

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW
FOR CAREER PROGRAMS
THAT CONDUCT SELF-STUDIES
FOR NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITING BOARDS**

Paralegal Studies

2010 – 2012

**Program Review Committee:
Deborah Walsh, Program Coordinator**

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Academic Program Review

**FOR CAREER PROGRAMS
THAT CONDUCT SELF-STUDIES
FOR NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITING BOARDS**

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Middlesex Community College

Academic Program Review

FOR CAREER PROGRAMS THAT CONDUCT SELF-STUDIES FOR NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITING BOARDS

Note: This program review is an addendum to the Program Self-Study Report that is required for National Accreditation. The report of the Accrediting Board is included in this addendum. The complete Program Self-Study Report is on file with the Division Dean.

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

Using background and/or contextual information, please provide the reader with an overview/abstract of the program's evolution, progress, and direction. What is unique about this program? What does the future hold for the program? What are the major issues for this program? Connect us to your most recent program review where important, including information about previous findings, improvements, and unfinished items.

SECTION II: PROGRAM MISSION AND SUPPORT OF COLLEGE'S STRATEGIC PLAN

1. State the mission of the program.
2. Middlesex Community College's Strategic Directions are listed below. Describe how your program's mission and the work that is done within your program supports one or more of these directions.
 - *Improve access and advance student success by strengthening evidence-based practices and resource allocation.*
 - *Foster greater college engagement through improved communication, personal connections and collaborative partnerships.*
 - *Drive innovation, enrich community and broaden the learning experience for all by fulfilling our shared responsibility for diversity.*
 - *Empower all members of the college community to be educators, mentors, advocates and life-long learners.*
 - *Transform learning by integrating academic, workplace and global experiences to meet personal, professional and community needs.*
 - *Build partnerships that stimulate innovation and address the educational, social, economic and workforce development needs of our communities.*

Section III

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

3. Identify your Program Student Learning Outcomes

Graduates of the Paralegal Studies program will achieve the learning outcomes of the [Liberal Studies degree](#). Additionally, graduates are prepared to:

- Construct logical arguments in support of specific positions and evaluate their arguments;
- Work effectively as part of a team and individually, as appropriate;
- Prepare and carry out an effective legal research plan using both print and electronic sources of law;
- Understand the legal process and the nature of law practice, emphasizing the role of the paralegal in the delivery of legal services;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the legal and ethical principles that guide paralegal conduct and the ability to identify and resolve ethical issues.

4. Please provide your program's timeline for ongoing, annual assessment of its PSLOs.

2010-11	
2011-12	
2012-13	
2013-14	
2014-15	
2015-16	
2016-17	

5. If applicable, discuss any changes you have made to your PSLOs and/or the ways in which the courses in the program support those PSLOs since your last program review.

N/A

- This is an exercise to create a map of what “is”, not what “should be”. It is an opportunity for faculty teaching in your program to think about and articulate which program learning outcomes their course(s) currently supports, and to what degree. Once this map of “what is” has been created, as a group you can identify gaps that you want to address to better enable student achievement of your goals for their learning (see question 7 below).
- At the Competency level, PSLOs and ISLOs should be reflected within the course outcomes on all syllabi for that course.

Curriculum Map I: Paralegal program Course Opportunities for Student Achievement of PSLOs

PSLO	ISLO support ed by PSLO	Course	Course	Course	Course	Course	Course	Course	Course
Construct logical arguments in support of specific positions and evaluate their arguments;	CT								
Work effectively as part of a team and individually, as appropriate;	PPD								
Prepare and carry out an effective legal research plan using both print and electronic sources of law;	WC, CT								
Understand the legal process and the nature of law practice, emphasizing the role of the paralegal in the delivery of legal services;	CT, PPD								
Demonstrate an understanding of the legal and ethical principles that guide paralegal conduct and the ability to identify and resolve ethical issues.	SR, PPD								

1. Does your Curriculum Map suggest a need to make changes to the **availability** and/or **sequencing of** opportunities for students to develop and achieve any PSLO within the program? If so, please explain.

