



Program Assessment Report

Program: College of Policy and Legal Studies: Paralegal, BAS

Option: Paralegal

Report Year: 2017-18

Drafted by Christy Powers on May 16, 2019

Data Files

[PLA 4941 Capstone Scores - Combined 2016-2018.xlsx](#)

[Legal Data Tables - 2016-2018.xlsx](#)

Overall Introduction

In support of the mission of St. Petersburg College, faculty committees established thirteen value statements. Three of these value statements are:

- Student Focus: We believe students are the heart of SPC! All SPC resources, decisions, and efforts are aligned to transform students' lives to empower them to finish what they start!
- Academic Excellence: We promote academic excellence through interactive, innovative, and inquiry-centered teaching and learning.
- Culture of Inquiry: We encourage a data-driven environment that allows for open, honest dialogue about who we are, what we do, and how we continue to improve student success.

It is the intent of St. Petersburg College to incorporate continuous improvement practices in all areas. Assessment reports provide comparisons of present and past results which are used to identify topics where improvement is possible. SPC has traditionally used past results as a vital tool in achieving its commitment to continuous improvement.

Program Learning Outcomes

#1: Acquire and implement advanced critical thinking and analytical skills needed to effectively problem solve.

I. Use of Past Results

Based on the case table and analysis of data, the Analytical (worth 25 points out of 200) competency maintained increasing scores from the first to the last of the three year period, while Legal Research (worth 50 points out of 200) and Critical Thinking (worth 20 points out of 200) competencies had a 4% increase. Individual projects are assigned to each student while considering the following: prior areas of interest/disinterest; prior areas of competency; current employment in a particular area of law; and pre-law potential. The increase overall is believed to be related to the exposure and awareness of the resources offered online for state and federal matters.

Upon reviewing the findings for MLO #1, and considering the current processes for determining pairings between case studies and students, the Paralegal, BAS program was scheduled to complete the following projects during the 2012-2013 academic year:

1. revise the types of projects currently available in order to continue to meet the needs of the legal community;

2. review the rubric criteria and guidelines provided to students to ensure sufficient direction is provided; and
3. hire a legal research tutor in order to increase overall scores in this area across the next three years.

In addressing the projects listed above, the scores during the 2013-2015 academic years incorporated the following improvements. Please see the comments numbered below:

1. New projects were added in areas such as social security disability and business law which are common issues in the local community and which provide employment for our students;
2. Added some sub-categories to the rubric that incorporated monitoring the projects more closely throughout the 16 or 10 week semesters; and
3. We have legal research tutors in place in the Clearwater and St. Petersburg-Gibbs libraries offered on an as-needed basis.

II. Methodology

Means of Assessment: The PLA 4941 Capstone Project is the final culminating project through which students demonstrate competency in all 5 program goals/learning outcomes. In grading and assessing the projects, MLO #1 is clearly aligned to the requirements of the projects and the criteria on which the projects are assessed. The students employ advanced critical thinking and analytical skills as they execute each step in the project. Each case/fact pattern has a cause of action(s) or scenario which presents the necessary elements for critique. Students are encouraged to identify the causal links that may or may not be present. After assessing the fact pattern and researching the legal information necessary to complete the tasks assigned, the student completes two mandatory memorandums documenting: 1. the utilization of websites and references to begin work and 2. internal case practice manuals and guidelines as prescribed by the state or federal government. Preparing the student for success in this learning outcome truly begins with proper guidance and research into the particular area(s) of law that each project encompasses. Each student is assigned a project along with a supervising attorney to assist should any questions or issues arise. From that point, the student is expected to maintain contact throughout the project with the assigned supervising attorney.

Date(s) of Administration: 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18

Method: Students are instructed and guided to determine the contents of the final submission by their professor or supervising attorney. Each project has its own set of guidelines (parameters) as part of the initial fact pattern that are to be met as a minimum. Three competencies within goal #1 are assessed: analytical, critical thinking, and legal research.

Assessment Instrument: Projects are assessed using a rubric, where one or more of the seven criteria align to the five program goals. The rubric criteria are then paired with the guidelines provided for each type of case study. Both the guidelines in the project specs and the rubric are provided to students at the start of the term. While students complete various types of projects within the same course, there is a consistent and common set of criteria on which students are assessed. Attached is a copy of the PLA 4941 Capstone Grading Rubric.

Population: All students enrolled in the PLA 4941 capstone course are assessed on the culminating project.

