



Paralegal Program Review

Review Period: Academic Years 2016-2020

Review Conducted: AY2020-21

Rio's Academic Program Review Process is an essential component of the College's Strategic Plan. The 2020-2023 work is guided by the following college-wide goals:

Rio Strategic Goal 1: Increase student goal attainment 23% by 2023 with innovative and world-class experiences

Rio Strategic Goal 2: Offer 23 new micro-credentials by 2023

Rio Strategic Goal 3: Foster a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging

Data relating to successful course completion, persistence, credentials awarded, and equity in program- and college-level outcomes across all student populations are aligned with the college-wide metrics that measure progress toward achieving the goals of the College's Strategic Plan.

I. Degrees and Certificates in the Paralegal Program

AAS in Paralegal

Description: The Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Paralegal program is designed to provide students with the education for a paralegal career. The program covers substantive and procedural areas of law, including legal ethics, civil procedure, criminal procedure, legal research, and legal writing. The program trains students in legal skills sets, preparing students for industry certification and employment in a multitude of legal settings. The program includes both a Certificate of Completion (CCL) in Paralegal and an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Paralegal. While this program was not designed to transfer to a 4-year university or stand alone as a pre-law major, it may apply toward Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) or other programs.

CCL in Paralegal

Description: The Certificate of Completion (CCL) in Paralegal program is designed to provide students with the education for a paralegal career. The program covers substantive and procedural areas of law, including legal ethics, civil procedure, criminal procedure, legal research and legal writing. The program provides students with legal skill sets, preparing students for industry certification and employment in a multitude of legal settings. Students may also pursue an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Paralegal.

II. Program Purpose and Mission

The Paralegal Program was created and implemented in fall 2009 to meet the growing needs of the industry. In early research and exploration of the program's viability, the Bureau of Labor Statistics forecast a 17% growth in the industry over the following 10 years.

In 2009 there was one Paralegal program in the district at Phoenix College, requiring in-person attendance. An environmental scan showed that a fully online program was viable due to the college's ability to offer a flexible and affordable option to national online programs that were being offered.

The mission of the program was to prepare students for employment as paralegals. Subject matter experts were contracted to research and develop the content of the courses. The program covers foundations and types of law, including business and tort law, in addition to fundamentals of litigation. Courses focus on paralegal responsibilities in the various areas of law practice, including the development of effective written and oral communication skills, critical thinking skills, computer proficiency, and legal research techniques. Legal theory and ethics are integrated throughout the program. The program offers a Certificate of Completion in Paralegal and an Associate in Applied Science in Paralegal.

According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov), employment of paralegals and legal assistants is projected to grow 10 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. Formally trained paralegals with strong computer and database management skills should have the best job prospects.

Recognizing a need and market to create a fully online paralegal program aligns with Rio's culture of innovation, flexibility, and affordability. Other national institutions offering online programs were at least 3 times more expensive than our tuition. Originally, the program offered 6 annual start dates, but to enhance flexibility, it has since aligned with Rio's 40+ Monday starts.

Every year, an advisory committee consisting of practitioners and industry leaders meet to discuss current trends and best practices in the field. Rio is responsive to the needs of industry, and actively engaged with the community by creating specialty courses such as immigration law and environmental law in order to prepare students for the various subfields in law. In addition, an internship course was added to further job opportunities between our students and potential employers. A career-building course also provides personalized service committed to preparing students for interviews and the job application process.

III. Student Population of the Paralegal Program

a. Student Data Analysis

Based on the data, a large majority of paralegal students are females (almost 85%) and over half are 30 years or older. Almost 60% identify as white/caucasian; Hispanic/Latino make up a little more than a quarter; Black or African American are just over 10%, and Asian/Native Americans make up under 3%.

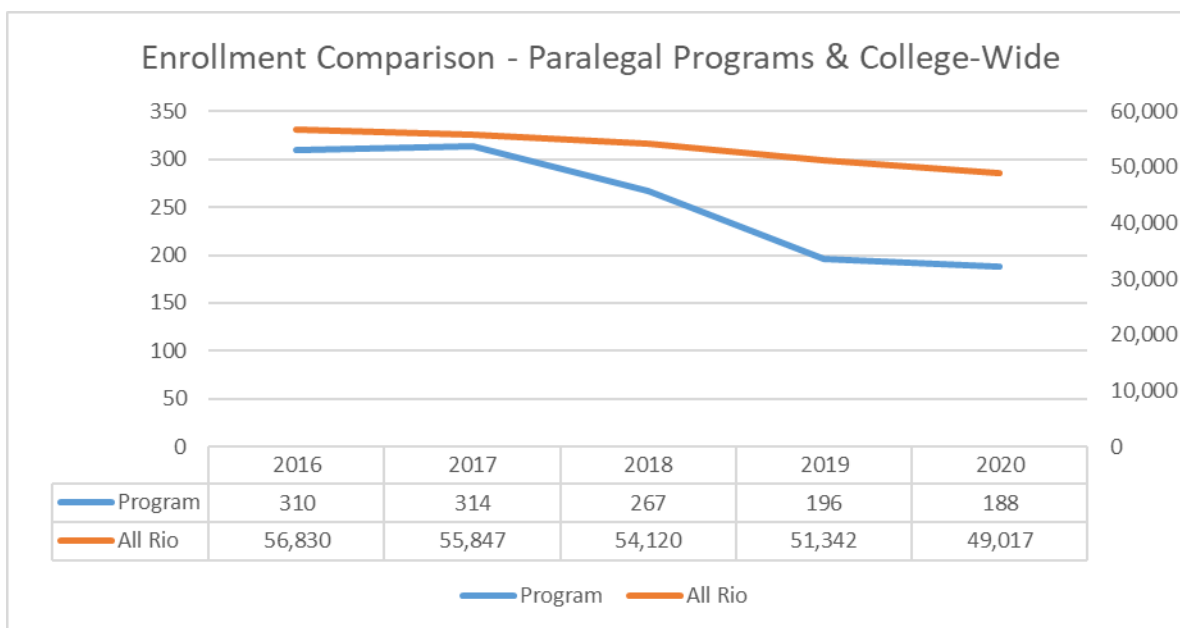
Further breakdown of students who received financial aid and are first generation college are detailed below.

