



IDAHO STATE UNIVERSITY

ADHOC Report- Recommendations #3 & #4

August 16, 2017

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1. Introduction

In this Ad Hoc report, Idaho State University (ISU) is responding to Recommendations 3 & 4 as identified in and requested by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities' letter dated January 26, 2015.

Since the 2014 Year Seven Comprehensive Self-Evaluation, ISU has focused its efforts to align its planning processes and identify methods of successfully assessing student learning outcomes university-wide. This report captures only a handful of those efforts. Additionally, it demonstrates how changes by the senior administration are operationalizing the new processes and ideas, which have fundamentally changed the University's decision-making system and increased the involvement of the faculty, staff, students and community members.

2. Recommendation #3.

Recommendation #3: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution integrates all campus plans into a comprehensive planning process. (Standard 3.A.1)

Overview

Idaho State University (ISU) has established a purposeful, integrated, and comprehensive planning system to achieve efforts that support its mission fulfillment and its strategic plan. Much of this work began in 2012 when ISU implemented program prioritization across all academic and non-academic units. Building on that effort, the administration has created multiple internal organizations, policies, and processes throughout the academic and non-academic structure to accomplish alignment. This section will discuss how ISU has made clear delineations between mission fulfillment and the strategic plan; how the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Council (IEAC) has aligned ISU's planning processes to focus them on strategic goals and mission fulfillment as well as conducted comprehensive core theme planning; and provide three examples of planning alignment that achieve results.

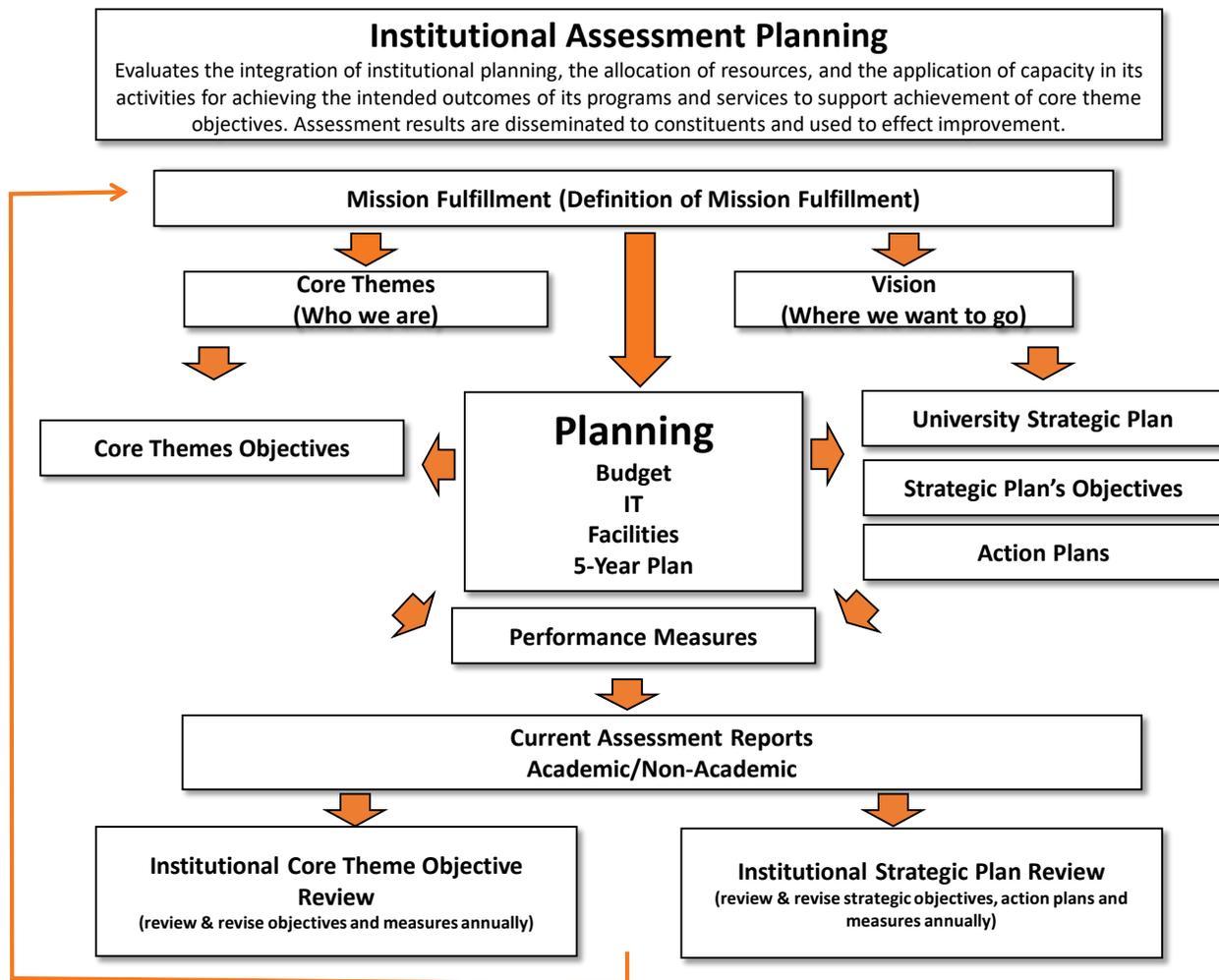
Mission Fulfillment and the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan

Idaho State University has worked diligently over the last 18 months to define the differences between achieving mission fulfillment and its strategic planning goals. An institution's ultimate measure of success is mission fulfillment. Mission fulfillment focuses on the accomplishment of ISU's mission and the four core themes. Mission fulfillment continually evolves and is never truly achieved because as core theme objectives are reached, they are replaced, or their benchmarks are reset at a higher level. This contrasts with the strategic plan's goals that are relatively short-term achievements and vision oriented. The IEAC is responsible for measuring the effectiveness of the implementation of ISU's four core themes and their overall alignment to the University mission, as well as demonstrating mission fulfillment. To measure mission fulfillment, the IEAC evaluates multiple core theme objectives and indicators against established long-term benchmarks.

In the past, ISU's core themes served as the goals of the strategic plan. To assist in differentiating between mission fulfillment and the strategic plan, ISU completed a new, five-year strategic plan with five goals that are unique, singular in nature, and stand on their own. Each of the new strategic goals aligns with the core themes to support achieving mission fulfillment, but they concentrate on specific,

relatively short-term issues that ISU determined as priorities needing to be addressed. By clearly defining the difference between mission fulfillment and the strategic goals, the IEAC Steering and Subcommittees are effectively aligning the outcomes of their planning endeavors, directing resources appropriately, and are focused on achieving operational, strategic, or visionary goals that shape ISU’s future. After providing multiple training sessions and having discussions at all levels throughout the University, there is a sense that the faculty and staff are beginning to achieve a level of clarity between the two.

Figure 3.1. Mission Fulfillment Assessment



Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Council (IEAC)

The most significant step toward accomplishing the goal of aligning ISU’s plans and planning processes was creation of the IEAC. The establishment of the IEAC transformed ISU because unlike the previous planning system that allowed for silos, plans are now created utilizing various IEAC subcommittees and groups, then those plans are elevated through the Steering Committee for discussion and approval or forwarded to the president with a recommendation. This ensures the alignment of campus planning efforts. The IEAC serves as a coordinated, sustainable system to pursue institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

Additionally, the composition of the IEAC structure was designed to include senior administrators, faculty, a Faculty Senate co-chair, staff, the Staff Council president, and student representation, so there is an increase in collaboration, inclusion, and transparency. It consists of a Steering Committee, eight subcommittees (Appendix 1), and the Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG). Additional information, including meeting agendas, minutes, and supporting documentation can be found at [ISU's IEAC website](#).