6. Referring back to your Curriculum Map for each PSLO, please provide at least one course-level student learning outcome (SLO) from syllabi from a wide range of sections for every course that supports that PSLO at a Competency level. If no such course-level SLOs are available, discuss how this will be addressed within the program. Also discuss how your program can or does ensure consistent opportunities among all sections of each Competency-level course for students to demonstrate their achievement of your program goals for student learning.

PSLO	Course Supporting at Competency Level	Course SLO

7. Referring back to your Curriculum Map, are there any ISLOs not supported to Competency levels within the program? If so, please describe how students in your program experience adequate opportunities to develop and achieve Competency with this (these) outcome(s), or please provide a plan for how this will be addressed.

<p>Written and Oral Communication For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written assignments • Oral presentations • Use of relevant information literacy skills • Effective use of technology 	<p>Critical Thinking For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis • Synthesis • Evaluation • Creative thinking • Development of logical conclusions
<p>Quantitative Literacy For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation • Representation • Calculation • Application/Analysis • Communication of quantitative information 	<p>Multicultural and Global Literacy For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intercultural knowledge • Global issues • Interactions that build diversity awareness • Diverse forms of creative expression • Aesthetic Appreciation • Historical, political, and economic perspective
<p>Social Responsibility For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability • Civic engagement • Social justice • Ethical frameworks • Social policy frameworks 	<p>Personal and Professional Development For example...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of academic goals • Career Readiness • Self Assessment • Responsibility for learning and personal development • Professionalism • Leadership • Wellness • Collaboration

Assessment

Please assess one PSLO as part of this program review. You will be sent an Assessment Update form each year in order to continue assessing your PSLOs.

PSLO: *Graduates of the ... Program will*

8. Assessment Planning:

What in particular would you like to know with regard to student achievement of this PSLO? How can you get that information?

9. Assessment Process:

Describe the process by which this PSLO was assessed for Competency, using your program's curriculum map to determine locations from which evidence of competency can be obtained. Include in your description as appropriate:

- Which courses contributed evidence of student learning and achievement?
- Which assignments/projects/exams/activities within those courses generated the evidence?
- Was there additional information/data incorporated into this assessment re: question 10 above?
- How was a sample selected from the full sets of contributed evidence?
- What criteria were used to assess student learning and achievement?
- Which faculty members assessed the evidence, and how representative are they of the faculty teaching in the program?
- How you created a block of time to conduct the assessments of student learning

10. Assessment Results:

What did your program learn about student achievement of this PSLO?

11. Closing the Loop:

What curricular and/or instructional changes are planned within the program as a result of this assessment work (if any)? Please consult current research/best practice in the field to inform these changes, and note that information here. (These changes should be noted as part of your action plan in **SECTION VII**, the Summary section of this document.)

SECTION IV: PROGRAM SUPPORT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

12. The following instructional practices and strategies have been described as high impact educational practices. Please discuss them in the context of your own program. Feel free to discuss additional high impact practices not mentioned here. Have you done any research within your program to determine the actual impact on student success that these or other high impact practices are having? If you are finding these high impact practices to be effective strategies for engaging students and increasing student success, how will you scale such practices up and out to support more students within your program? (This information should be noted as part of your action plan in **SECTION VII**, the Summary section of this document.)

- **FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS AND EXPERIENCES**
- **COMMON INTELLECTUAL EXPERIENCES**
- **LEARNING COMMUNITIES**
- **WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSES**
- **COLLABORATIVE ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS**
- **UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH**
- **DIVERSITY/GLOBAL LEARNING**
- **SERVICE LEARNING, COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING**
- **INTERNSHIPS**
- **CAPSTONE COURSES AND PROJECT**