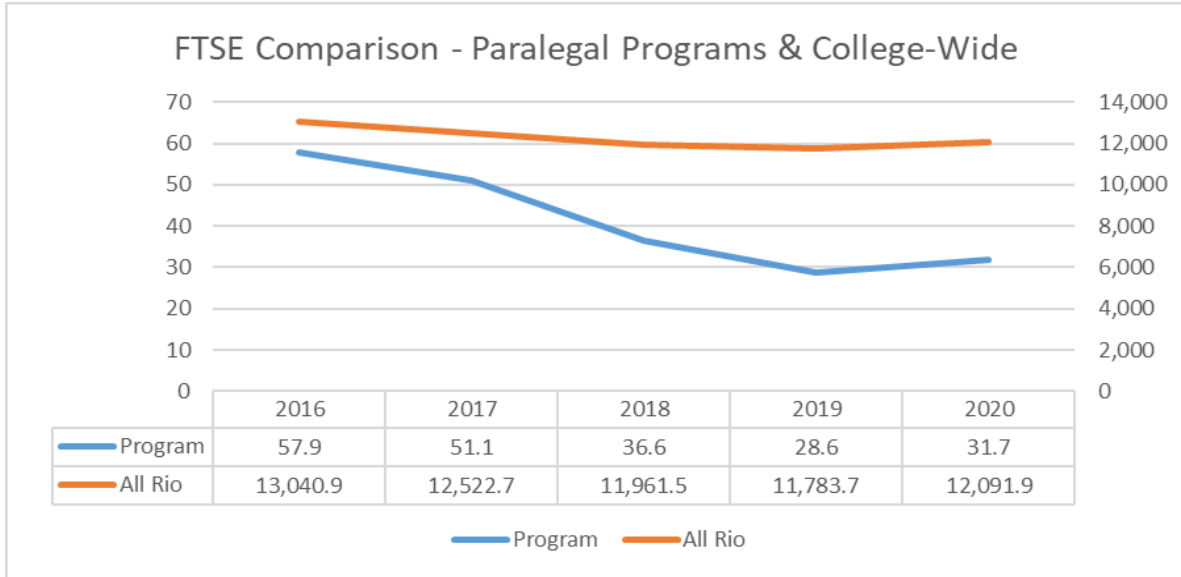
	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender										
Female	256	82.6%	256	81.5%	214	80.1%	167	85.2%	159	84.6%
Male	45	14.5%	49	15.6%	48	18.0%	25	12.8%	27	14.4%
Other/Not Specified	9	2.9%	9	2.9%	5	1.9%	4	2.0%	2	1.1%
Ethnicity										
American Indian	6	1.9%	8	2.5%	7	2.6%	3	1.5%	2	1.1%
Asian	2	0.6%	2	0.6%	6	2.2%	4	2.0%	3	1.6%
Black or African American	30	9.7%	29	9.2%	30	11.2%	23	11.7%	19	10.1%
Hawaiian			1	0.3%						
Hispanic or Latino	67	21.6%	80	25.5%	66	24.7%	50	25.5%	49	26.1%
White or Caucasian	188	60.6%	181	57.6%	145	54.3%	109	55.6%	110	58.5%
Other/Not Specified	17	5.5%	13	4.1%	13	4.9%	7	3.6%	5	2.7%
Age Group										
19 and under	4	1.2%	13	4.0%	9	3.2%	8	3.9%	4	2.1%
20-30	135	41.7%	126	38.7%	107	38.6%	80	39.2%	78	40.2%
30-39	94	29.0%	100	30.7%	78	28.2%	69	33.8%	58	29.9%
40-49	59	18.2%	59	18.1%	51	18.4%	33	16.2%	36	18.6%
50 and over	32	9.9%	28	8.6%	32	11.6%	14	6.9%	18	9.3%

First Generation										
Yes	195	62.7%	194	61.8%	168	62.9%	125	63.8%	119	63.3%
No	116	37.3%	117	37.3%	93	34.8%	68	34.7%	62	33.0%
Other/Unknown			3	1.0%	6	2.2%	3	1.5%	7	3.7%
Financial Aid Recipient										
Yes	176	54.0%	178	54.4%	134	48.2%	112	54.4%	94	48.2%
No	150	46.0%	149	45.6%	144	51.8%	94	45.6%	101	51.8%