The IEAC's primary functions are to:

- (1) provide the organizational framework for integrating institutional effectiveness into the fabric of the university
- (2) provide integrative and coordinated academic, facilities, technology, and financial planning and implementation
- (3) reduce redundancy and increase efficiency, transparency, and accountability among mission fulfillment, strategic planning, institutional management, university accreditation, state and federal reporting requirements
- (4) optimize data and reports system wide
- (5) develop an assessment plan that supports the implementation of the strategic plan and mission fulfillment
- (6) enhance consistent and coordinated communication between schools, colleges, departments and administration regarding assessment and institutional effectiveness
- (7) provide a forum to share best practices, and generate ideas for process improvement
- (8) incorporate into the decision-making process a number of planning organizations

The Steering Committee meets at a minimum of once a month during the academic year, or more often as needed. Each subcommittee also holds meetings at least once a year. In many ways, the IEAC is still evolving and defining the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee and the subcommittees, but over the past two years, the IEAC has made significant achievements in fully aligning ISU's planning efforts.

Examples of Aligning Planning

Since its inception, a primary focus of the IEAC has been to align planning processes across the University that drive decision-making as a means of attaining mission fulfillment and accomplishing the strategic plan's goals. Upon completion of updating the core themes, the Steering Committee and subcommittees began focusing on those processes that have the highest impact. Three areas at ISU that affect every student, faculty, staff, and stakeholder are the 1) budget process, 2) facilities' and information technology's project prioritization lists, and 3) academic program assessment and review of program health. Working beyond the IEAC, the development and alignment of opportunities and sharing of responsibilities reinforced relationships between the administration and faculty. The following are examples of changes that occurred to the processes.

New Budget Process

In 2017, ISU's Administration transitioned away from the University's existing budget process and began implementation of a new budget process that utilizes the IEAC Steering Committee as the executive budget council to the President. The implementation of the IEAC facilitated several process improvements from the prior Special Budget Consultation Committee (SBCC) structure. The SBCC had a diverse constituency of participating members, but functioned primarily in silos with special interests by the units, which were brought forward by the respective vice presidents. The committee then made

recommendations to the President. The process was not as comprehensive in analysis and alignment as to what we have since implemented with the IEAC. With the IEAC framework the diverse constituency still exists; however, how the information moves forward for approval is different. With the IEAC framework, the Core Theme Subcommittees solicit information from across the University with their expanded memberships. In addition, they bring in scoring matrices and a detailed evaluation project to assist in prioritization. They work to assure alignment of proposed budget actions, funding and processes are in alignment with the mission, core themes, and strategic plan. The resulting outcomes are improved alignment, transparency, appropriate prioritization, and appropriate reallocation of resources. At the end of the IEAC's budget review, the group unanimously approved the budget recommendations.

The [IEAC FY2018 Budget Process](#) lent itself to other significant changes. For the Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) budget, both the academic and non-academic units received funding targets from the Executive Vice President/Provost (EVPP) (who is the IEAC Steering Committee Chair) at the beginning of the budget cycle. The funding targets required that they aligned with accreditation requirements, the strategic plan's priorities, the mission fulfillment objectives, and the Idaho Legislature's requirement to attain a balanced budget.

Also under the new model, academic and non-academic units' leadership received significantly more freedom to determine how they would allocate their proposed funding and thus where they would adjust spending. They balanced their operational needs against personnel requirements.

As a means of increasing transparency and inclusion, this was also the first year that the EVPP, the Vice Provost for Academic Strategy and Institutional Effectiveness, and the Interim Chief Financial Officer (CFO) presented a proposed academic budget to the Faculty Senate for their review and feedback.

Implementing a new budget model is complicated, but it was made even more difficult for those involved when it came to developing FY18's budget. ISU is experiencing a significant drop in international enrollment because of the economic strains felt by multiple Middle Eastern countries. In FY18, ISU expects an approximate \$9 million tuition shortfall. ISU's leaders at all levels came together throughout the process to identify where within their areas of responsibility they could reduce expenditures or generate income, with a primary goal to lower overhead costs. As a result, the IEAC proposed to President Vailas a budget cut of approximately \$6.3 million, an increase in revenue generation of approximately \$1 million, and to use approximately \$2 million of the institutional reserve fund to cover the difference. While this was a challenging process, the reduction only represents 5% of ISU's \$70 million appropriated budget, and 2% of ISU's total budget of approximately \$160 million.

In June 2017, the State Board of Education (SBOE) approved ISU's FY18 budget. While further refinements will occur to the process this fall, the changes that were already undertaken proved that the University could align the distribution of funding to academic and non-academic units based on program prioritization, strategic initiatives, and mission fulfillment activities. The new process broke down silos not only between the units but also within the process itself. Finally, by making the IEAC Steering Committee the executive level budget council, the level of participation and diversity in the process increased significantly, as did the level of transparency when the CFO presented the academic budget to the Faculty Senate.

Facilities' and Information Technology's Project Prioritization

As an example of increased efficiency and alignment occurring at ISU in FY17, the IEAC Steering Committee implemented two new processes to support aligning the budget planning process more closely with the strategic plan and mission fulfillment. Facilities Services and Information Technology Services (ITS) requested that units complete and submit the [IEAC Project Rubric](#) with all new project requests. The rubric scores are tied to the strategic goals and core theme objectives as well as with accreditation, administrative, and legal requirements.

The IEAC Facilities and IT Subcommittees, consisting of mid-level administrators and faculty members, reviewed then ranked the projects by the rubric score, thus prioritizing them. Upon completion, the committees provided them back to Facilities and ITS who evaluated the cost of the prioritized projects against their designated budgets to determine how many of the units' projects they could accomplish given their current funding levels. Facilities Services and ITS then submitted their recommendations to the IEAC Steering Committee. The IEAC Steering Committee reviewed the prioritization and were provided three choices: 1. the Steering Committee could approve the list and request the President reprioritize funds from another area of the University to cover unfunded projects; 2. reprioritize the projects based on operational requirements; or 3. approve the existing prioritized lists using existing designated funding. In 2017, the IEAC approved the prioritized list submitted, and made recommendations to the President who approved it.

This process has worked well for both Facilities Services and ITS. The groups have already met to reevaluate the process to determine if any changes to the rubric or the prioritization process need to occur. One change already underway is the creation of a supporting document units will submit with their request that better describes the project. This need became apparent during the evaluation process. Both units had to seek additional information from the requesting units in order to evaluate the time and funding requirements.

In July 2017, the IEAC approved a new project submission and review timeline for both information technology and facilities projects. It provides the academic and non-academic units the ability to incorporate their requests into their budget requests by more closely aligning with the budget development and submission timeline. This change will ensure that financial requirements are taken into consideration during the current budget cycle and the IEAC does not have to reallocate funds or the units do not have to postpone the approved projects until the next fiscal year because they have to wait for funding.

The new process resulted in two significant outcomes. First, it gave ISU's leadership a clear understanding of what projects will and will not be funded in the upcoming fiscal year. If a project is important to the University's success and falls below the funding line, then the decision-makers can manage the distribution of funds to ensure the needs are met. Second, it provided predictability to the units submitting the requests. Units can now see where their project falls on the funded list which is regularly updated so they can plan accordingly.

Academic Program Assessment/Review of Program Health

ISU has transitioned its Program Prioritization Process into an annual Program Assessment/Review of Program Health Process that supports growth and demonstrates the need for increased, reallocated, or new resources. Academic Affairs completes an annual review of all programs that are primarily

outcomes based using the program prioritization metrics and dashboard. Included in this process is a review of each college's three-year employee hiring plan, as well as ensuring program goals align with the strategic plan and mission fulfillment objectives.