III. Criteria for Success

For each of the three competencies within goal #1 that are assessed - analytical, critical thinking, and legal research - there is a maximum number of available points (90 for all three areas, combined) that contribute to the overall grade of the project (200 points total).

Students are required to score a minimum of 63 out of 90 possible points (70%) in order to successfully demonstrate the program goal.

When students experience difficulty with one or more areas of the project, they are required to write an internal memorandum to the supervising attorney identifying the questions they have; feedback is provided accordingly. Once students submit the project to be assessed, the grade is final unless a student has not met the minimum of 70% on the respective sections relating to each MLO. In cases where students do not meet the minimum requirements, they are given a "guided" opportunity to revise the project until the required competency level is met. Students cannot pass the course unless they complete the project.

IV. Summary of Assessment Findings

Results via Face-to-Face

Results via Distance Delivery (Online, Blended, etc)

Student Performance on PLO #1 Competencies: 2016 -2018							
Competency (points)	2015-16 (n=45)		2016-17 (n=50)		2017-18 (n=37)		3yr Avg (n=132)
	Avg	%	Avg	%	Avg	%	%
Analytical (25)	22.5	90%	23.2	93%	23.2	93%	92%
Critical Thinking (20)	19.5	98%	19.0	93%	18.1	90%	94%
Legal Research (30)	28.6	95%	27.9	93%	27.3	91%	93%

V. Discussion and Analysis of Assessment Findings

Based on the case table and analysis of data, the Analytical (worth 25 points out of 200) competency maintained increasing scores from the first to the last of the three year period, while Legal Research (worth 30 points out of 200) and Critical Thinking (worth 20 points out of 200) competencies have slightly decreased while still maintaining an "A" average. Individual projects are assigned to each student while considering the following: prior areas of interest/disinterest; prior areas of competency; current employment in a particular area of law; and pre-law potential. The increase overall is believed to be related to the exposure and awareness of the resources offered online for state and federal matters. The slight decrease in critical thinking and legal research is due to the student pool missing a few causes of action in their research.

Upon reviewing the findings for MLO #1, and considering the current processes for determining pairings between case studies and students, the Paralegal, BAS program were scheduled to complete the following projects during the 2016-2017 academic year:

1. revise the types of projects currently available in order to continue to meet the needs of the legal community;
2. review the rubric criteria and guidelines provided to students to ensure sufficient direction is provided; and
3. hire a legal research tutor in order to increase overall scores in this area across the next three years.

In addressing the projects listed above, the scores during the 2015-2018 academic years incorporated the following improvements. Please see the comments numbered below:

1. New projects were added in areas such as social security disability and business law which are common issues in the local community and which provide employment for our students;
2. Added some sub-categories to the rubric that incorporated monitoring the projects more closely throughout the 16 or 10 week semesters; and
3. We have legal research tutors in place in the Clearwater and St. Petersburg-Gibbs libraries offered on an as-needed basis.

VI. Action Plan and Timetable for Implementation

Based on the analysis of the results the following Action Plan Items have been selected for implementation:

- [Students' scores vary from semester to semester. Focusing on the individual competencies attained and future skill sets will continue to guide how the projects are provided to the students.](#)
- Christy Powers, Susan Demers, Ian Banks, and Deborah Eldridge / May 2019

Budget / Planning Implications:

N/A

#2: Demonstrate the appropriate use of communication and organizational skills within and outside the legal system.

I. Use of Past Results

Based on the case table and analysis of data for the years 2013-2015, the Legal Writing (worth 40 points out of 200) competency maintained a 1% increase in scores from the first to the last of the three year period, while the Legal Research (worth 50 points out of 200) competency had a 4% increase. Communication (45 points out of 200); Presentation (20 points out of 200); and Organization (20 points out of 200) competencies all saw a decrease. Organization and the lack of A/V materials in the projects saw a drastic decline. The decrease is believed to be related to the students not aware of how to use current technology and software to implement of short-form presentation to their fellow students and myself, as the instructor. The use of a table of contents and a logical order to the project go hand-in-hand for a concise submission.

Upon reviewing the findings for MLO #2, in order to address the decrease in the Organization scores, the Paralegal,

BAS program will be implementing more mandatory projects in core courses in the upper division to practice and demonstrate the compilation of a concise and organized submission of work product.