- 13.** Were any of the courses in this program reformed as a result of MCC's recent Title III "Strategies for Success" grant? If so, please discuss the perceived program impact of that curriculum reform work, along with the use of DegreeWorks and Early Alert intervention, on students in your program. Are there teaching and learning strategies that have been found to be particularly effective? Have co-curricular activities been embedded in course content that have strengthened student learning? How is the program bringing these strategies to scale in all sections of these courses and other courses? (Include in your action plan in the Summary section as appropriate.) In Question #20, you will be asked to discuss course completion comparison between reformed and non-reformed sections of the same course.
- 14.** Discuss any new strategies being implemented within your program to support student success not mentioned above. This could include efforts to establish consistent expectations for students, scaffolding learning within sequential courses, inclusion of experiential learning, collaborations with Academic Support Services and/or other support areas, curriculum revision, pedagogical sharing and innovation, etc.
- 15.** Do all students in your program, regardless of campus, day/evening, and/or modality of instruction, have equal access to the high impact practices and student success strategies that your program offers to at least some of its students? If not, discuss how you can increase equity for all students in your program. (Include in your action plan as appropriate.)
- 16.** Discuss the program's ability to facilitate student learning with regard to staffing, facilities, equipment, etc. Be specific about deficiencies and/or needs and their impact on student learning. (Include in your action plan as appropriate.)

SECTION V: INSTITUTIONAL DATA

The Institutional Research Office will provide a significant portion of the data. Your committee is encouraged to request additional relevant information from Institutional Research and to develop and conduct alternative assessments as well. Some examples of assessments that the committee may choose to implement are student focus groups and/or student surveys. Input from relevant internal groups such as Advising, Admissions, and/or connected departments will also be necessary. Please include a copy of the data from Institutional Research and all committee-developed surveys or focus questions in the Appendix of the review.

- 17.** Please note important trends, patterns and issues that emerge as you examine data from Institutional Research office, including:
 - a.** program enrollment data
 - b.** reading, writing and math placement data
 - c.** demographic data
 - d.** enrollment status data
 - e.** course completion data (by method of course offering)
 - f.** academic progress data
 - g.** retention data
 - h.** transfer data

- 18.** Were any courses in the program recently reformed as a result of MCC's Title III grant? If so, how does the completion rate of those reformed sections compare to the overall completion rate for that course?

- 19.** Are any of the CCSSE data relevant to student achievement of PSLOs? If so, explain the data and how, as student perception data, they contribute to your understanding of student achievement.

- 20.** Please identify labor/market trends that may impact current and future graduates of this program, based on input from advisory boards, focus group meetings with recent graduates, and national and regional data. Discuss changes to the program that these market trends may suggest. Some possible sources for such data include:
 - <http://online.onetcenter.org> (use "Find Occupations")
 - <http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/FPlmiforms1.asp>

- 21.** Please summarize findings from student surveys, student focus groups, and/or other types of surveys and focus groups the Committee chose to undertake.

SECTION VI: EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

- 22. LOCAL:** Based on a review of other college catalogs, list the colleges in our general area that have similar programs and comment on significant differences from the ones we currently offer that bear further exploration. If appropriate, discuss steps that MCC could take towards implementing these best practices in this program. Also if appropriate, include steps in action plan of Section VII, Summary.

- 23. NATIONAL BEST PRACTICE:** Based upon research on institutions beyond our geographical area that have exemplary programs or are known for their 'best practices,' discuss significant similarities or differences at MCC and identify areas that bear further exploration. If appropriate, discuss steps that MCC could take towards implementing these best practices in this program. Also if appropriate, include steps in action plan of Section VII, Summary.

SECTION VII: PROGRAM EVALUATION SUMMARY

- A. Program Strengths
(Bulleted List with reference to the question(s) numbers in the program review where this strength is explained.)

- B. Program Action Plan for Improvements, Budgetary Implications, Timelines.
Program Review is both evaluative and forward-thinking, offering the opportunity to set future directions for the program.

Action Items (Reference the question in the program review where this need is explained.)	Proposed Plans for Improvement (Bulleted list of suggestions.)	Financial Needs to Make Improvements	Proposed Timelines for Implementation