This process begins in Academic Affairs and then folds into the institutional planning processes through the IEAC, which is responsible for overseeing the University planning process, coordinating and assessing strategic directions, ensuring that the University meets NWCCU accreditation standards, and implementing the University's strategic planning agenda. When evaluating full degree programs and certificates, Academic Affairs has determined that programs are flagged and must prepare an appropriate plan to address low enrollment if they have a five-year average number of graduates:

- ≤ 5 at the associate and certificate level
- ≤ 10 at the undergraduate level
- ≤ 5 at the master's level
- ≤ 3 at the doctoral level

When programs fail to demonstrate progress towards or meet the minimum thresholds, they are required to develop a plan that must address program needs and sustainability, as well as identify if the program should be restructured, consolidated, or closed. The academic unit is expected to monitor these numbers annually and keep Academic Affairs apprised of declines or failure to show progress towards meeting the goals. This process and data metrics were reviewed and discussed at length in June at the 2017 Dean's Summer Retreat, and received continued support for the process.

Aligning Opportunities for Faculty Representation and Development

Creating opportunities to align planning extends beyond typical policy and program functions. ISU's EVPP, Deans, and Faculty Senate have worked together to expand faculty involvement in administrative functions that directly affect programs, students, and instruction.

Faculty Senate's Role in Policy and Planning

The primary organization that the EVPP works with to establish academic policy outside of the Academic Affairs staff is ISU's Faculty Senate. Article II (Purpose and Function) of the [Faculty Senate's Bylaws](#) states that the Senate will establish, review, and recommend policies that affect academic standards for admission, progression, and granting of degrees as well as many other areas that concentrate around faculty and student success. Over the past three years, the EVPP has worked closely with the Faculty Senate on multiple policies. In Academic Year 2016, the Senate reviewed and provided feedback to Academic Affairs on six major policies including Promotion & Tenure, the Five Year Program Review, and Student Affairs Student Code of Conduct.

The Faculty Senate has also made the development of ISU's new strategic plan a priority. A Faculty Senate co-chair served on the SPWG; the Faculty Senate as a whole received periodic updates during the development of the strategic plan; Faculty Senate members provided direct feedback to the planning facilitator; and the Faculty Senate's representatives served as one of the conduits for faculty to provide feedback on the draft plans. ISU's Faculty Senate has made significant strides over the past three years to serve not only as the Faculty's advocate, but to include faculty members in the University's decision-making process.

Faculty Fellow

In Academic Year 2016, the EVPP re-established the Faculty Fellow position in Academic Affairs. This position had been vacant for a number of years prior to this appointment, but the EVPP felt it was important to invest in this position to provide additional leadership opportunities for faculty in the Provost's office. The 2016 Faculty Fellow focused on analysis of the current student evaluation process across campus, and opportunities and structures that would support faculty development and teaching innovation.

Teaching Innovation Grants and Faculty Forums

In Academic Year 2016, the EVPP established a new \$50,000 grant for Faculty to encourage the development of new teaching strategies. Faculty were invited to [apply](#) for up to \$5,000 to fund a course release, travel, software, supplies, or other costs directly related to the goals of the project. The proposals addressed the background, nature of the innovation, objectives and significance (or impact), designated student population impacted, sustainability beyond the grant period, preparedness for project, methodology, and plan for assessing the innovation's success. Faculty who received grants will also have the opportunity to present their work in a faculty forum on teaching innovation. Thirteen faculty members from four colleges received grants averaging approximately \$4,600 for use during academic year 2017-2018.

Faculty Affairs Coordinator

To align all of these functions and opportunities, during the 2016 Academic Affairs restructure, the EVPP established a new position called the Faculty Affairs Coordinator. This individual splits their time between serving as a faculty member and as an administrator in Academic Affairs. Their primary responsibility is to serve as the liaison between the faculty and the EVPP. Additionally, the Faculty Affairs Coordinator has multiple duties. The position oversees multiple administrative functions like the selection process of the faculty awardees, the review of faculty position requests, and administering the Teaching Innovation Grants. It also supervises the Faculty Fellow position, provides input on policies, oversight of tenure and promotions, and attends the Faculty Senate meetings as the Academic Affairs representative.

Recommendation #3 Conclusion

ISU's leadership takes great pride in the system it has created to align planning throughout the University. The leadership can state with certainty that ISU has undertaken a considerable amount of effort and made significant strides to establish a planning system that uses the IEAC Steering and Subcommittees for planning development and oversight. Alignment moved beyond simply implementing new processes and committees, ISU also focused on aligning relationships that resulted in generating new opportunities for faculty while providing crucial support to the Administration. As a result of these new systems, the level of inclusion and transparency continues to grow and flourish.

3. Recommendation #4

Recommendation #4: The evaluation committee recommends that the institution continue to work to clarify the ways in which it will use assessment results to inform and strengthen programs and services, and to demonstrate institutional improvement, mission fulfillment, and sustainability. (Standards 4.A, 4.B, 5.A and 5.B)

Overview

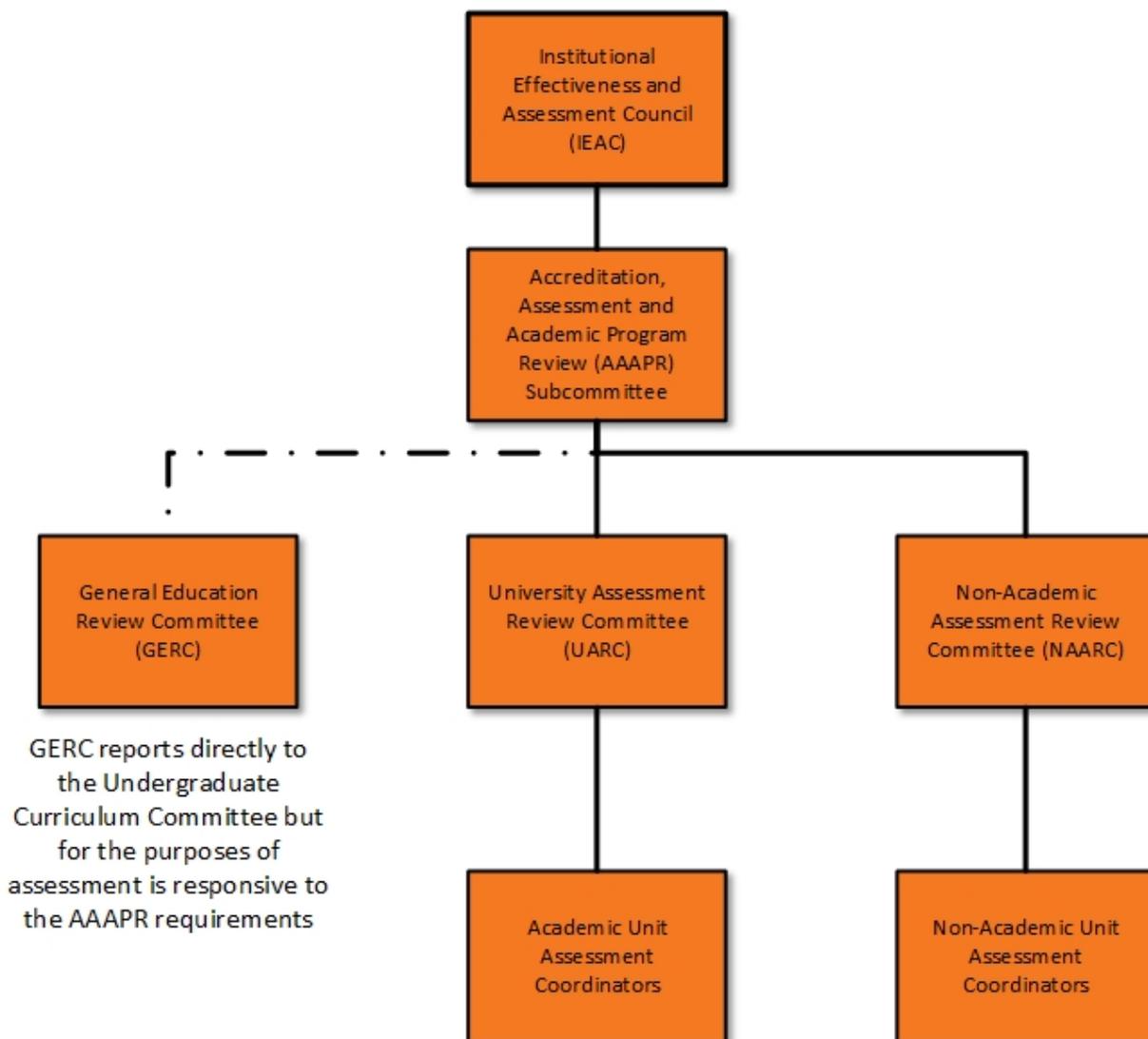
Over the past ten years, like other universities in Idaho and across the United States, ISU has experienced a decrease in state resources, which has had a dramatic effect on programs and services. To increase efficiency, effectiveness, and to support the University's efforts to attain strategic goals and mission fulfillment, ISU created a comprehensive, university-wide assessment program that evaluates both academic and non-academic programs and services. The foundation for this work began during the implementation of program prioritization in 2012. At that time, the University implemented a process to evaluate both academic and non-academic programs and services to ensure alignment with the mission and core themes. Since then we have sought to formalize the assessment processes in both academic and non-academic areas across campus.