II. Methodology

Means of Assessment: The PLA 4941 Capstone Project is the final culminating project through which students demonstrate competency in all 5 program goals/learning outcomes. In grading and assessing the projects, MLO #2 is clearly aligned to the requirements of the project and the criteria on which the projects are assessed. Each case/fact pattern has a cause of action or scenario which presents the necessary elements for review. Students are encouraged to identify the causal links that may or may not be present. After assessing the fact pattern and research necessary to complete the tasks assigned, the student completes two mandatory memoranda documenting: 1. the utilization of websites and references to begin work and 2. internal case practice manuals and guidelines as prescribed by the state or federal government. Setting the student up for success starts with proper guidance and research into the particular area(s) of law that each project covers. Each student is assigned a project and a supervising attorney to assist in facilitating this process. From that point, the student is expected to maintain contact throughout the project with the assigned supervising attorney.

Date(s) of Administration: 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18

Method: The PLA 4941 Capstone project assesses five competencies within MLO #2 - communication, presentation, organizational skills, critical thinking, and legal writing. Students are instructed and guided to determine the make-up of the submission pursuant to course instructions, supervising attorney guidance, and professor guidance. Each project has its own set of guidelines (parameters) as part of the initial fact pattern that are to be met at a minimum.

Assessment Instrument: Projects are assessed using a rubric where one or more of the the seven criteria align to the five program goals. The rubric criteria are then paired with the guidelines provided for each type of case study. Both the guidelines in the project specs and the rubric are provided to students at the start of the term. While students complete various types of projects within the same course, there is a consistent and common set of criteria on which students are assessed. Attached is a copy of the PLA 4941 Capstone Grading Rubric.

Population: All students enrolled in the PLA 4941 Capstone course are assessed on the culminating project.

III. Criteria for Success

For each of the five competencies within goal #2 that are assessed - communication, presentation, organizational skills, critical thinking, and legal writing - there is a maximum number of available points (125 for all five areas, combined) that contribute to the overall grade of the project (200 points total). Students are required to obtain a minimum of 88 out of 125 possible points (70%) in order to successfully demonstrate the program goal. When students feel they are experiencing difficulty with one area of the project, they are required to write an internal memorandum to the supervising attorney, identifying the questions they have; feedback is provided accordingly. Once students submit the project to be assessed, the grade is final unless a student has not met the minimum of 70% on the respective sections relating to each MLO. In cases where students do not meet the minimum requirements, they are given the opportunity to revise the project until the required competency level is met. Students cannot pass the course unless they complete the project.

IV. Summary of Assessment Findings

Results via Face-to-Face

Results via Distance Delivery (Online, Blended, etc)

Student Performance on PLO #2 Competencies: 2016 -2018							
Competency (points)	2015-16 (n=45)		2016-17 (n=50)		2017-18 (n=37)		3yr Avg (n=132)
	Avg	%	Avg	%	Avg	%	
Communication (25*)	42.6	95%	23.9	94%	22.3	89%	93%
Presentation (30*)	17.3	87%	27.7	90%	27.3	91%	89%
Organization (20)	13.8	69%	15.8	77%	14.6	73%	73%
Critical Thinking (20)	19.5	98%	19.0	93%	18.1	90%	94%
Legal Writing (30*)	36.5	91%	27.7	92%	25.3	84%	89%

*Maximum available points changed in 2016-17 for Communication (45 to 25), Presentation (20 to 30), and Legal Writing (40 to 30) competencies

V. Discussion and Analysis of Assessment Findings

Based on the case table and analysis of data for the years 2015-2018, the Presentation (30 points out of 200) competency maintained a 3% increase in scores from the first to the last of the three year period, while the Legal Writing (worth 30 points out of 200); the Communication section (20 points out of 200); Critical Thinking (20 points out of 200); and Organization (20 points out of 200). Organization and the lack of A/V materials in the projects saw a drastic decline. The decrease is believed to be related to the students not being aware of how to use current technology and software to implement a short-form presentation to their fellow students and myself, as the instructor. The use of a table of contents and a logical order to the project go hand-in-hand for a concise submission.

Upon reviewing the findings for MLO #2, in order to address the decrease in the Organization scores, the Paralegal, BAS program will be implementing more mandatory projects in core courses in the upper division to practice and demonstrate the compilation of a concise and organized submission of work product.