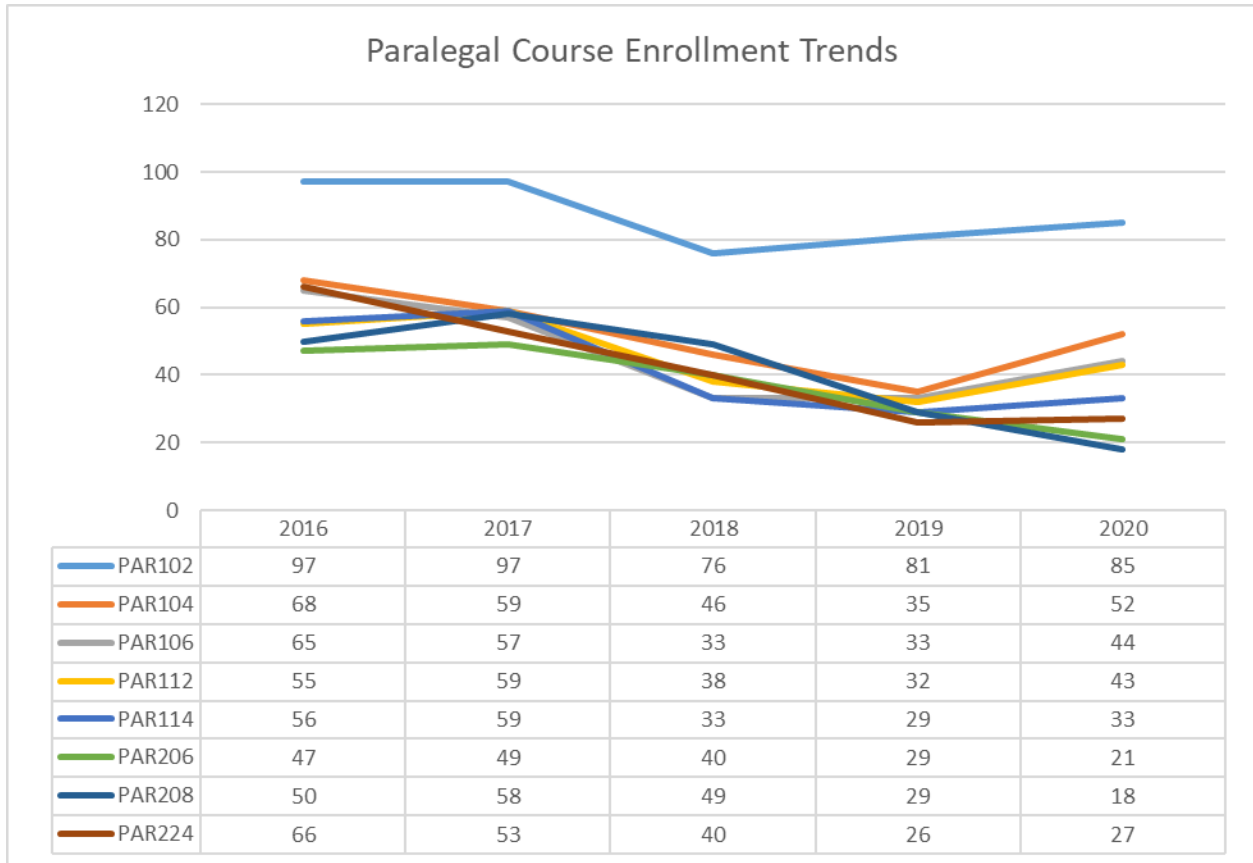
b. Enrollment Trends

There has been a decline in enrollment since 2018. When the program started in 2009, the projected growth was 17% over the span of ten years. The more recent forecast is 10% which is still promising for this field. The chair along with the advisory committee will continue to monitor the industry and workforce needs.





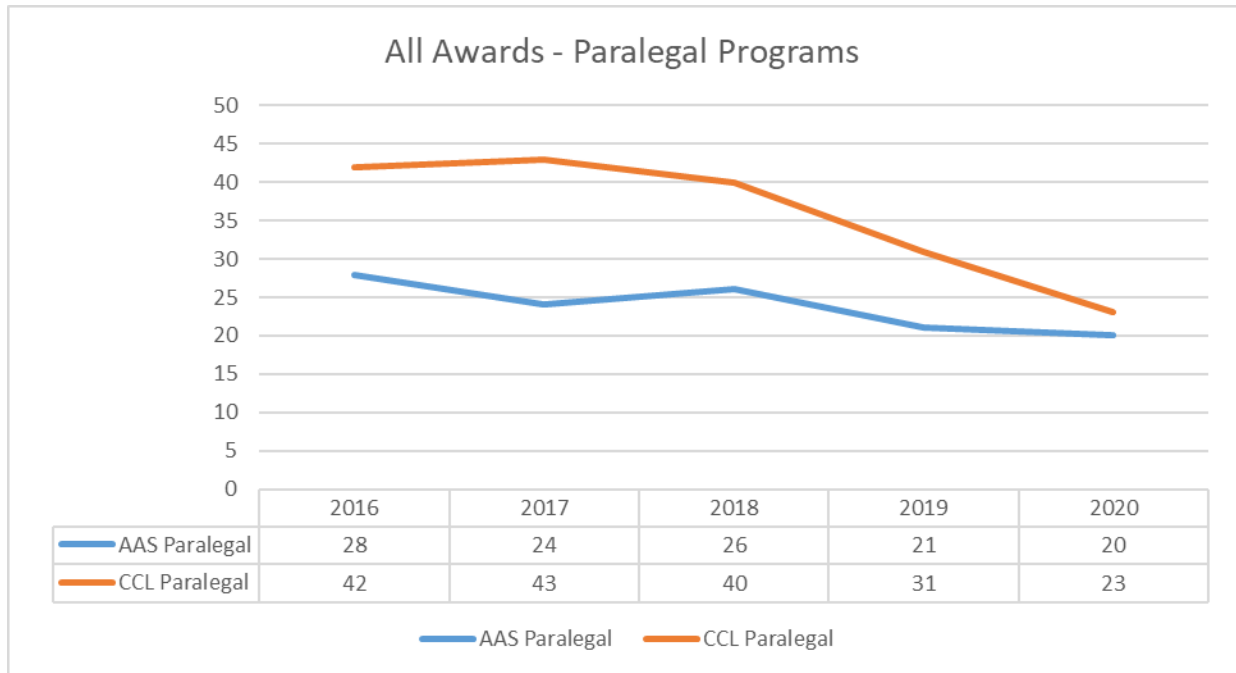
Though both program and college enrollments decreased during the review period, it is encouraging to see that program FTSE and overall college FTSE began an upward trend in 2019. This indicates that, though there are fewer individual enrollments, students are taking more classes.