Recognizing that many academic programs and non-academic units already use assessment as part of their quality enhancement and decision-making process, ISU's assessment plan provides increased support to those programs and units without assessment plans. Many areas throughout this report demonstrate how ISU has continued to clarify the ways that the University uses assessment, which results in informing and strengthening programs and services, institutional improvement, mission fulfillment, and sustainability. Our response to recommendation #3 examines the creation of ISU's Comprehensive Assessment framework and plan, and the internal and external evaluation tools the University uses to evaluate student learning.

Creating an Assessment Framework

In 2015, ISU established the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Council (IEAC) with a primary responsibility to set university priorities and to coordinate planning efforts across the campus as a means of eliminating planning silos. The IEAC is also charged to develop a university-wide assessment program. This charge falls directly to IEAC's Accreditation, Assessment, Academic Program Review (AAAPR) Subcommittee. The AAAPR coordinates efforts between permanent and Ad hoc organizations. The General Education Review Committee (GERC), University Assessment Review Committee (UARC) and the Non-Academic Assessment Review Committee (NAARC) all have responsibility for portions of the academic and non-academic assessment planning processes. The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, who serves as the University assessment coordinator, attends all three organizations' meetings as a way to maintain alignment and consistency. This structure ensures alignment throughout the organizational chart.

Figure 4.1. ISU’s Comprehensive Assessment Program Framework.



University Assessment Review Committee (UARC)

An example of the University’s commitment to assessment is the UARC. This committee provides support for faculty involved in assessment practices and is in the process of making a recommendation to Academic Affairs later this summer. It has been reviewing assessment software and will make recommendations to Academic leadership concerning appropriate methods and venues for communicating results. Once this recommendation is made, the intended outcome is that the University will purchase assessment software that will be available to all academic programs. The UARC will also recommend changes to program review that will streamline and improve the process, will establish standards for student learning outcomes, and will develop a structure for an annual university assessment report.

Non-Academic Assessment Review Committee (NAARC)

The NAARC has responsibility for assisting the non-academic units with developing their objectives and measures, establishing training for the units and evaluation teams, and providing oversight over the

evaluation process to include establishing and maintaining the schedule and creating evaluation teams. The NAARC is composed of members from each of the University's non-academic units: Advancement, Athletics, General Counsel, Finance, non-academic units in Academic Affairs, Facilities, Student Affairs, Research, Human Resources, and Information Technology Services. Each member represents their area of responsibility and provides information to their subordinate organizations.

General Education and Review Committee (GERC)

The purpose of GERC is to consider all courses and policies that relate to the University's general education (Gen Ed) requirements; to evaluate, on a regular basis, the University's Gen Ed courses for appropriateness, rigor, and assessment; and to make Gen Ed curricular recommendations based on these evaluations to the Undergraduate Curriculum Council (UCC). The Gen Ed objectives are to be reviewed on a staged 5-year cycle; not all of the objectives need be evaluated at once.

GERC is a subcommittee of the UCC and thus has a direct reporting line to that committee. The AAAPR has indirect oversight over both committees to ensure the state and ISU's assessment standards are being met. GERC includes faculty representatives from all academic units on campus as voting members. Representatives from Academic Advising, the Registrar's Office, Instructional Technology Services, Academic Affairs, and Curriculum Council attend meetings but do not vote. [Minutes from GERC meetings](#) are posted on the University's website and are reviewed by Associate Deans of the academic units.

A University-Wide Assessment Plan

The University established a four-phase methodology to develop and implement the university-wide assessment plan: 1. provide assessment training to faculty and staff, 2. create the University's assessment framework, 3. develop the plan, and 4. implementation.

Phase 1. In the spring and summer of 2016, Institutional Effectiveness brought in expert faculty consultants to hold two training workshops for faculty and staff on assessment basics and the technical aspects of evaluating student learning outcomes. The initial training provided participants with a basic understanding of why assessment is important; how to identify outcomes versus objectives; targeting learning outcomes at the department and program level; and curriculum mapping. The second session taught participants to use the assessment process to create an assessment plan for their colleges and programs with goals, objectives, and outcomes.

Phase 2. Upon completion of the training, Academic Affairs established a working group to begin developing a university-wide academic assessment plan. The group began by creating an assessment program proposal. Simultaneously, members of the AAAPR were also developing the non-academic assessment unit proposal. The IEAC reviewed both proposals and charged the AAAPR to create ISU's Comprehensive Assessment Program.

Phase 3. Using the assessment proposals created by the academic and non-academic groups, the AAAPR developed [ISU's Comprehensive Assessment Plan](#) that explains the importance of a university-wide assessment, the University's assessment framework, and the academic and non-academic assessment programs. The IEAC approved the plan in August 2017, and its implementation begins in September 2017.

Phase 4. Implementation of the plan begins September 2017 and will continue through spring of 2018. One of the first priorities for ISU is to identify and purchase a cloud-based software program to support standardization and to work with each of the college assessment coordinators to identify the faculty requirements and other training requirements. In some ways, the implementation of non-academic assessment will be less challenging because ISU will use the Council for Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education as an evaluation tool for many of the non-academic units. Those units that CAS does not have evaluation criteria for will use other national professional organizations' standards that support their particular unit. Units without a national evaluation tool will create their own goals, objectives, and outcomes using a template established by the NAARC. Other elements of ISU's assessment program are already in places like GERC and the Academic Program Review. Those programs were implemented in 2014 and will continue to evolve.

Internal and External Program Evaluation Tools

Gen Ed assessment, Academic Program Review, and Specialized Accreditation provide internal and external evaluations to help faculty and administrators evaluate the health and effectiveness of both academic programs and non-academic services.

General Education Requirements Committee

As described above, evaluating ISU's Gen Ed programs falls under the responsibility of GERC. Gen Ed in Idaho follows the [Governing Policies and Procedures III.N. of the Idaho State Board of Education](#) (SBOE). SBOE policy mandates six objectives: written communication; oral communication; mathematical ways of knowing; scientific ways of knowing; humanistic and artistic ways of knowing; and social and behavioral ways of knowing. In addition, each Idaho institution must have six credits of Gen Ed in institutionally designated credits. ISU students take one course in cultural diversity, and one course in either critical thinking or information literacy. The nine objectives encompass 36 student learning competencies.

The [Gen Ed Program](#) at ISU is diverse and includes courses from all academic units. While the majority of Gen Ed courses are housed in the Colleges of Arts and Letters and Science and Engineering, the other academic units are represented as well.