VI. Action Plan and Timetable for Implementation

Based on the analysis of the results the following Action Plan Items have been selected for implementation:

- [Students' scores vary from semester to semester. Focusing on the individual competencies attained and future skill sets will continue to guide how the projects are provided to the students.](#)
- Christy Powers, Susan Demers, Ian Banks, and Deborah Eldridge / May 2019

Budget / Planning Implications:

N/A

- [In order to address the decrease in the Organization scores, the Paralegal, BAS program will be implementing more mandatory projects in core courses in the upper division to practice and demonstrate the compilation of a concise and organized submission of work product.](#)
- Christy Powers and Susan Demers / May 2019

Budget / Planning Implications:

N/A

#3: Execute the technical skills, including legal research and writing, needed to succeed in the legal profession.

I. Use of Past Results

Upon reviewing the findings for MLO #3, each of these program learning outcomes were discussed and analyzed above in #1 and #2, except Communication (45 points out of 200) and Legal Research (30 points out of 200) competencies.

Communication has a slight 1% decrease, while still maintaining a 94% average score. The elements of style in legal writing are more critically governed as words in the English language may have specific meaning within the law. Legal definitions have weight and authority which must be determined given the particular project area. Students continue to work with concise writing which effectively communicates the work product they are producing.

Legal Research had an increase of 4% with an overall average score of 94%. This is once again attributed to increased access to online research, both paid and unpaid databases and software programs. While the students continue to uncover the variety of resources available to them during their research, narrowing down what is reliable and correct is being refined through techniques in PLA 1104, Legal Research and Writing; PLA 2114, Advanced Legal Research; and PLA 4116, Legal Writing Seminar.

II. Methodology

Means of Assessment: The PLA 4941 Capstone Project is the final culminating project through which students are able to demonstrate their competency in all 5 program goals/learning outcomes. In grading and assessing the projects, MLO #3 is clearly aligned to the requirements of the project and the criteria on which the projects are assessed. Each case/fact pattern has a cause of action or scenario which presents the necessary elements for critique. Students are encouraged to identify the causal links that may or may not be present. After assessing the fact pattern and research necessary to complete the tasks assigned, the student completes two mandatory memoranda documenting: 1. the utilization of websites and references to begin work and 2. internal case practice manuals and guidelines as proscribed by the state or federal government(s). Preparing students for success starts with proper guidance and research into the particular area(s) of law covered in each project. Each student is assigned a project and a supervising attorney to assist in facilitating this process. From that point, the student is expected to maintain contact throughout the project with the assigned supervising attorney.

Date(s) of Administration: 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18

Method: Students are instructed and guided to determine the make up of the submission pursuant to course instructions and professor guidance. Each project has its own set of guidelines (parameters) as part of the initial fact pattern that are to be met as a minimum. Seven competencies within goal #3 are assessed: analytical, communication, presentation, organization, critical thinking, legal research, and legal writing.

Assessment Instrument: Projects are assessed using a rubric where one or more of the the seven criterion align to the five program goals. The rubric criteria are then paired with the guidelines provided for each type of case study. Both the guidelines in the project specs and the rubric are provided to students at the start of the term. While students complete various types of projects within the same course, there is a consistent and common core set of criteria on which students are assessed. Attached is a copy of the PLA 4941 Capstone Grading Rubric.

Population: All students enrolled in the PLA 4941 capstone course are assessed on the culminating project.

III. Criteria for Success

For each of the seven competencies within goal #3 that are assessed, there is a maximum number of available points (200 for all areas, combined) that contribute to the overall grade of the project (200 points total). Students are required to obtain a minimum of 140 out of 200 possible points (70%) in order to successfully demonstrate the program goal. When students feel they are experiencing difficulty with one area of the project, they are required to write an internal memorandum to the supervising attorney, identifying the questions they have; feedback is provided accordingly. Once students submit the project to be assessed, the grade is final unless a student has not met the minimum of 70% on the respective sections relating to each MLO. In cases where students do not meet the minimum requirements, they are given the opportunity to revise the project until the required competency level is met. Students cannot pass the course unless they complete the project.