PAR102 is the foundation course and is naturally a high-enrollment course. Students gain an understanding of the profession and get an introduction to the writing requirements of the profession. All courses are fully online and 8 weeks in length with the exception of the internship courses and career preparation course. Note: effective Fall 2020, the foundation course is now PAR101.

c. Student Graduation Data

As mentioned, there has been a slight decline in enrollment. This has had a more notable effect on CCL completion numbers than AAS completion numbers:



IV. Retention and Persistence

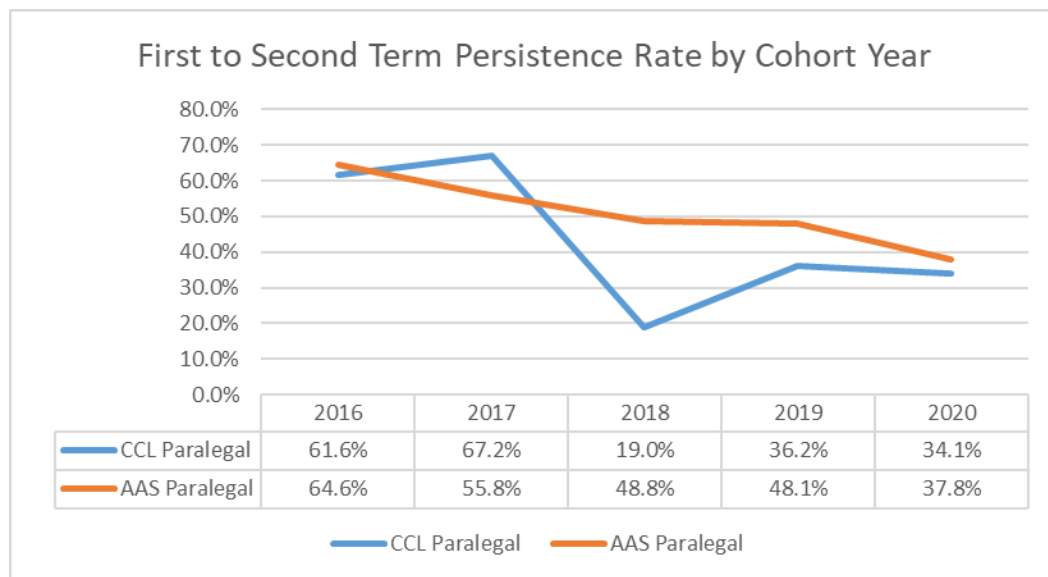
The previous foundation course, PAR102, has a lower retention rate than other courses. The course was revised in 2017 to include a legal writing element and introduce students to IRAC, which is a legal way to format written communication. This style of writing can be very foreign to students but it sets them up for success in future courses. The department changed the foundations course to PAR101 and revised the research and writing courses (PAR102 and PAR103) to begin right after the foundation course.

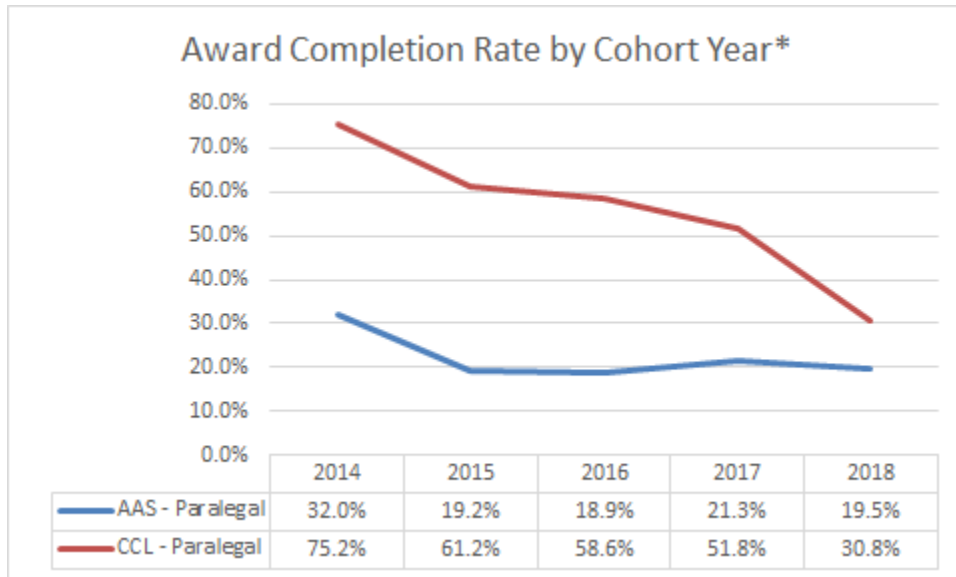
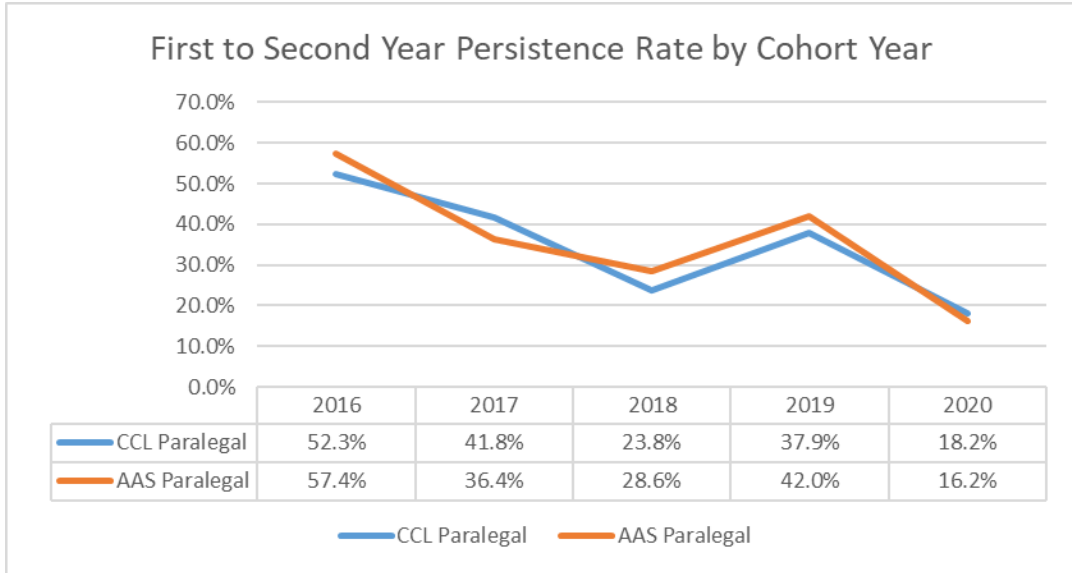
	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Retention Rate	Successful Retention	Retention Rate	Successful Retention	Retention Rate	Successful Retention	Retention Rate	Successful Retention	Retention Rate	Successful Retention
PAR102	96.4%	81.8%	95.5%	70.9%	95.2%	73.5%	75.0%	65.5%	76.5%	72.4%
PAR104	97.5%	89.9%	97.0%	84.8%	90.2%	82.4%	81.1%	75.7%	95.0%	85.0%
PAR106	98.7%	89.9%	97.1%	94.1%	100.0%	89.2%	83.8%	78.4%	96.1%	84.3%
PAR112	100.0%	95.6%	98.5%	94.1%	95.2%	90.5%	93.8%	93.8%	82.7%	82.7%

