer directional questions for students when they are using the library. Students are instructed in legal research prior to being given research assignments. The library staff includes two librarians, four library technicians, one interim administrative assistant, interim



dean and additional assistance from a recently retired librarian who was designated to the law library collection.

### **Evaluation of Library Resources**

The Program Director, legal collection librarian, faculty, and Advisory Committee work to maintain the law library collection in a way that best serves the needs of the students. The Paralegal Director, Advisory Committee, and Librarian evaluate the Collection annually, to justify funds to support the paralegal law collection.

## **SECTION IV** **FACULTY**

### **G-401**

#### **Qualifications of Program Director**

Joan M. Rettinger has been the full-time Program Director since August 2021. She is also an attorney working in Trust and Estates as well as Family Law for approximately nine years. In her time as an attorney, she has supervised a paralegal and regularly interacted with the paralegals of opposing counsel. Ms. Rettinger is well respected in the college and the legal community. She attends AAFPE conferences regularly and keeps current on professional trends through electronic mailing lists, professional journals, interaction with the San Diego Paralegal Association, and online resources. She is also on the California Paraprofessional Program Working Group Email List Subscribers to stay on top of developments within California specifically.

#### **Qualifications of Faculty**

The faculty members other than Ms. Rettinger are all adjuncts and consist of practicing lawyers, paralegals, and judges. The faculty members have experience in the fields in which they teach. Students and graduates expressed a high level of satisfaction with the faculty. They described the instructors as excellent teachers, highly approachable, and eager to help with classes and career issues. The faculty were also knowledgeable about the paralegal profession. The faculty who are practicing attorneys all have experience working with paralegals.

#### **Professional Development**

CC provides in-service professional development opportunities relating to teaching effectiveness for all faculty members each semester, and it appears that all faculty have taken advantage of these opportunities. All faculty have participated in training designed to teach in the formats they utilize.

#### **Faculty Meetings**

The faculty meets twice annually, as required by the Guidelines. Minutes of the meetings were provided. The minutes listed those in attendance along with their full-time or part-time/adjunct status, those not in attendance, the topics discussed, and the actions taken.

The Site Team confirmed that all faculty attend faculty meetings regularly, that the meetings include discussions relating to the matters set forth in the Guidelines, and that the faculty meeting

minutes include a list of those in attendance along with their full-time/part-time status, a list of the absent faculty members along with their full-time/part-time status, the topics discussed, and actions taken. The Site Team also confirmed that the Program Director is aware of the changes made to the Guidelines relating to the faculty and has implemented these changes.

#### **G-402**

##### **Program Leadership**

The Program Director is full-time and is responsible for all functions that relate to Guideline requirements. The Program Director spends approximately 20% of her time each week on program-related administrative duties, 75% of her time teaching, and 5% of her time on duties not related to the Program. It appears that the Program Director is able to devote adequate time and effort to program leadership.

#### **G-403**

##### **Teaching Conditions**

The size of the faculty is commensurate with the number and type of courses offered and the number and needs of students served. Clerical support for the Program is provided by the Career Education Division secretary. Faculty have easy access to computers, a copy machine, and mail service, although many adjunct faculty do their own work at their individual law firms.

Technical support is available for faculty through the Cuyamaca Help Desk. Instructors with enrollment over 45 students are permitted a teacher's assistant to further support their courses.

## **SECTION V** **ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES**

#### **G-501**

##### **Student Admissions and Recruitment**

Cuyamaca College is an open admission public community college in the State of California. The laws of the State of California and supplementary regulations prescribed by the Board of Trustees govern its admission criteria. Students who are over 18 years of age and have a high school diploma or the equivalent, or the ability to benefit from the instruction offered, may attend CC. Admission procedures are published in the college's catalog and on their official website.

Student recruitment efforts are handled by the Office of Enrollment Development and Retention Services through direct mail to individual students, local businesses and industries, high school visits, and on-campus tours. The Office of Enrollment Development and Retention Services also mails to prospective paralegal students a letter drafted and signed by the Program Director, along with a brochure about paralegal careers and the Program at CC.

### **Program Literature**

Program information is available on the College's website, and in the Catalog and Student Handbook. The program literature and promotional materials are accurate, truthful, and not misleading. The program literature includes a statement that students must take at least nine semester credits, or the equivalent, of legal specialty credits through synchronous instruction.