Consistent and regular assessment of Gen Ed courses is relatively new at ISU. Before 2015, some Gen Ed courses were assessed by their departments as a part of program review or specialized accreditation assessment, but were not part of a university-wide effort to evaluate the Gen Ed program as a whole. GERC at ISU oversees the assessment of Gen Ed courses. GERC reviews courses that have applied for inclusion in the Gen Ed program and acts on the applications. An assessment plan is included in the application. Consequently, all Gen Ed courses submit assessment plans to GERC before beginning assessment activities; GERC reviews the assessment plans and either approve them or remands them back to the submitting departments with recommendations for improvement.

A plan was developed for departments to design and submit assessment plans to GERC for approval and submit annual assessment reports. This plan, which was approved by the Provost in April 2015, is shown in Appendix 2 (GERC Flow Chart) and the processes and resources are described on the [GERC](#) web page. GERC is currently on track to meet the deadlines shown in the plan; the first round of assessment reports was submitted in November 2016. Results for Year 2 of the reporting process are due on November 1, 2017; in addition, Objectives 1 (Written Communication) and 2 (Oral Communication) will be reviewed by Objective Review Committee in Fall 2018 as part of the overall objective review process.

As of April 17, 2017, assessment plans for 100% (158) of the Gen Ed courses were submitted to GERC for review. As of April 25, 2017, GERC had approved 144 plans. GERC will review the remainder of the plans in fall 2017.

Academic Program Review

Academic Program Review (APR) is an integral part of ISU's ongoing efforts to ensure that our educational mission is being met through the delivery of programs that are effective in meeting their goals through curricula that is current and relevant. APR provides faculty and academic units the opportunity to reflect upon the content of their programs and delivery of curriculum, assessing its effectiveness and planning for actions to maintain or improve the quality of teaching and scholarship at the University, and alignment with core themes.

APR is both linked to and driven by the accreditation cycle and the state-mandated responsibility to conduct a regular review of all academic programs. The APR formalizes the review process at ISU and ensures our compliance with NWCCU standards and SBOE policy. APR is also linked to the institutional mission fulfillment through Core Theme 1 (Learning and Discovery). APR provides an important mechanism by which the University can measure alignment with and achievement of the goals of the ISU Mission Fulfillment Matrix and, vice versa, the Mission Fulfillment Matrix provides an institutional context and framework within which the APRs are conducted.

The review process is scheduled on a five-year cycle, and takes 18-24 months to complete the series of stages, which are: 1) Planning and data collection; 2) Unit self-study; 3) Site visit by the review team; 4) Reports to the college leadership; and 5) Development of an Action Plan. The [APR schedule](#) is posted on the ISU website.

The guiding principles of an effective APR are that such critical self-study and analysis ensures linkage to the long-term institutional mission and priorities, and all relevant plans and policies. It is essential that the self-study is driven by faculty so that the reflection, and subsequent responses and plans, are authentic. The academic units (comprised of faculty) – are in a position to determine their own goals, identified student learning outcomes, and measures within the context of the institutional mission and core themes, and are expected to describe their programs with respect to both regional and national peers and norms. The descriptions and recommendations that emerge from unit self-studies are expected to be outcome-based to ensure the measurability of goals and quality of academic programming. Fiscal responsibility is also a necessary component of the review, connected to institutional budget processes. Library resources are also a necessary component of each unit's reflection, and the self-study will make use of the knowledge and expertise of library faculty in describing and assessing the holdings and databases relevant to the program's needs.

A review cycle is initiated by the college leadership who will have established, in consultation with the college dean, a program review schedule for all units within the college. Further, the college leadership will develop this schedule in consultation with the Vice Provost for Academic Strategy and Institutional Effectiveness to maximize the impact of each APR and ensure sound linkage between program review and accreditation needs.

The most recent programs to go through this process were Arts and Letter's Psychology Programs (undergraduate program and the Experimental Ph.D. Program) and the College of Technology Paralegal Program in 2015-2016. The following discussion provides a synopsis of the Psychology Program's review while Appendix 3 provides the Paralegal Program's full report.

Psychology Program's APR

Two evaluators, the Psychology Department Chair from Montana State University and the Department Chair of ISU's Department of Sociology evaluated the programs. The depth of knowledge and experience of the evaluators showed in the quality of the report. They provided the department a comprehensive assessment that discussed non-assessment overview, curriculum mapping, communication of program objectives to students, and an evaluation of the assessment programs. The evaluation team wrote recommendations to improve for each of the areas; for example, adding more objective measures that tied to psychology knowledge and include a yearly subjective measure of graduate students' impressions of the Ph.D. program. From the evaluation, the Provost, Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, and Department Chair received an accurate accounting of the Psychology Programs' that demonstrated the strengths, weaknesses, and capabilities.

Slated for review during the 2017-2018 year are Anthropology, English, History, Philosophy, Educational Leadership, Sports Management, Outdoor Education, Exercise Science, Computer Science, Mathematics, Bachelor of Applied Science, Welding, and the Honors Program.

Specialized Accreditation

Currently, ISU has over 80 programs that have specialized accreditation requirements. Evaluated by external organizations using national standards, specialized accreditation plays a key role in assessment. ISU has an average of 10 specialized accreditation evaluations annually; some reporting requirements occur annually, but most evaluations happen approximately every five to seven years. The [specialized accreditation schedule](#) outlines the programs and specializations occurring from 2013-2022. The most recent specialized accreditations and modified reviews to occur were Communication Sciences and Disorders, Business, Theatre/Dance, Teacher Education, and Pharmacy. Assessing student learning is a key element of a self-study. To see an example of a specialized accreditation assessment plan follow the link to view [Pharmacy's self-evaluation](#). Over the past three years, the ISU programs that have undergone specialized accreditation evaluation have been found in compliance or exceeded the standards in regards to their assessment programs. Specialized accreditation requirements fulfill the assessment needs and supports utilizing student learning outcomes to continuously improve many of ISU's programs and units.

Recommendation #4 Conclusion.

ISU has made great strides since its Year Seven evaluation and has taken a holistic approach to evaluating student learning and services through assessment. Whether assessing Gen Ed, specialized accreditation, or non-academic units, the University has adopted the mindset across the campus of achieving continuous improvement even though the implementation of some elements of the overall plan are still in their infancy. This plan, combined with the other assessment efforts that are now integrated into the overall institutional planning and the functions of the IEAC, demonstrate our use of assessment results to inform and strengthen programs and services, and to continue to facilitate institutional improvement, mission fulfillment, and sustainability. The faculty, staff, and administration are dedicated to following through with working toward increasing student learning and creating efficient and effective support services, which will result in ISU's ultimate goal of achieving mission fulfillment.

4. Conclusion

Over the past three years, ISU has diligently worked to develop and implement all of the components necessary for the University to not only comply with the NWCCU's accreditation recommendations from its Year Seven Mission Fulfillment and Sustainability Evaluation, but also evolve as a place where those elements have become essential to its future success. Whether it is endeavoring to realize mission fulfillment through the performance of its core themes or embracing the challenges of a new assessment plan, ISU has created a comprehensive system that aligns all of the campus' plans at the core of those efforts.