PAR114	97.3%	90.5%	96.0%	88.0%	92.1%	78.9%	87.1%	80.6%	93.5%	76.1%
PAR206	98.6%	97.2%	100.0%	98.6%	98.0%	90.0%	97.2%	97.2%	96.7%	96.7%
PAR208	91.3%	70.7%	94.6%	81.5%	93.8%	80.0%	94.9%	89.7%	93.1%	82.8%
PAR224	100.0%	93.8%	98.7%	93.4%	100.0%	75.5%	92.3%	88.5%	86.8%	68.4%
Total	97.3%	87.9%	97.0%	86.9%	95.4%	81.4%	86.0%	80.7%	88.1%	79.7%

There is certainly an anomaly in the year 2018 which created a drop in persistence. The chair has been working the adjuncts to enhance retention strategies through nudging, supportive language, and positive engagement.

Note: The following graphs represent student cohorts based on when students first declared their academic program. For example, students who declared their program in Fall 2015, Spring 2016, and Summer 2016 are grouped into cohort year 2016.





**Cohort year based on when students first declared the program. Completion rate measured as 150% completion time based on length of program.*

[RioPACE](#) is a predictive analytics tool that measures student engagement in the classroom to evaluate the likelihood of success. The department has not turned on RioPACE in all courses. However, in an effort to increase persistence and retention, this is planned for the next academic year.

V. Program Learning Outcomes

AAS in Paralegal Learning Outcomes:

1. Define the boundaries of the paralegal career field. (CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR101, PAR104, PAR106, [FYC], [HU], [MA], [SB])
2. Explain the duties assigned and the responsibilities delegated to paralegals, including the knowledge of legal ethics. (CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR101, PAR104, PAR106, [FYC], [HU], [MA], [SB])
3. Demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in a culturally responsive manner with lawyers, clients, witnesses, court personnel, co-workers and other legal/business professionals. (CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR101, PAR102, PAR103, PAR104, PAR112, PAR114, (COM), [FYC], [HU], [SB])
4. Analyze factual and legal information for use in preparing legal documents. (BPC110, CIS105, CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR102, PAR103, [FYC], [HU], [SG], [SQ], [SB])
5. Research print and electronic sources. (BPC110, CIS105, CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR102, PAR103, [FYC], [HU], [SG], [SQ], [SB])
6. Analyze legal sources including statutes, rules of court, rules of evidence, case law and regulations, and apply them to a given set of facts. (BPC110, CIS105, CRE101, PAR102, PAR103, [FYC], [HU], [SG], [SQ], [SB])
7. Describe the sources of law, hierarchy and powers of various state and federal courts. (CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR102, PAR106, (COM), [FYC], [HU], [SB])
8. Demonstrate the paralegal's role during a legal matter, including preparing pleadings, motions, discovery and other documents. (BPC110, CIS105, CRE101, PAR101, PAR106, PAR112, PAR114, PAR224, (COM), [FYC], [HU], [SB])
9. Analyze substantive and procedural areas of law, including legal ethics, civil procedure, criminal procedure, legal writing, and legal research. (BPC110, CIS105, CRE101, PAR104, PAR106, PAR112, PAR114, PAR206, PAR208, PAR224, [FYC], [HU], [SB])

CCL in Paralegal Learning Outcomes:

1. Define the boundaries of the paralegal career field. (CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR101, PAR104, PAR106)
2. Explain the duties assigned and the responsibilities delegated to paralegals, including the knowledge of legal ethics. (CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR101, PAR104, PAR106)

3. Demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in a culturally responsive manner with lawyers, clients, witnesses, court personnel, co-workers and other legal/business professionals. (CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR101, PAR102, PAR103, PAR104, PAR112, PAR114)
4. Analyze factual and legal information for use in preparing legal documents. (BPC110, CIS105, CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR102, PAR103)
5. Research print and electronic sources. (BPC110, CIS105, CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR102, PAR103)
6. Analyze legal sources including statutes, rules of court, rules of evidence, case law and regulations, and apply them to a given set of facts. (BPC110, CIS105, CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR102, PAR103)
7. Describe the sources of law, hierarchy and powers of various state and federal courts. (CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR102, PAR106)
8. Demonstrate the paralegal's role during a legal matter, including preparing pleadings, motions, discovery and other documents. (BPC110, CIS105, CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR101, PAR106, PAR112, PAR114, PAR224)
9. Analyze substantive and procedural areas of law, including legal ethics, civil procedure, criminal procedure, legal writing, and legal research. (BPC110, CIS105, CRE101, ENG101, ENG107, PAR104, PAR106, PAR112, PAR114, PAR206, PAR208, PAR224)

Student Performance on Program Learning Outcomes*

Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Student Count	Students @ College Level[†]
1	PAR102; Lesson 1 Written Assignment	332	89.5%
	PAR102; Lesson 5 Written Assignment	316	88.6%
	PAR104; Lesson 1 Written Assignment	248	89.5%
2	PAR102; Lesson 2 Written Assignment	13[‡]	84.6%
	PAR104; Lesson 4 Written Assignment	244	83.6%