IV. Summary of Assessment Findings

Results via Face-to-Face

Results via Distance Delivery (Online, Blended, etc)

Student Performance on PLO #3 Competencies: 2016 -2018							
Competency (points)	2015-16 (n=45)		2016-17 (n=50)		2017-18 (n=37)		3yr Avg (n=132)
	Avg	%	Avg	%	Avg	%	%
Analytical (25)	22.5	90%	23.2	93%	23.2	93%	92%
Communication (25*)	42.6	95%	23.9	94%	22.3	89%	93%
Presentation (30*)	17.3	87%	27.7	90%	27.3	91%	89%
Organization (20)	13.8	69%	15.8	77%	14.6	73%	73%
Critical Thinking (20)	19.5	98%	19.0	93%	18.1	90%	94%
Legal Research (30)	28.6	95%	27.9	93%	27.3	91%	93%
Legal Writing (30*)	36.5	91%	27.7	92%	25.3	84%	89%

*Maximum available points changed in 2016-17 for Communication (45 to 25), Presentation (20 to 30), and Legal Writing (40 to 30) competencies

V. Discussion and Analysis of Assessment Findings

Upon reviewing the findings for MLO #3, each of these program learning outcomes were discussed and analyzed above in MLOs #1 and #2.

Overall, the elements of style in legal writing are more critically governed as words in the English language may have specific meaning within the law. Legal definitions have weight and authority which must be determined given the particular project area. Students continue to work with concise writing which effectively communicates the work product they are producing.

In Legal Research & Writing, the students continue to uncover the variety of resources available to them during their research. Narrowing down what is reliable and correct are being refined through techniques in PLA 1104, Legal Research and Writing; PLA 2114, Advanced Legal Research; and PLA 4116, Legal Writing Seminar.

VI. Action Plan and Timetable for Implementation

Based on the analysis of the results the following Action Plan Items have been selected for implementation:

- [Students' scores vary from semester to semester. Focusing on the individual competencies attained and future skill sets will continue to guide how the projects are provided to the students.](#)
- Christy Powers, Susan Demers, Ian Banks, and Deborah Eldridge / May 2019

Budget / Planning Implications:

N/A

- [In order to address the decrease in the Organization scores, the Paralegal, BAS program will be implementing more mandatory projects in core courses in the upper division to practice and demonstrate the compilation of a concise and organized submission of work product.](#)
- Christy Powers and Susan Demers / May 2019

Budget / Planning Implications:

N/A

#4: Exhibit the ability to deliver professional and ethical legal services in a culturally and locally appropriate manner.

I. Use of Past Results

Based on the case table and analysis of data for MLO #4, the point values were altered from 2013 moving forward. Critical Thinking was worth 15 points and it is now worth 15 points out of 200; Legal Research was 50 points and it is now worth 50 points out of 200; and Communication was worth 25 points and it is now worth 45 points out of 200. Each area had a slight increase over 2013-2015 with a total average of 94% in Communication and Legal Research respectively. Critical thinking steadied in at 85% for average scores during this time. Individual projects are assigned to each student while considering the following: prior areas of interest/disinterest; prior areas of competency; current employment in a particular area of law; and pre-law potential. As noted in previous program goal action items, the Paralegal program plans to continually revise project areas in the coming year to ensure that the program continues to meet the needs of stakeholders in the culminating project, namely students and potential employers.

II. Methodology

Means of Assessment: Addressing requirements in MLO #4 presents many issues for the student that are both internal and external in the legal community. In addition to interacting with the "supervising attorney" for the case project, the student is required to complete a minimum of ten volunteer hours in the legal community. They receive 100 points for this in the PLA 4941 coursework which includes: 1. a learning contract between the student and the work site, 2. a reflection paper of the hours spent, and 3. a reflection piece on how the experience benefited the student by being placed in a live setting within the legal community. As part of our program's new initiatives, we have collaborated with legal aid services in the effective delivery of legal services in our local area. The Tampa Bay area and the State of Florida face many legal challenges particular to our region. When students are in a clinic, courtroom, or law office, the interactive learning and mentorship enhances the student's ability to deliver professional and ethical legal services in a culturally and locally appropriate manner.

Date(s) of Administration: 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18

Method: Students are instructed and guided to determine the make up of the submission pursuant to course instructions and professor guidance. Each project has its own set of guidelines (parameters) as part of the initial fact pattern that are to be met as a minimum. Three competencies within goal #4 are assessed: communication, critical thinking, and legal research.

Assessment Instrument: Projects are assessed using a rubric, where one or more of the the seven criterion align to the five program goals. The rubric criteria are then paired with the guidelines provided for each type of case study. Both the guidelines in the project specs and the rubric are provided to students at the start of the term. While students complete various types of projects within the same course, there is a consistent and commoncore set of criteria on which students are assessed. Attached is a copy of the PLA 4941 Capstone Grading Rubric.

Population: All students enrolled in the PLA 4941 capstone course are assessed on the culminating project.