Index of Abbreviations

AAAPR	Accreditation, Assessment, Academic Program Review
APR	Academic Program Review
AY	Academic Year
CAS	Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
EVPP	Executive Vice President and Provost
FY	Fiscal Year
Gen ED	General Education
GERC	General Education and Review Committee
IEAC	Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Council
ISU	Idaho State University
ITS	Information Technology Services
NAARC	Non-Academic Assessment Review Committee
NWCCU	Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
SBCC	Special Budget Consultation Committee
SPWG	Strategic Planning Working Group
SBOE	State Board of Education
UARC	University Assessment Review Committee
UCC	Undergraduate Curriculum Council

Appendix 1. IEAC Steering and Subcommittees

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Appendix 1. IEAC Steering and Subcommittees

IEAC Steering Voting Members and Subcommittee Chairs

Name	Title	Position
Dr. Laura Woodworth-Ney	Executive Vice President/Provost	Chair
Dr. Neels Van der Schyf	Vice President for Research/ Graduate School Dean	Core Theme 1 SC Chair
Lowell Richards	Vice President for Student Affairs (Interim)	Core Theme 2 SC Chair
Dr. Rex Force	Vice President for Kasiska Division of Health Sciences	Core Theme 3 SC Chair
Dr. Kent Tingey	Vice President for Advancement	Core Theme 4 SC Chair
Selena M. Grace	Vice Provost for Academic Strategy and Institutional Effectiveness	AAAPR SC Chair
Cheryl Hanson	Associate Vice President for Facilities	Facilities SC Chair
Randy Gaines	Chief Information Officer	IT SC Chair
Brian Hickenlooper	Chief Financial Officer (Interim)	Finance SC Chair
Dr. Paul Watkins	Co-Chair, Faculty Senate	Faculty Rep
Dr. Lyle Castle	Dean, College of Science and Engineering (Interim)	Dean Rep
Makayla Muir		Student Rep
Lewis Eakins	Director, Public Safety	
Vince Miller	Director, Institutional Research	Metrics Collection
Jeff Tingey	Athletic Director	
James Yizar	Staff Council	

Appendix 1. IEAC Steering and Subcommittees

IEAC Core Theme 1 Subcommittee

Name	Title	Position
Dr. Neels Van der Schyf	Vice President for Research/Graduate School Dean	Chair
Dr. Karen Wilson Scott	Associate Dean, College of Education	
Dr. Margaret Johnson	Faculty Affairs Coordinator	
Dr. Mary Hofle	Chair, Mechanical Engineering	
Dr. Douglas Warnock	College of Arts and Letters	
Vince Miller	Director for Institutional Research	
Dr. Joanne Tokle	Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs	

Appendix 1. IEAC Steering and Subcommittees

IEAC Core Theme 2 Subcommittee

Name	Title	Position
Lowell Richards	Vice President for Student Affairs (Interim)	Chair
Dr. Cindy Hill	Student Success Center	
Dr. Randy Earles	Associate Dean, College of Arts and Letters	
Ches Barnes	Student Union University Programs Director, Idaho Falls	
Dr. Tracy Collum	Associate Dean, Graduate School	
Ali Crane	Enrollment & Student Services Director, Meridian	
Karina Rorris	Disability Services Director	
James Martin	Financial Aid & Scholarships Director	
Michael Mikitish	Division of Health Sciences	
Vince Miller	Institutional Research Director	
Scott Scholes	Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management	
Dr. Brian Williams	College of Science and Engineering	
Eric Mickelsen	Staff Council Representative	
Amy Brumfield	Student Representative	

Appendix 1. IEAC Steering and Subcommittees

IEAC Core Theme 3 Subcommittee

Name	Title	Position
Dr. Rex Force	Vice President for Kasiska Division of Health Sciences	Chair
Christopher Cessna	Assistant Director for Institutional Research	
Dr. Alan Mirly	Department of Physicians Assistant Studies	
Dr. John Holmes	College of Pharmacy	
Dr. Barb Mason	College of Pharmacy	
Dr. Vaughn Culbertson	College of Pharmacy	
Dr. Christopher Wertz	Radiographic Science	
Dr. Karen Neill	Associate Director, School of Nursing	
Dr. Tracy Farnsworth	Health Care Administration, College of Business	

IEAC Core Theme 4 Subcommittee

Name	Title	Position
Dr. Kent Tingey	Vice President for Advancement	Chair
Randy Gaines	Chief Information Officer	
Cheryl Hanson	Associate Vice President for Facilities	
Collette Wixom-Call	Health Sciences Development Officer	
Dr. Gerard Lyons	College of Education	
Dr. Mark McBeth	College of Arts & Letters	
R. Scott Rasmussen	Dean, College of Technology	
Vincent Miller	Director, Institutional Research	
Dianne Bilyeu	Community Member	

Appendix 1. IEAC Steering and Subcommittees

IEAC Information Technology Subcommittee

Name	Title	Position
Randy Gaines	Chief Information Officer	Chair
Lisa Leyshon	Finance and Accounting	
Andrew Taylor	Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications	
Karina Mason-Rorris	Student Representative	
Randy Stamm	eLearning Coordinator, Instructional Technologies Resource Center	
Dr. Dorothy Sammons Lohse	Faculty Fellow	
Ross Knight	Assistant Director of Admissions, Operations, and Systems	
Dr. Tracy Collum	Associate Dean, Graduate School	
Blake Beck	eISU Director, Educational Technology Services	
TBD	College of Technology	
Walter Mills	Program Information Coordinator, ISU Foundation	
Christopher Cessna	Assistant Director for Institutional Research	

Appendix 1. IEAC Steering and Subcommittees

IEAC Information Technology Project Prioritization Subcommittee

Name	Title	Position
Randy Gaines	Chief Information Officer	Chair
Matthew Steuart	Assistant Athletic Director	
Adam Jacobsmeyer	Executive Director of Treasury	
Kimberly Channpraseut	Enterprise Applications, Information Technology Services	
Dr. Tracy Farnsworth	Health Care Administration, College of Business	
Scott Scholes	Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management	
David Blakeman	Co-Chair for Faculty Senate	
Ryan Sargent	Associate Director, Alumni Relations	
Dave Harris	Office of Research	
Mark Norviel	IT Networking & Communications Systems, Information Technology Services	

Appendix 1. IEAC Steering and Subcommittees

IEAC Facilities Subcommittee

Name	Title	Position
Cheryl Hanson	Associate Vice President for Facilities Services	Chair
Brian Hickenlooper	Chief Financial Officer (Interim)	
Dr. David Rodgers	Associate Dean for College of Science and Engineering	
Dr. Debra Easterly	Assistant Vice President for Research Outreach Compliance	
Jason Adams	Director of Design and Construction, Facility Services	
Jennifer Parrott	Environmental & Safety Officer, Facility Services	
Dr. John Gribas	Associate Dean, College of Arts and Letters	
Dr. Karen Appleby	Dean, College of Education (Interim)	
Karina Hensley	Custodian, Facility Services	
Lowell Richards	Vice President for Student Affairs (Interim)	
Mark Norviel	IT Networking & Communications Systems, Information Technology Services	
Dr. Nancy Devine	Associate Dean, Rehabilitation and Communication Sciences	
Dr. Thomas Ottaway	Dean for College of Business	
Todd Adams	Senior Project Manager, Facility Services	
Vincent Miller	Director for Institutional Research	