	PAR112; Lesson 2 Short Answer Essays	141	98.6%
3	PAR102; Lesson 8 Final Assignment	221	82.8%
	PAR224; Lesson 8 Final Assignment	171	91.8%
	PAR 238; Final Assignment	25	88.0%
4	PAR112; Lesson 7 Complaint and Answer	137	98.5%
	PAR206; Lesson 6 Case Study	127	97.6%
	PAR230; Lesson 6 Shield Support Worksheet	48 [‡]	87.5%
5	PAR102; Lesson 4 Writing Assignment (Parts I & II)	216	92.6%
	PAR222; Lesson 7 Westlaw Training Certificate	26 [‡]	96.2%
	PAR230; Lesson 5 Writing Assignment	3 [‡]	100.0%
6	PAR106; Lesson 2 Writing Assignment	1 [‡]	100.0%
	PAR112; Lesson 6 Short-Answer Essays	142	99.3%
	PAR230; Lesson 7 Short-Answer Essays	47 [‡]	97.9%
7	PAR112; Lesson 3 Short-Answers Essays	142	100.0%
	PAR102; Lesson 2 Quiz	12 [‡]	100.0%

	PAR206; Lesson 2 Case Brief	129	98.4%
8	PAR220; Lesson 3 Application Exercise	169	78.1%
	PAR114; Lesson 3 Short-Answer Essays	89[‡]	97.6%
	PAR114; Lesson 4 Short-Answer Essays	130	93.1%
9	PAR102; Lesson 2 Citation Workshop	228	94.7%
	PAR224; Lesson 5 Assignment	175	86.3%
	PAR106; Lesson 7 Writing Assignment	213	91.6%

**Data inclusive only of students who are declared in the program.*

†College Level defined as students earning 70% or greater.

‡Lessons were introduced near the end of the review period, resulting in fewer student submissions during the specified time frame.

Based on the cohort data, students are performing above college level on the program learning outcomes. As noted earlier in the review, students in PAR102 Paralegal Foundations underperformed in the last 3 lessons of the introductory course. We evaluated the course and determined that students were not prepared for the writing elements added to Lessons 6-8. The program has since re-structured the sequence of courses by developing a true introduction course (PAR101) and sequencing to PAR102 and PAR103 Legal Research, Analysis, and Writing I and II. We will evaluate the effectiveness of this new pathway in the next review.

Results for the PAR220 Lesson 3 Application Exercise fell just short of the target. This is an example of how students may not have been adequately prepared for the writing expectations in the 200-level courses. PAR220 was originally the paralegal writing course which introduced students to more complex writing assignments. The writing course has been moved earlier in the program and will build a foundation for subsequent courses.

VI. College-wide Student Learning Outcomes

In addition to the program-level outcomes addressed above, Rio Salado College places a high priority on developing core competence in the following areas:

1. **Critical Thinking:** The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze information, evaluate material, use inference to draw conclusions, and use deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning at a college level
2. **Information Literacy:** The student will demonstrate the ability to determine an information need, access successfully and evaluate critically the needed information, and organize and apply the information appropriately to accomplish a given research task.
3. **Oral Communication:** The student will demonstrate the ability to prepare and present oral communication in a variety of contexts as a college-level speaker.
4. **Reading:** The student will demonstrate the ability to comprehend a variety of materials by determining the central idea and providing textual evidence, drawing inferences or valid conclusions, analyzing the author’s purpose and bias, and applying the text to a given task or course content.
5. **Writing:** On a written assignment, the student will demonstrate the ability to generate relevant and sufficient content; organize his or her thoughts coherently; adhere to the conventions of correct mechanics and sentence structure; and use correct terminology and rich vocabulary in the fulfillment, at the college level, of his or her writing assignments.

For more information:

<http://www.riosalado.edu/about/teaching-learning/assessment/Pages/SLO.aspx>

Class	Critical Thinking	Reading	Information Literacy	Oral Communication*	Writing
PAR102					Y
PAR104					Y
PAR106	Y	Y	Y		Y
PAR112	Y	Y	Y		Y
PAR114	Y	Y	Y		Y
PAR206	Y	Y	Y		Y
PAR224			Y		Y

Data from PAR102 (foundation course) show that a small number of students between the review years underperformed in the area of writing. The foundation course was initially an introduction to the career and expectations of the work field. In 2017, the department saw the need to introduce legal writing at the beginning of the program to prepare students for future courses. Legal research and writing courses came later in the program; however, based on adjunct feedback, they felt students were not properly prepared for the complexities of legal writing at that stage.

The department revised the foundation course and introduced basic legal writing skills in the last three lessons. It was not ideal to pivot the foundations course in such a complex manner; therefore, with the opportunity to re-map the program under guided pathways, two research and writing courses were developed and sequenced immediately after the foundation course.

The foundation course returned to its original competencies and allowed students to slowly build writing skills with a level I and II sequence of research and writing (Legal Research, Analysis, and Writing I and II). This new sequence became effective Fall 2021. The department will evaluate this improvement cycle in the next review.

*Currently, no courses contain an oral communication dimension. Much of a paralegal's job duties are based on research and writing; however, they can be involved with initial interviews with clients and follow up correspondence via phone, email, and web conferencing. PAR260 is a career preparation course, and one assignment has the student submit a mock interview video. Moving forward, the dimension will be tagged as an oral communication assessment. An assignment will also be added in PAR239 Legal Investigation that will require students to submit an audio or video interview between a paralegal and a client.

VII. Impact of Co-curricular Programs

Learning Outcome	All Student Assignments	Assignments at College Level	Percent of Assignments at College Level	Co-Curricular Assignments	CC Assignments at College Level	Percent of CC Assignments at College Level
Critical Thinking	824	632	76.7%	107	87	81.3%
Information Literacy	574	398	69.3%	79	61	77.2%
Oral Communication						
Reading	570	394	69.1%	78	60	76.9%
Writing	17360	14514	83.6%	2032	1831	90.1%

Students involved in co-curricular activities demonstrate a higher percentage of college level performance when compared to all students. Students involved in co-curricular activities tend to be more motivated in their studies and engagement with the college. Co-curricular activities promote inclusiveness and belonging, which may lead towards intrinsic motivation to excel in their studies.