III. Criteria for Success

For the 2013-2015 Assessment Data, each of the three competencies within goal #4 had a maximum number of available points (95 for all areas, combined) that contribute to the overall grade of the project (200 points total). Students are required to obtain a minimum of 67 out of 95 possible points (70%) in order to successfully demonstrate the program goal. When students feel they are experiencing difficulty with one area of the project, they are required to write an internal memorandum to the supervising attorney, identifying the questions they have; feedback is provided accordingly. Once students submit the project to be assessed, the grade is final unless a student has not met the minimum of 70% on the respective sections relating to each MLO. In cases where students do not meet the minimum requirements, they are given the opportunity to revise the project until the required competency level is met. Students cannot pass the course unless they complete the project.

IV. Summary of Assessment Findings

Results via Face-to-Face

Results via Distance Delivery (Online, Blended, etc)

Student Performance on MLO #4 Competencies: 2016 -2018							
Competency (points)	2015-16 (n=45)		2016-17 (n=50)		2017-18 (n=37)		3yr Avg (n=132)
	Avg	%	Avg	%	Avg	%	%
Communication (25*)	42.6	95%	23.9	94%	22.3	89%	93%
Critical Thinking (20)	19.5	98%	19.0	93%	18.1	90%	94%
Legal Research (30)	28.6	95%	27.9	93%	27.3	91%	93%

*Maximum available points changed in 2016-17 for the Communication (45 to 25) competency

V. Discussion and Analysis of Assessment Findings

Upon reviewing the findings for MLO #4, each of these program learning outcomes were discussed and analyzed above in MLOs #1 and #2.

Individual projects are assigned to each student while considering the following: prior areas of interest/disinterest; prior areas of competency; current employment in a particular area of law; and pre-law potential. As noted in previous program goal action items, the Paralegal program plans to continually revise project areas in the coming year to ensure that the program continues to meet the needs of stakeholders in the culminating project, namely students and potential employers.

VI. Action Plan and Timetable for Implementation

Based on the analysis of the results the following Action Plan Items have been selected for implementation:

- Students' scores vary from semester to semester. Focusing on the individual competencies attained and future skill sets will continue to guide how the projects are provided to the students.
- Christy Powers, Susan Demers, Ian Banks, and Deborah Eldridge / May 2019

Budget / Planning Implications:

N/A

#5: Demonstrate an advanced knowledge and understanding of the American legal system.

I. Use of Past Results

Upon reviewing the findings for MLO #5, each of these program learning outcomes were discussed and analyzed above. In researching the studies of American General Law in prior classes (through the use of Subsequent Courses Taken through Business Intelligence software), the students who maintained the highest scores which demonstrate a detailed and concise understanding of the American Legal System had taken classes such as PLA 4944, Paralegal Certificate Capstone and PLA 4225, Civil Trial Practice. PLA 4944 focuses heavily on Communication, Legal Research, Ethics, Memorandum Writing, and American General Law (Contracts, Business Organizations, and Civil Litigation).

Hence, these courses will continue to be recommended to the students before or while they are in the PLA 4941 Capstone Course.

II. Methodology

Means of Assessment: For the last and final MLO #5, understanding the American Legal System ("ALS") is best taught through a series of various teaching methods. All prior Learning Outcomes considered, PLA 4941 is an opportunity to challenge a student to provide an attorney with a complex assessment supported by legal research. Rote memorization and recitation of an infinite number of elements of causes of actions are not the ultimate goals. The ALS is an essential flow chart and system of avenues to resolve disputes or matters in law or equity. As highlighted in MLO #1, which assessed both critical thinking and legal research, students are given initial memorandums to start the chain of investigation of the case they have been assigned.

Date(s) of Administration: 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18

Method: Students are instructed and guided to determine the make up of the submission pursuant to course instructions and professor guidance. Each project has its own set of guidelines (parameters) as part of the initial fact pattern that are to be met as a minimum. Five competencies within goal #5 are assessed: analytical, presentation, critical thinking, legal research, and legal writing.

Assessment Instrument: Projects are assessed using a rubric, where one or more of the seven criteria align to the five program goals. The rubric criteria are then paired with the guidelines provided for each type of case study. Both the guidelines in the project specs and the rubric are provided to students at the start of the term. While students complete various types of projects within the same course, there is a consistent and common core set of criteria on which students are assessed. Attached is a copy of the PLA 4941 Capstone Grading Rubric.