Appendix 1. IEAC Steering and Subcommittees

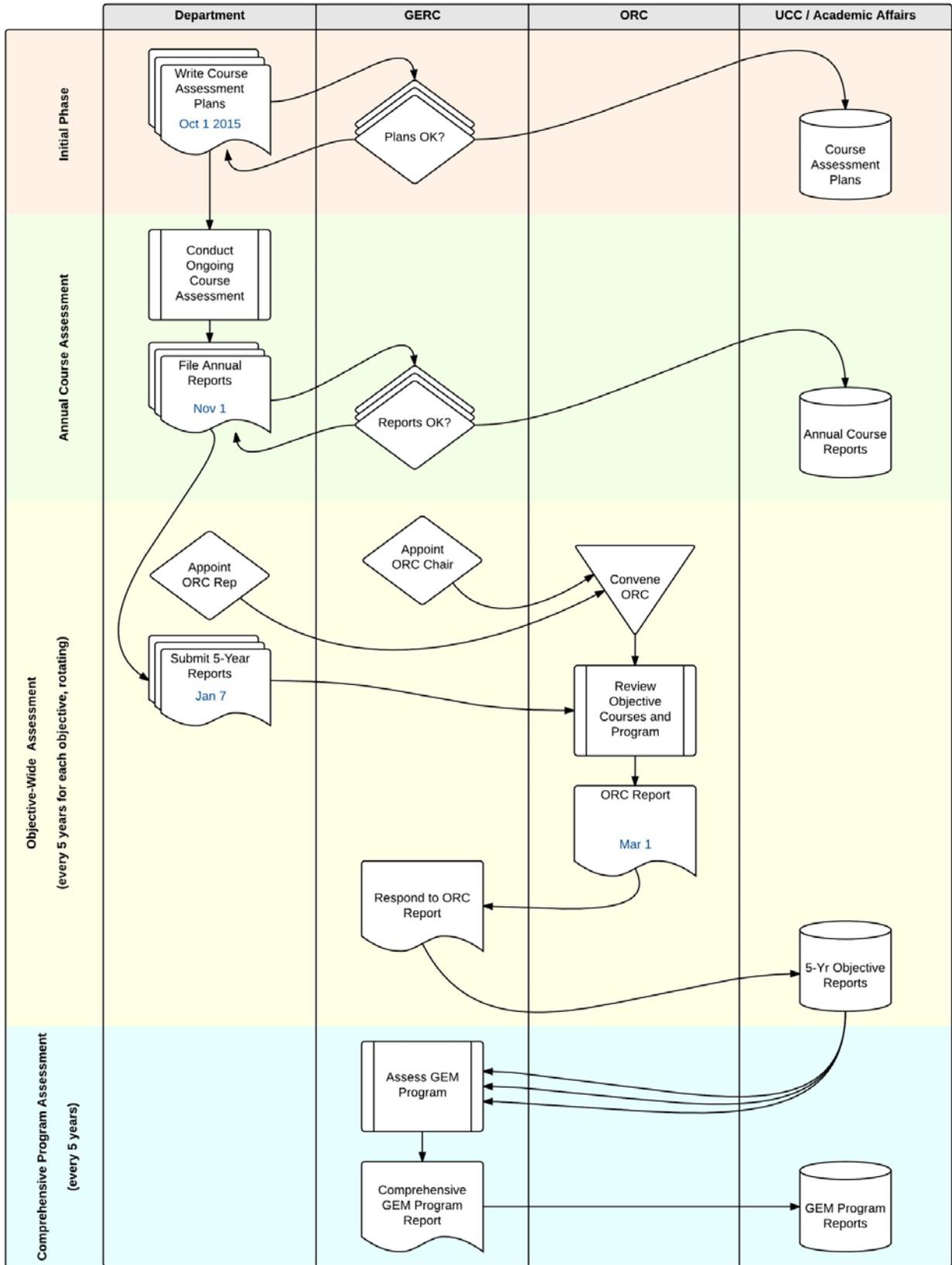
IEAC Accreditation, Assessment, Academic Policy Review Subcommittee

Name	Title	Position
Selena M. Grace	Vice Provost for Academic Strategy and Institutional Effectiveness	Chair
Darren Blagburn	Project Manager	
Dr. Barb Mason	College of Pharmacy	
Craig Thompson	Director, Central Office of University Housing	
Deb Gerber	University Business Officer	
Laura McKenzie	Registrar	
Dr. Joanne Tokle	Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs	
Vince Miller	Director for Institutional Research	
Jessica Sargent	Student Representative	
Dr. Paul Watkins	Co-Chair, Faculty Senate	

Appendix 2. GERC Flow Chart

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Appendix 2. GERC Flow Chart



Appendix 3. Paralegal Program Review Report

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IDAHO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY
PARALEGAL PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT
APRIL 1, 2016

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 1, 2016, consistent with the accreditation standards set forth by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), and consistent with the Idaho State University Academic Program Review Plan, the ISU College of Technology Paralegal Studies Program underwent its first formal Academic Program Review. This review process is now mandated by ISU policy every five years for all university academic programs that do not hold a national accreditation within their specific discipline.

The Program Review Team was composed of two Program Coordinators for similar Paralegal Studies programs in other State of Idaho CTE colleges, Traci Harbert of Eastern Idaho Technical College (EITC, located in Idaho Falls, Idaho); and Natalie Holman of Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC, located in Lewiston, Idaho). Natalie was brought into the review process through Skype. The EITC Paralegal Studies program offers certificate options and an AAS degree option for paralegals. The LCSC Paralegal Studies program offers a certificate, an AAS degree, and a BAS degree option for paralegals. The third member of the review team was Dr. Gesine Hearn from the ISU College of Arts and Letters, Chair of the Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Criminology.

Prior to the day of the actual review, Program Review Team members were provided with a Self Study report (provided herewith), and course syllabi for all Paralegal Studies courses, to provide them with an overall orientation to the program. At 9:00 a.m. the Team was welcomed to the COT by the Dean; and the Team was introduced to the Program Coordinator, the Department Chair, and the two adjunct faculty for Paralegal Studies. The Team met with the Program Coordinator and Adjunct Faculty for approximately one hour to discuss the Self Study; the specific requirements for the Paralegal Studies AAS and BAS degrees; and to answer various questions about teaching methodology and structure of coursework.

After a brief break, the Team met with two former students currently employed as paralegals in the community; one who completed her AAS degree; and one who completed her AAS degree and her BAT (now called a BAS) degree. The alumni responded to questions from the team about the strengths and weaknesses of the program.

During lunch, the Team had the opportunity to meet with some of the members of the ISU Paralegal Studies Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC), including local attorneys from various law firms, and paralegals. The Team was able to have a discussion with the FAC members about the strengths and weaknesses of the ISU Paralegal Studies program and how it meets the needs of the local legal community, and how it could meet those needs better.

After a short break, the Team met with some current students, including both first and second year students, to solicit feedback, positive and negative, about their educational experience. Commencing at around 2 p.m., the Review Team went into “executive session,” where they were able to talk freely among themselves, compare notes and observations, and formulate the substance of their overall findings and recommendations.

At 3:00 p.m., the official exit meeting was conducted by the Department Chair and Program Coordinator. Strengths observed, as well as some ideas for changes and improvements in the program, were discussed generally, and they are summarized further below. The Team members were thanked for their public service to improve the Paralegal Studies program. The Team was advised that a draft report template would be sent to them, and that they would summarize in writing, by May 1, 2016, their findings of program strengths, observations, and weaknesses, and a recommended action plan.

PROGRAM REVIEW TEAM FINDINGS

Strengths:

- Students (both current and former) felt like the program instructors and adjunct instructors were a strength to the program. Mary Huneycutt and Carol Wesenberg, in particular, were mentioned by all as great strengths to the program. Faculty are dedicated and very accessible.
- The variety of instructors with different approaches in teaching was also mentioned as a strength. The fact that attorneys and paralegals teach the classes was seen by both current and former students as a great strength.
- The methods of instruction by the various instructors was mentioned. The recording of lectures, if a student was ill or unable to make it to class, for reviewing at a later time was mentioned several times by both current and former students.
- The students were happy with the facilities and access to computer labs.
- Having an AAFPE National affiliation and use of the Westlaw/WestlawNext electronic law library were strengths mentioned by both current and former students and the FAC.
- Program content which included critical thinking skills was discussed by the FAC. Program objectives include critical thinking skills. FAC emphasized the importance of this skill set and lauded the program for its effective teaching of this skill set.
- Students mentioned their classroom discussions and being exposed to current cases that were happening in the courts as strengths.
- Access to faculty, receiving good feedback from faculty and advising by faculty were other areas of strength that were discussed by both current and former students.

- Both of the former students felt prepared to enter the workplace and said this was because of their program.
- The former students discussed how they felt able to work independently in the workplace and that they had learned to be flexible. They credited this to training in their program.