Honors credit is available for the following paralegal courses:

PAR106 Legal Foundations for Paralegals

PAR206 Paralegal Business Law

PAR208 Introduction to Tort Law

PAR224 Law Office Technology for the Paralegal

PAR230 Family Law for the Paralegal

PAR238 Paralegals and Immigration Law

Honors assignments or projects are designed to challenge honors students with more advanced and complex assignments such as creating a presentation slideshow using multimedia sources. A project or assignment should take a student approximately 20 hours of additional work on top of their regular hours dedicated to the course.

VIII. Effective Teaching

Student evaluations are submitted at the conclusion of each course and rate the effectiveness of each instructor. See survey questions and results below.

1. My instructor communicated the course policies and procedures.
2. My instructor communicated his/her expected response time for messages and grading assignments.
3. My instructor responded to messages within the stated time frame.
4. My instructor graded assignments within the stated time frame.
5. My assignment feedback explained why I earned or lost points.
6. My instructor's feedback on assignments helped to increase my understanding of the course content.
7. My instructor provided complete responses to my questions.

Total Surveys = 390

Course	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
PAR102	4.63	4.67	4.26	4.18	4.22	4.09	4.24
PAR104	4.44	4.59	4.37	4.34	3.80	3.37	3.85
PAR106	4.67	4.46	4.27	3.82	4.34	4.26	4.54
PAR112	4.82	4.82	4.50	4.37	4.20	4.14	4.46
PAR114	4.40	4.35	3.69	3.73	3.96	4.00	3.86
PAR206	4.65	4.65	4.45	4.44	4.38	4.18	4.32
PAR208	4.57	4.74	4.20	4.38	4.31	3.96	4.09
PAR224	4.47	4.29	3.56	3.29	4.11	3.91	3.62
Grand Total	4.58	4.58	4.16	4.08	4.17	4.00	4.12

Questions rated on a Likert-type scale, range from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree")

Based on the survey responses, overall instructors are meeting the expectations to communicate effectively and in a timely manner. If an overall evaluation falls below 4.0 on a 5 point scale, the faculty chair researches the issue and addresses concerns with the adjunct.

It should be noted that two of the adjuncts who routinely taught PAR114 during this review period no longer teach in this program. There is only one adjunct who teaches PAR224 Technology for the Paralegal. The chair identified a gap in performance during the review period and subsequently coached the adjunct about this issue. The chair has monitored, and continues to monitor, this adjunct's performance. Professional development with ALL instructors will encourage persistent improvement in these areas.

In an alumni survey distributed within this review period, alumni were asked, "I was motivated by the instructors in my courses." The mean indicated 3.89 with a standard deviation of 1.02. The "n" was 19. There is opportunity for improvement in this area and the department will continue to provide professional development opportunities in teaching and learning during the academic year. Additional alumni survey data is provided in Section IX below.

Adjunct faculty members are formally evaluated every 3 years to determine the effectiveness of instruction and ensure that proper educational techniques are being followed. The following are the areas that are evaluated:

Effectiveness of Instruction

1. Preparation (Familiarity with course materials, policies and procedures, and technologies as well as college resources and services)
2. Facilitation (Course management: record keeping, timely response, student retention, problem solving)
3. Communication (Interaction and Feedback that is specific, detailed, fair, consistent and supports improvement)
4. Content Knowledge:
 - Shows Breadth and Depth to Teach Competencies
 - Sufficient to Teach Competencies
 - Insufficient to Teach Competencies

Evaluations are reviewed by the faculty chair. Any needed corrective action is taken with individual adjunct faculty members.

A formal all faculty meeting and department meetings are held semi-annually to keep adjunct faculty informed of relevant information and new procedures. Communication with adjunct faculty members occurs on a regular and continual basis through the faculty chair.

IX. Evaluation of Curriculum

The Paralegal Advisory committee meets annually to discuss current trends in the industry. The advisory committee consists of practitioners in the industry and community members.

Changes are made as the result of information from the Advisory Committee, faculty chair/lead instructor review, and adjunct feedback.

Textbook editions also prompt changes. Originally, the program partnered with Pearson to utilize their customized textbooks to save students money compared to the national title.

We saw that students were trying to save even more money by finding the national title on 3rd party sites but in some cases, they were buying the wrong edition. In these cases, students were unprepared for the first day of class. We also experienced title shortages from the bookstore and again, students were unprepared for the first day of class. To mitigate this issue, we switched to Cengage Unlimited, which is a subscription-based platform. This provides a lower cost to students depending on the subscription model they choose. Content is available via e-textbooks or print. The Unlimited subscription provides the students with more than 20 thousand titles beyond what they need for the paralegal program; i.e. psychology, sociology, etc.

Based on the most recent advisory meeting, there is an opportunity to explore an up and coming practitioner specialist called a Legal Paraprofessional (LP). An LP is a professional with specific education and experience who is licensed to provide legal services in limited practice areas. This professional is often compared to a nurse practitioner in the medical field.

Since this is a new field, the chair will work with the instructional coordinator assigned to workforce development to research the labor market in this area. It is too soon to determine the feasibility of this opportunity.

An alumni survey was conducted during this review to help the department address opportunities to enhance areas of student expectations and meeting career goals. A portion of the survey related to the purpose and mission of the college is included below. Planned actions as a result of this survey are addressed in Section XI of this review Total Surveys = 19

Question	Mean	Std. Deviation
The paralegal courses in the program prepared me for my career goals.	3.63	1.18
There was a commitment to academic excellence in my paralegal program.	4.32	0.65
I was motivated by the material in my courses.	4.21	1.00
I was motivated by the instructors in my courses.	3.89	1.02
The design of the program provided the flexibility and access to	4.68	0.57

complete my coursework and maintain my lifestyle.		
I would recommend the paralegal program to others looking to enter or advance in the legal field.	4.16	0.87
My degree and/or certificate from this program has or will increase my marketability as an employee.	3.32	1.34
I am or will earn a greater wage working in the legal field as a result of my education in this program.	3.05	1.47
The paralegal program adequately covered the skills and knowledge required to work in the legal field.	3.63	1.18
The paralegal program provided me with a comprehensive and cohesive legal education.	4.00	1.03

Questions rated on a Likert-type scale, range from 1 ("Strongly Disagree") to 5 ("Strongly Agree")

The full survey can be found [here](#).