The Site Team confirmed that the ABA logo and identifying mark are used appropriately in the electronic and print promotional materials, and that the Program literature contains a clear statement that paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public, except as permitted by law. The Site Team also confirmed that all print and electronic program literature has been updated to reflect students must complete 9 semester credits of synchronous instruction. G-302.J, G-501.A

- *Suggestion: The Site Team suggests that the Program continue to monitor the website closely to ensure that all print and electronic program literature continues to include the notice that paralegals must complete 9 semester credits of synchronous instruction. G-302.J, G-501.A*
- *Suggestion: The Site Team suggests that the Program continue to monitor the website and other information channels closely to ensure that all print and electronic program literature includes a clear statement that paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public, except as permitted by law. G-501.A*

### **G-502**

#### **Orientation to the Paralegal Profession**

The Program Director incorporates information on the paralegal profession in PARA 100 - Introduction to Paralegal Studies. Prior to course registration, students may elect to see one of the several college counselors for advice on course selection. Also, the Program Director is available for student counseling. Both the counseling staff and the Program Director are proactive in assisting with students, with the counseling staff attending the first meetings of PARA 100 to encourage students to schedule advising visits. Counseling staff also attend faculty meetings, to inform faculty of available resources. Students may visit the counselling center for aptitude tests, comprehensive education plan assistance, and referrals for mental health and tutoring referrals.

#### **Student Advising**

Students begin to receive academic advising regarding the application process, the college experience, majors, course requirements, and other key topics from the moment they are accepted at CC. The team met with Agustin Orozco, Dean of Counseling Services; Charlene Alsbaugh, MA. Ed. Program Manager; Sade Burrell, Dean of Student Services; Lauren Vaknin, Ed.D.. Dean, Student Affairs; and Donna Hajj, Counselor.

Program Director Joan Rettinger is responsible for advising students as to Paralegal Studies course offerings, after considering feedback from the Advisory Committee.

### **Student Services**

Sade Burrell is the Dean of Student Services. Tutoring is offered in person at the Tutoring Center. NetTutor provides limited support for students over the weekend and also offers several Paralegal Guides and Resources. The Paralegal Studies Program has two tutors available to help students in individual or group sessions, both in person and over zoom. A tutor is embedded in PARA 130 Legal Research and Writing and PARA 132 Computer Assisted Legal Research. Mary Graham is the Faculty Coordinator for the Tutoring Center.

CC also offers Diversity and Inclusion, Health and Wellness Counseling, and Cuyamaca Cares which assists students with food, housing, emergency funds and other life necessities.

### **Career Services**

The team met with Kevin Brown, Career Center Supervisor. Students in the Paralegal Program use CC's Career Center, which provides assessments and tools to guide students in choosing majors and offers career planning and employment assistance to all students, staff, and community members. Jobs are posted on the "College Central Job Board" on the website. Onsite computers are available at the Center for the students to use to perform job searches and create resumes. Counselors help with resume writing and interviewing skills, hold job fairs, conduct vocational assessments, and visit classes.

The Program Director also provides career counseling. Most job opportunities available at local law offices are sent directly to the Program Director, who distributes them electronically to each faculty member for posting in each class's Canvas Container. The announcements are also sent to the student organization, CAPS, for distribution via their email list.

Announcements sent to the Career Counseling Center are shared with the Program Director, who distributes them to the faculty and CAPS. The Program Director also shares announcements with the Job Placement Case Manager. Students are advised to join the San Diego Paralegal Association which also maintains a job bank for its members.

Kevin Brown heads the Career center, with a staff of Career Counselors and the Job Placement Case Managers.

Paralegal students begin preparing their resumes in PARA 100 - Introduction to Paralegal Studies and are referred to the Career Center for support. Career Center staff members visit two class sessions to discuss soft skills and resumes and are available to help students revise resumes and polish their interviewing and job search skills individually or through workshops.

### **Information on Employment/Educational Status**

CC maintains information on employment and educational status centrally. The information is collected within six months of graduation and maintained for a minimum of seven years. The employment/educational information reviewed by the Site Team was accurate and substantially complete.

