

OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY
Paralegal Studies

		2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
1. Assessment information collected		<p>Questionnaires mailed or e-mailed to students</p> <p>Questionnaires mailed or e-mailed to graduates</p> <p>Individual interviews with employers of Graduates</p> <p>Review of assessment information by Outcomes Assessment Subcomm.</p> <p>Review of assessment information by Paralegal Advisory Committee</p>	<p>Student focus groups</p> <p>Comparison of student writing, PLS 102 vs. PLS 280 and 285</p> <p>UAF Instructional Assessment System</p> <p>Internship Reports</p> <p>Graduate Focus group</p> <p>Successful placement of graduates</p> <p>National certification exam</p> <p>Individual interviews with employers of Graduates</p> <p>Review of assessment information by Outcomes Assessment Subcomm.</p> <p>Review of assessment information by Paralegal Advisory Committee</p>	<p>100% of graduates gainfully employed in the industry</p> <p>100% of graduates passed the Certified paralegal exam</p> <p>100% of employers satisfied with graduates – nearly all offices in town employ CTC paralegal graduates</p> <p>Student focus groups</p> <p>Comparison of student writing, PLS 102 vs. PLS 280 and 285</p> <p>Student Portfolios</p> <p>UAF Instructional Assessment System</p> <p>Internship Reports</p> <p>Graduate Focus group</p> <p>Successful placement of graduates</p> <p>National certification exam</p> <p>Individual interviews with employers of graduates</p> <p>Review of assessment information by Outcomes Assessment Subcomm.</p> <p>Review of assessment information by Paralegal Advisory Committee</p>
2. Conclusions drawn from information collected		<p>a) Employers of graduates report some graduates have inadequate legal writing skills; cannot produce “a simple business letter.” Instructors also notice many students have poor grammar skills.</p> <p>b) Questionnaires indicate students very happy with team teaching for PLS 203, “Torts” (lawyer and practicing paralegal). Encouraged more of the same.</p>	<p>a) Focus groups indicate one credit is inadequate for the paralegal ethics course, PLS 105.</p> <p>b) Focus groups indicate required political science courses, PS 303 and PS 435/436, are taught on main campus at times not usually convenient for paralegal students.</p> <p>c) Much student demand for availability of paralegal courses online.</p>	<p>a) Focus groups indicate name confusion exists between PLS 102, “Introduction to Paralegal Studies,” and PLS 103, “Introduction to Paralegal Skills.”</p>

3.	Curricular Changes resulting from conclusions drawn above	<p>a) Advisory committee identified quality writing as one of the most important skills for a practicing paralegal. Program created new required course, PLS 285, "Advanced Legal Writing," to be taken only after successful completion of PLS 280, "Intermediate Legal Research and Writing." Focus of new course will be solely on legal writing since local job market does not require advanced legal research. New booklet written by instructor uses a new grading system based on 50 basic rules of grammar to be used in both PLS 280 and PLS 285.</p> <p>b) Added paralegal team teacher to PLS 210, "Civil Procedure" and began using two lawyers, a prosecutor and a defense lawyer, to teach PLS 213, "Criminal Law."</p>	<p>a) Increase PLS 105, "Introduction to Paralegal Ethics," to a two-credit-hour course. This raised credits required for the A.A.S. degree from 60 to 61.</p> <p>b) Continue to freely substitute other law-related courses at the 300-level and 400-level. However, provide specific alternatives in the catalog for the most used online choices: PS 300X, JUST 300X, JRN 413.</p> <p>c) Any legal specialty courses taught online must be approved by the ABA. Program coordinator advised approval often takes one year. Advisory committee decided to teach PLS 242, "Employment Law," online in spring semester as an "experiment." If it is successful, start the process to obtain ABA approval and develop two additional courses for online delivery, probably PLS 102, "Introduction to the Law," and PLS 203, "Torts."</p>	<p>b) Low student ratings for PLS 260, "Computers in the Law Office." Course taught online Microsoft Office, not law office software.</p> <p>c) Graduates indicate majority of local law offices and both court systems use Westlaw, not Lexis.</p> <p>a) Rename PLS 102 "Introduction to the Law," which is better title in any event. The text used for the course is entitled "Introduction to Law for Paralegals."</p> <p>b) Retain new instructor, a practicing paralegal with experience using Abacus, Lexis CaseMap, and Smartdraw. Obtain instructional license for all three softwares and incorporated them into the course curriculum.</p> <p>c) Did not renew contract with Lexis, which was being taught to students, and switched to Westlaw. Instructor attended special training in Anchorage in order to teach Westlaw to students and Westlaw sent a representative to Fairbanks for two days of student seminars.</p>
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