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| **Assurance of Student Learning Report****2023-2024** |
| *Potter College of Arts and Letters* | *Political Science* |
| *Paralegal Studies (1757)* |
| *Julie Shadoan, Program Coordinator* |
| ***Is this an online program***? No | Please make sure the Program Learning Outcomes listed match those in CourseLeaf . Indicate verification here  Yes, they match! Assessing 3/5. |

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| ***Use this page to list learning outcomes, measurements, and summarize results for your program. Detailed information must be completed in the subsequent pages. Add more Outcomes as needed.*** |
| **Program Student Learning Outcome 1:**  **Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical restrictions of paralegal practice.** |
| **Instrument 1** | Office Simulations (PLS 200, PLS 393) |
| **Instrument 2** | Internship Supervisor Evaluation (PLS 499) |
| **Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.** | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Program Student Learning Outcome 2:**  **Communicate effectively within the standards of practice.** |
| **Instrument 1** | Office Simulations (PLS 225, PLS 250 and PLS 393) |
| **Instrument 2** | Course Writing and Presentation Projects (PLS 225, PLS 250 and PLS 450) |
| **Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.** | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Program Student Learning Outcome 3:**  **Execute effective legal research strategies and critically construct legal argument.** |
| **Instrument 1** | Course Research and Writing Projects (PLS 250, PLS 450) |
| **Instrument 2** | Mock Trial (PLS 393) |
| **Based on your results, check whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.** | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Assessment Cycle Plan:**  |
| Students in the Certificate Program Option were not assessed separately from those in the Bachelor’s Degree Program Option for 2023-2024, but they will be going forward. Based on comments from the external accreditation site visit team in 2023, the Program Coordinator, Program Faculty and Advisory Board have reviewed the Program Learning Outcomes for the Certificate and have made appropriate changes that will be proposed through the curriculum process in fall 2024. These will be reflected in the 2024-25 ASL Report. |

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| **Program Student Learning Outcome 1** |
| **Program Student Learning Outcome**  | Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical restrictions of paralegal practice. Here, the Program is assessing how well the students can identify and understand ethics rule applications on matters such as competence in technology and research, diligence in practice, maintenance of client confidentiality and integrity of the practice, recognition of conflicts of interest, and contribution to public service. |
| **Measurement Instrument 1**  | In PLS 200 (Legal Ethics) and PLS 393 (Civil Procedure), students will participate in general discussions relating to moral decisions they make in their daily lives. Students will then review the Rules of Professional Responsibility for attorneys as well as suggested guidelines and standards of conduct for paralegals. They will be required to learn the ethical constraints on the practice of law and apply the concepts to practice simulations in order to make decisions as to what course of action should be taken. They will then discuss the ramifications of ethical violations for the public at large and for legal professionals.  |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Student learning is assessed based on the student’s ability to recognize the ethics issue triggered, to identify the relevant rule or guideline, to act in compliance with the rule or guideline and to identify the legal and professional ramifications for violation. A “C” or above is considered success. |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a “C” or above on the simulation assignments. | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | PLS 200 (FA 23): 84% (36/43 students)PLS 393 (SP 24): 93% (26/28 students) |
| **Methods**  | Simulation assignments from PLS 200 and PLS 393 were assessed according to this rubric: A: Correctly identifies ethics issue, correctly links ethics issue to relevant rule or guideline, correctly identifies all actions required for compliance and correctly identifies all legal and professional ramifications for non-compliance;B: Correctly identifies ethics issue, correctly links ethics issue to relevant rule or guideline, correctly identifies most but not all actions required for compliance and correctly identifies most but not all legal and professional ramifications for non-compliance;C: Recognizes that an ethics issue is triggered but does not link the issue to a specific rule or guideline, correctly identifies some but not all actions required for compliance and correctly identifies some but not all legal and professional ramifications for non-compliance; D: Recognizes that an ethics issue is triggered but does not link the issue to any rule or guideline; fails to correctly identify some actions required for compliance or fails to correctly identify some legal and professional ramifications for non-compliance;F: Fails to recognize that an ethics issue is triggered and does not link the act or omission to any rule or guideline; does not identify any actions required for compliance and does not identify any legal and professional ramification for non-compliance. |
| **Measurement Instrument 2** | In PLS 499 (Internship), students work with practicing attorneys and paralegals to complete one hundred fifty (150) hours of legal service in various employment environments including but not limited to private law firms, corporate legal departments, government offices, courts and non-profit organizations. They submit a work sample portfolio, prepare an experience paper and are evaluated by their internship supervisors. The experience paper must address an ethical issue the student encountered during his/her internship and thirty percent (30%) of the supervisor evaluation is focused on ethical standards of practice. |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Student learning is assessed based on the student’s ability to recognize the ethics issue triggered, to identify the relevant ethics guideline and to act in compliance with that guideline. A “P” is considered success. |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | One hundred percent (100%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a “P” after instructor assessment of the portfolio and paper and the external evaluation of performance.  | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | PLS 499 (FA 23): 100% (6/6 students)PLS 499 (SP 24): 100% (10/10 students)\*2 students received an “X” to complete the 150 hours |
| **Methods** | Student portfolios, experience papers and external evaluations were assessed according to this rubric:P: Correctly identifies ethics issue, links ethics issue to relevant ethics guideline and acts in compliance with relevant guideline; F: Fails to recognize that an ethics issue is triggered and/or fails to act in compliance with relevant guideline. |
| **Based on your results, highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 1.** | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Results, Conclusion, and Plans for Next Assessment Cycle (Describe what worked, what didn’t, and plan going forward)** |
| Results were consistent with conscientious efforts to work with students in order to guarantee completion of the course (PLS 200). |