Population: All students enrolled in the PLA 4941 capstone course are assessed on the culminating project.

III. Criteria for Success

For the 2013-2015 Assessment Data, each of the five competencies within goal #5 had a maximum number of available points (135 for all areas, combined) that contribute to the overall grade of the project (200 points total). Students are required to obtain a minimum of 95 out of 135 possible points (70%) in order to successfully demonstrate the program goal. When students feel they are experiencing difficulty with one area of the project, they are required to write an internal memorandum to the supervising attorney, identifying the questions they have; feedback is provided accordingly. Once students submit the project to be assessed, the grade is final unless a student has not met the minimum of 70% on the respective sections relating to each MLO. In cases where students do not meet the minimum requirements, they are given the opportunity to revise the project until the required competency level is met. Students cannot pass the course unless they complete the project.

IV. Summary of Assessment Findings

Results via Face-to-Face

Results via Distance Delivery (Online, Blended, etc)

Student Performance on MLO #5 Competencies: 2016 -2018							
Competency (points)	2015-16 (n=45)		2016-17 (n=50)		2017-18 (n=37)		3yr Avg (n=132)
	Avg	%	Avg	%	Avg	%	
Analytical (25)	22.5	90%	23.2	93%	23.2	93%	92%
Presentation (30*)	17.3	87%	27.7	90%	27.3	91%	89%
Critical Thinking (20)	19.5	98%	19.0	93%	18.1	90%	94%
Legal Research (30)	28.6	95%	27.9	93%	27.3	91%	93%
Legal Writing (30*)	36.5	91%	27.7	92%	25.3	84%	89%

*Maximum available points changed in 2016-17 for Presentation (20 to 30) and Legal Writing (40 to 30) competencies

V. Discussion and Analysis of Assessment Findings

Upon reviewing the findings for MLO #5, each of these program learning outcomes were discussed and analyzed above. In researching the studies of American General Law in prior classes (through the use of Subsequent Courses Taken through Business Intelligence software), the students who maintained the highest scores which demonstrate a detailed and concise understanding of the American Legal System had taken classes such as PLA 4944, Paralegal Certificate Capstone and PLA 4225, Civil Trial Practice. PLA 4944 focuses heavily on Communication, Legal Research, Ethics, Memorandum Writing, and American General Law (Administrative Law, Estates & Probate Law, Criminal Law, Contracts, Business Organizations, and Civil Litigation). Hence, these courses will continue to be recommended to the students before or while they are in the PLA 4941 Capstone Course.

VI. Action Plan and Timetable for Implementation

Based on the analysis of the results the following Action Plan Items have been selected for implementation:

- **Students' scores vary from semester to semester. Focusing on the individual competencies attained and future skill sets will continue to guide how the projects are provided to the students.**
- Christy Powers, Susan Demers, Ian Banks, and Deborah Eldridge / May 2019

Budget / Planning Implications:

N/A

Action Plan

Category	Action Plan Detail / Implications	For PLO	Responsible Party / Due Date
A. Enable Greater Student Success			
A1. Identify needs and address ways to improve overall student success			
	Students' scores vary from semester to semester. Focusing on the individual competencies attained and future skill sets will continue to guide how the projects are provided to the students. Budget / Planning Implications: N/A	#1, #2, #3, #4, #5	Christy Powers, Susan Demers, Ian Banks, and Deborah Eldridge May 2019
	In order to address the decrease in the Organization scores, the Paralegal, BAS program will be implementing more mandatory projects in core courses in the upper division to practice and demonstrate the compilation of a concise and organized submission of work product. Budget / Planning Implications: N/A	#2, #3	Christy Powers and Susan Demers May 2019

Approvals

Program Administrator:

Christy Powers - Instructor in Charge

Approved by Christy Powers - Instructor in Charge on May 16, 2019

Educational Outcomes Coordinators:

Amy Eggers - Coord, Accredtn&BaccAssessment

Magaly Tymms - Assessment Director

Approved by Magaly Tymms - Assessment Director on May 16, 2019

Dean:

Susan Demers - Dean, College of Policy Ethics and Legal Studies

Approved by Susan Demers - Dean, College of Policy Ethics and Legal Studies on Jun 10, 2019

Senior Vice President:

Sabrina Crawford - AVP, Institutional Eff Acad Srv

Approved by Sabrina Crawford - AVP, Institutional Eff Acad Srv on Jun 10, 2019

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