X. Program Resources

The chair contracts a lead instructor for 10 hours a week to assist with inquiries related to the legal profession. The lead is also the internship coordinator and assists with overseeing the development/revision of courses.

Currently, Library Services oversees the budget and account for WestLawNext (WLN). WLN is a legal database that is used in the program. During the 2019/2020 AY, the course sequence was modified placing the emphasis on research early on in the program. This created an increase in the number of users. If enrollment grows, the library will not be able to sustain the budget of this database. As of this report, the users are manageable but that requires constant monitoring of students who need access.

Students have access to counseling services and disability resources and services (DRS); there are no specific tutors for the program.

Adjuncts direct students to DRS if the student discloses a condition that could qualify for accommodations. Additionally, if a student is struggling with issues outside of the classroom affecting their academic performance, adjuncts encourage the student to reach out to counseling. They make it a point to provide the student with a phone number or email address, not just say, "contact counseling."

XI. Program Recommendations, Decisions, and Action Plans

a. Program Best Practices

It may be too early to tell, but the Cengage Unlimited platform seems promising to provide students with access to textbooks on the first day of class. If more departments, specifically in general education areas find value in this platform, this could save students more money.

b. Program Viability

Job Outlook

Employment of paralegals and legal assistants is projected to grow 10 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for all occupations. (Source: <https://www.bls.gov>)

Job Prospects

Due to the rise of electronic discovery, formally trained paralegals with strong computer and database management skills should have the best job prospects (Source: <https://www.bls.gov>).

Pay

The median annual wage for paralegals and legal assistants was \$51,740 in May 2019. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$32,160, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$82,500.

In May 2019, the median annual wages for paralegals and legal assistants in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

Federal government	\$67,080
Finance and insurance	64,190
Local government, excluding education and hospitals	51,030
Legal services	49,630

State government, excluding education and hospitals 46,820

Most paralegals and legal assistants work full time. Some may work more than 40 hours per week in order to meet deadlines (Source: <https://www.bls.gov>).

Top Industries % change (2018 vs 2019) United States vs Arizona

NAICS Code	Description	United States	Arizona
541110	Offices of Lawyers	7%	3%
901199	Federal Government, Civilian, Excluding Postal Service	7%	8%
541191	Title Abstract and Settlement Offices	5%	1%
903999	Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	4%	2%
902999	State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	-1%	-5%
	Total	7%	3%

Source: <https://login.economicmodeling.com/login/login.php>

Projections for Employment

In Arizona, the number of Paralegals and Legal Assistants is expected to grow at a faster rate than the overall average for all occupations (17%). Jobs for Paralegals and Legal Assistant are expected to grow by 24%, or 1,782 jobs between 2018-2028.

Estimated Employment and Projected Growth
Paralegals and Legal Assistants

Geographic Area (Estimated Year-Projected Year)	Estimated Employment	Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Job* Openings
Arizona (2018-2028)	7,485	9,267	1,782	24%	10,642

* Includes due to separation, due to transfers and growth

The median wage in 2020 for Paralegals and Legal Assistants* in Arizona is \$50,212 annually which is below the median compensation for Paralegals and Legal Assistants in the United States is \$51,730, or \$24.14 hourly. The median is the point at which half of the workers earn more and half earn less.

2019 Occupational Employment and Wages

	Employment	Mean	Median	Entry
Arizona-Paralegals and Legal Assistants	7,210	\$50,937.00	\$50,212.00	\$31,722.00

Source: [Employment Projections - Labor Market](#)

The chair has consulted with the Dean of Instruction and Partnerships about exploring the Legal Paraprofessional (LP) industry credential.

c. Action Plans

We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of our current pathway mapping. Things to consider from these changes:

- Will retention and persistence rates change with the new PAR101 Foundations course?
 - Report on the next program review
 - Also factor in enhanced retention strategies with professional development
- Will students be better prepared for research and writing by placing this earlier in the course sequence?
 - Report on the next program review
 - Also factor in enhanced retention strategies with professional development
- Are students satisfied with the Cengage subscription model, why or why not?
 - Include this question in the next alumni survey
 - Target date 2023 or 2024 (current survey to go out mid-May 2021)

Based on results of the alumni survey, the department will focus efforts to enhance the student learning experience through communication and feedback. Additionally, the department will explore strategies to increase participation in internships as firms and offices begin to open up post-COVID. Students have expressed an interest in internships; however, it has been

challenging to increase enrollment in this area possibly due to students' busy work and personal schedules.

- The chair will continue to provide (and require) professional development to adjunct faculty to enhance retention and persistence.
 - Training is provided during the department meetings which coincide with the All Faculty Meetings.
 - Foster a culture of belonging among adjunct faculty and solicit ideas that create more ownership of the students' learning experience.
- Explore strategies and tactics to increase the number of internship opportunities and encourage students to participate in internships.
 - Review and evaluate other internship programs, such as paid internships.
 - Field work is required for seeking a certification as a Legal Paraprofessional.
- Add an oral communication dimension to PAR260 Legal Career Preparation and PAR239 Legal Investigation.

d. Assessment Team Recommendation

Continue program and implement stated action plan. Next review due AY 2025-26.

Continue program, implement stated action plan, and address comments listed below. Spotlight follow-up report due {1-2 years}.

Refer to college administration to determine program viability.

Discontinue program.

Comments:

Version 7. Last Updated by Assessment Committee 12/20