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| **Program Student Learning Outcome 2** |
| **Program Student Learning Outcome**  | Communicate effectively within the standards of practice. Here, students are assessed on their ability to communicate effectively within the standards of practicing, using oral and written communication tools. |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | In three (3) targeted paralegal courses (PLS 225, Introduction to Law; PLS 250, Legal Research and Writing I; and PLS 393, Civil Procedure), students are presented with various practice simulations requiring them to develop appropriate lines of communication with various constituencies. Simulations include ***oral*** communication with clients, attorneys, judges, witnesses and vendors. |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Student learning is assessed on student’s ability to choose best mode of communication, to deliver appropriate content, to comply with ethics guidelines including client confidentiality and professional decorum, and to deliver content timely. Success is defined as a “C” or above. |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a “C” or above on course simulations. | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | PLS 225 (FA 23): 88% (21/23 students)PLS 225 (SP 24): 97% (21/32 students)PLS 250 (FA 23): 98% (34/35 students)PLS 250 (SP 24): 100% (1 of 1 students)PLS 393 (SP 24): 93% (26/28 students) |
| **Methods**  | Simulation assignments from PLS 225, PLS 250 and PLS 393 were assessed according to this rubric: A: Chooses best mode of communication; delivers all content precisely and succinctly; complies with ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; B: Chooses a good mode of communication; delivers all content but lack precision and succinctness; complies with ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; C: Chooses a good mode of communication; delivers most content but lacks precision and succinctness; complies with most ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines;D: Chooses inappropriate mode of communication; delivers minimal content; communication violates some ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines;F: Chooses inappropriate mode of communication; delivers little if any relevant content; communication violates ethics guidelines; and fails to meet deadlines. |
| **Measurement Instrument 2** | In three (3) targeted paralegal courses (PLS 225, Introduction to Law; PLS 250, Legal Research and Writing I; and PLS 393, Civil Procedure), students are presented with various practice simulations requiring them to develop appropriate lines of communication with various constituencies. Simulations include ***written*** communication with clients, attorneys, judges, witnesses and vendors. They are also required to research and present on various topics including trends in the legal profession and legal technology. |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Student learning is assessed on student’s ability to choose best mode of communication, to deliver appropriate content, to comply with ethics guidelines including client confidentiality and professional decorum, and to deliver content timely. Success is defined as a “C” or above. |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a “C” or above on course simulations. | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | PLS 225 (FA 23): 88% (21/23 students)PLS 225 (SP 24): 97% (21/32 students)PLS 250 (FA 23): 98% (34/35 students)PLS 250 (SP 24): 100% (1 of 1 students)PLS 393 (SP 24): 93% (26/28 students) |
| **Methods** | Simulation and presentation assignments from PLS 225, PLS 250 and PLS 393 were assessed according to this rubric: A: Chooses best mode of communication; delivers all content precisely and succinctly; complies with ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; B: Chooses a good mode of communication; delivers all content but lack precision and succinctness; complies with ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines; C: Chooses a good mode of communication; delivers most content but lacks precision and succinctness; complies with most ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines;D: Chooses inappropriate mode of communication; delivers minimal content; communication violates some ethics guidelines; and meets deadlines;F: Chooses inappropriate mode of communication; delivers little if any relevant content; communication violates ethics guidelines; and fails to meet deadlines. |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 2.** | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Results, Conclusion, and Plans for Next Assessment Cycle (Describe what worked, what didn’t, and plan going forward)** |
| Improvement on success targets was realized in all four courses assessed for AY 2022/23. Despite this, incompletes based on failure to submit graded work continue to be a concern. Based on internal and external research and consultations, this phenomenon is not limited to this program and seem to be a holdover from the pandemic.  |