### **Student Views**

Through Canvas, all students may evaluate each course they complete at Cuyamaca College. Students complete the survey during the course, and the results are available to instructors the following semester via Watermark Course Evaluations & Surveys. The survey includes 25 questions and allows students to respond through 1 of 6 options or to type their own feedback. In addition, students in PARA 100 may offer feedback on the Program overall.

### **Continuing Education Courses**

Continuing legal and paralegal education courses are not offered at CC.

### **G-503**

#### **Non-Degree Students**

Students must have the appropriate prerequisites to enroll in paralegal courses. Non-paralegal students who wish to take a legal specialty course must obtain permission from the Program Director. The progress, content, level, and quality of legal specialty courses are not adversely affected by having non-majors in the courses.

Although the Program allows non-majors to enroll in LS courses, the progress, content, level, and quality of LS courses are not diluted or adversely affected.

## **SECTION VI** **PHYSICAL PLANT**

### **G-601**

#### **Physical Facilities – On-Campus Instruction**

The Site Team viewed detailed videos of the CC Campus, including the classrooms and other facilities. Courses are taught in “smart” classrooms that are appropriate in design and size for the classes offered. Students were observed gathering and studying in the library, computer labs, and other open areas on Campus.

#### **Physical Facilities – Asynchronous and Remote Synchronous Instruction**

The Site Team confirmed that adequate support is provided to the Program to offer asynchronous online and remote synchronous instruction. CC uses Canvas as its LMS and provides training to both faculty and students in its use. To ensure consistency of design and basic content, the Program uses a template for the design of legal specialty classes. Faculty and student meetings are conducted through Zoom.

### **G-602**

#### **Equipment, Technology, Support Services & Other Facilities**

The computer lab has over 100 computers, a scanner, and 3 printers. Staff members are available to assist students and faculty. The lab has 3 group study rooms and is open 7:30 a.m. through 7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Fridays. The help desk is

staffed Monday-Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Students may call and leave a voice message or email anytime.

The Student Center includes dining facilities, the bookstore, and vending machines for snacks.

### **G-603**

#### **Office Space – On-Campus Instruction**

The Program Director has an office. Adjunct faculty members have access to a work room equipped with desks, computers, and supplies. The workroom is located near the Program Director's office. Private meetings with students can take place in study rooms in the library, in empty classrooms, or private "nooks" in Building E.

#### **Office Space – Asynchronous and Remote Synchronous Instruction**

In addition to office space, CC provides the Program Director, faculty, and staff with institutional Zoom accounts to facilitate private meetings with students and others for advising and counseling.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The Paralegal Studies Program at CC is an established program under the capable direction of Joan Rettinger. The students and graduates expressed satisfaction with the instruction received and their preparation to enter the paralegal profession. The administration (including the highest level) is interested in and supportive of the Program. At the time of the visit, the Site Team identified no potential compliance issues.

Therefore, the Site Team recommends that the Paralegal Program at Cuyamaca College be **reapproved**.

To further enhance the Program, the Site Team suggests that:

- *To ensure that the Program Director has adequate support to perform the duties necessary for the position, the Site Team suggests that the College consider providing the Provide the Director with TA support early in each semester. G-202.*
- *To allow the Program Director adequate time to perform the ongoing administrative tasks necessary to maintain ABA approval, specifically when reapproval and interim reports are due and assessment surveys are performed, the Site Team suggests that the College may wish to allow the Program Director additional reassign time. G-202.*
- *Suggestion: Six months after students graduate, the Program perform two separate surveys of graduates, using separate instruments and questions, including (1) the G-502.D “placement surveys” to determine employment status; and (2) the G-301.E.3 surveys to obtain graduates’ input as to how the program is meeting its LOs. To obtain more informed responses from graduates in the workforce, the Site Team suggests that the Program consider performing the 301.E.3 graduate survey one to two years after students graduate. G- 301.E.3, G-502.D*
- *Suggestion: The Site Team suggests that the Program continue to monitor the website closely to ensure that all print and electronic program literature continues to include the notice that paralegals must complete 9 semester credits of synchronous instruction. G-302.J, G-501.A*
- *Suggestion: The Site Team suggests that the Program continue to monitor the website and other information channels closely to ensure that all print and electronic program literature includes a clear statement that paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public, except as permitted by law. G-501.A*