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| **Program Student Learning Outcome 3** |
| **Program Student Learning Outcome**  | Execute effective legal research strategies and critically construct legal argument. Here, students are assessed on their ability to execute efficient and relevant legal research strategies and to construct persuasive legal argument. |
| **Measurement Instrument 1** | In PLS 250 (Legal Research and Writing I) and PLS 450 (Legal Research and Writing II), students will complete legal research projects utilizing resources in the WKU Law Library and online databases such as Westlaw. Students will utilize the results of the legal research projects to construct and articulate persuasive legal argument both in the form of oral argument and legal pleadings and briefs. |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Student learning will be assessed on the student’s ability to conduct efficient and accurate legal research, to incorporate the results of legal research into persuasive legal argument and to articulate that argument effectively in oral and written format. Success is defined as a C or above. |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a “C” or above on the research and writing projects. | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | PLS 250 (FA 23): 98% (34/35 students)PLS 250 (SP 24): 100% (1 of 1 students) |
| **Methods**  | Student projects from PLS 250 were assessed according to this rubric: A: Correctly identified relevant primary law; effectively utilized primary law to construct persuasive legal argument; and articulated legal argument into oral or written format as required by assignment instructions and rules of procedure; B: Correctly identified relevant primary law; utilized primary law to construct legal argument somewhat persuasive argument; and articulated legal argument into oral or written format as required by assignment instructions and rules of procedure:C. Correctly identified relevant primary law; utilized primary law to construct legal argument that lacked persuasion; and articulated argument into oral or written format that complied with some but not all of the assignment instructions and rules of procedure:D. Identified primary law that lacked relevance; failed to construction persuasive legal argument; and articulated argument into oral or written format that complied with few but not all of the assignment instructions and rules of procedure; F: Failed to identify relevant primary law; failed to construct persuasive legal argument; and failed to articulate argument in compliance with assignment instructions and rules of procedure. |
| **Measurement Instrument 2** | In PLS 393 (Civil Procedure), students prepare a civil case for mock trial proceedings. As part of this process, students must conduct legal research and use the results of their research to construct legal argument for delivery in pre-trial motions, jury instructions, pre-trial memorandum and closing argument. |
| **Criteria for Student Success** | Student learning will be assessed on the student’s ability to conduct efficient and accurate legal research, to incorporate the results of legal research into persuasive legal argument and to articulate that argument effectively in written format. Success is defined as a “C” or above. |
| **Program Success Target for this Measurement** | Seventy-five percent (75%) of the students will perform within the industry standard and receive a “C” or above on the research and writing projects. | **Percent of Program Achieving Target** | PLS 393 (SP 24): 93% (26/28 students) |
| **Methods** | Student projects from PLS 393 were assessed according to this rubric: A: Correctly identified relevant primary law; effectively utilized primary law to construct persuasive legal argument; and articulated legal argument into written format as required by assignment instructions and rules of procedure; B: Correctly identified relevant primary law; utilized primary law to construct legal argument somewhat persuasive argument; and articulated legal argument into written format as required by assignment instructions and rules of procedure:C. Correctly identified relevant primary law; utilized primary law to construct legal argument that lacked persuasion; and articulated argument into written format that complied with some but not all of the assignment instructions and rules of procedure:D. Identified primary law that lacked relevance; failed to construction persuasive legal argument; and articulated argument into written format that complied with few but not all of the assignment instructions and rules of procedure; F: Failed to identify relevant primary law; failed to construct persuasive legal argument; and failed to articulate argument in compliance with assignment instructions and rules of procedure. |
| **Based on your results, circle or highlight whether the program met the goal Student Learning Outcome 3.** | **Met** | **Not Met** |
| **Results, Conclusion, and Plans for Next Assessment Cycle (Describe what worked, what didn’t, and plan going forward)** |
| Success was realized in 250, 450 and 393 due to conscious efforts to monitor attendance and intervene throughout the semester to assure completion of the courses. Only one student failed to complete the PLS 393 and PLS 450.Employer and alumni surveys were delayed in AY 23-24. These surveys will be disseminated in summer 2024. |

***See Curriculum Map on the following page.***