Observations:

- The FAC observed that the paralegals were coming to the workforce with areas that needed improvement. These areas consisted of typing speed (min. 55 wpm), more hands-on calendaring, solid grammar skills, word processing and the ability to draft pleadings with proper formatting, Excel, case management software, paperless filing systems (via Adobe PDF software) and document management systems. In addition, FAC recommended additional instruction in some marketing skills and cultural sensitivity training.
- One suggestion that was discussed with both current and former students, was the idea of having the Law Office Management course taught in the first semester. The students felt that it would be more beneficial to them if it was taught earlier. Additionally, Law Office Management would benefit students by focusing more on technology and performing office functions (e.g. calendaring, mail merge).
- Students mentioned that the program is not very flexible; classes are locked in; and a 2 year curriculum might be too short for the program. They reported that they often end up taking 17 credits a semester which is a really high credit load especially for first or second semester students. The review team felt like the students would be better served if there were two tracks, one for full-time students and one for part-time students.
- Paralegal licensing in the state of Idaho was discussed with the review team and the FAC. While the review team and the paralegals present felt that licensing was a worthwhile goal, the attorneys in the room did not agree. They wanted the ability to make the decisions within their own practices who they called a paralegal.
- The American Bar Association (ABA) approved program was also discussed among the review team and the FAC. Although the FAC encouraged this step, they did not express a willingness to increase beginning pay for students graduating from an ABA-program. Some discussion circulated regarding the costs in relation to; single (FT) faculty member tasked with increased responsibilities for an ABA-program; as well as potential reporting requirements pursuant to ABA guidelines. Both the FAC and the review team considered an ABA-program to be a “Gold Seal”. The review team felt the matter warranted further review.
- NALS Certification (either the ALP, PLS or PP certification exams) exam on exit of program was discussed and encouraged.
- Discussion between the FAC and the review team concerning who managed their client trust accounts took place. Most attorneys hired a bookkeeper to manage their trust accounts, but said it would be helpful for paralegals to be able to calculate judgment

interest and per diem amounts. Students felt this could be easily taught in the Law Office Management course.

- Discussion between FAC and the review team concerning people skills, emotional intelligence and cultural sensitivity took place. Members of the FAC would like to see paralegals with stronger people skills, better problem-solving skills and an ability to analyze and diffuse different emotions in the clients and employees they work with.
- FAC members expressed a need within the legal environment for (office) personnel to exhibit cross-cultural awareness, sensitivities and possibly some Spanish language skills if working in southeast Idaho.
- FAC members supported the idea of diversity training as a means of assisting students with managing diversity.

Weaknesses:

The following changes could make the program even better.

- The review team made suggestions for improving CM/ECF (Federal court electronic filing system) instruction, increasing CM/ECF training and maybe adding some simulation exercises to the Civil Litigation courses.
- The review team heard from several students who stated that the credit load of the program was difficult. Students take 15 credits for three semesters and 17 credits the last semester. The team felt that 15 credits was a heavy load for students in their first semester. Some felt this could be part of the cause of the 30% attrition rate.
- One of the review team members is concerned that the BAS Paralegal Studies degree is not necessary and offers a watered down bachelor's degree. This member suggested that students would be better served getting a traditional bachelor's degree in a related major such as Political Science.
- Several students expressed dissonance over the lack of legal course offering for spring enrollees. The review team felt like this might be a lost opportunity for some students. Spring enrollees are limited to taking only General Education courses and that was cause for some dissatisfaction among the student panel. The review team felt like this schedule track is limiting for some students, yet certain scope and sequence restrictions are inherent to all programs. The lack of flexibility in the curriculum could possibly contribute to the 30% attrition.
- The lack of flexibility in the curriculum, combined with the attrition, creates small class sizes. This may not be a detriment to the students, but it does create workload issues within the University.
- There is only one full time faculty member.
- The program may benefit from adding an additional faculty member provided enrollment numbers support, or if the current program seeks ABA approval.
- The review team felt like course offerings could benefit by incorporating more curriculum on people skills since FAC expressed increased interest in this area. Communication skills and cultural sensitivity should be embedded in existing classes.

Teaching students how to market the law practice could be incorporated in the Law Office Management course.

- Peer review as an instruction method was discussed with the students. The program does not generally use peer review or have students assess each other's written work. This can be an effective teaching method.
- Two of the review team members suggested students would benefit from taking three required semesters of Legal Research and Writing instead of two. Currently two semesters are required and a third course is offered as an elective. One of the review team members pointed out that paralegals are more often utilized for their technical skills rather than their writing skills. This member felt more space should be allotted for technical skill development.
- Some distance learning or hybrid course offerings are helpful and might retain and recruit more students.
- Typing skills, marketing skills, Spanish language skills, and cultural sensitivity training were mentioned as the top skills to be added to the existing excellent program.

Action Plan

Physical:

There were no observations or recommendations from either the Program Review Team, the students, or the FAC for changes that need to be made to paralegal program physical plant. There is adequate classroom space available to all of the students. There are no physical plant recommendations, except to increase technology services offered consistent with the recommended changes to curriculum, addressed below.

Curriculum:

The program would benefit from incorporating more specific technology skills necessary in a law office, such as advanced word processing, Excel spreadsheets, and ensuring fast typing speeds. Ideally the program should add an entire class devoted to law office technology (Law Office Technology) to accomplish this goal, if we can make room in the current curriculum. Additional law firm marketing and "soft skills" recommended by the Program Review Team can easily be incorporated into existing curriculum through the Introduction to Paralegal Studies course, the Ethics course, and the Law Office Management course.

The program would benefit from building in more flexibility and by requiring less credit hours (17) in the final semester. The lack of flexibility probably does contribute significantly to attrition. If a student needs to take a semester off, they generally will have to wait a full year before they can catch up with the current course sequencing requirements, because with limited staff we are unable to offer courses in any other way. As a four semester AAS program, we cannot and should not reduce the total credit hour requirement, which is consistent with most AAS degree programs nation wide. The ABA requires a minimum of 60 total credit hours. We may be able to explore a certificate program option for students who need more flexibility and

already have some kind of degree or testable experience. We will work on the curriculum to make adjustments so that students have the opportunity to do their “heavy” 17 hour semester whenever they choose, and not necessarily in their last semester.

The program should continue to develop “hybrid” education delivery models, using technology, to help distance learners and to make the program more flexible. Unfortunately, without additional staff, it will be very difficult for us to offer more flexibility except through online learning. There were no recommendations that we increase our online course offerings, and we discussed that it takes highly motivated students to succeed with purely online legal and technology courses. The better solution to additional flexibility would be more staff, which will be discussed below in the Administrative recommendations.

The program may be heavy in areas of substantive legal knowledge that are not necessary for the marketplace or could be learned on the job. Updating those curriculum requirements may allow us to make room for the technology pieces we would like to incorporate. For example, one review team member suggested that three semesters of Legal Research and Writing may be too much. Currently the program requires two semesters of Legal Research and Writing, which focuses on fundamental skills that are critical to any legal services environment. The advanced legal writing course focuses on more advanced drafting skills, such as brief writing, and it is offered as an elective. The FAC expressed concern with making sure we are covering basic grammar and drafting skills. Since the curriculum is already developed, and the program has an excellent instructor available to teach it, there is no harm to the program to keep offering the advanced class as an elective. The program would benefit from emphasizing more basic grammar and proofreading skills in every course offering, and not just in the two required Legal Research and Writing semesters. There may be other ways we can adjust the substantive law curriculum to build in more flexibility and make room for more basic skill building.

Concern was expressed by the Program Review Team about the Bachelors of Applied Science degree with a Paralegal Studies major. Specifically, concern was expressed that by having the same credit requirement hours as with an ISU general baccalaureate degree, but by allowing many of the AAS degree credits to count towards the baccalaureate degree, we may be offering a “watered down” bachelor’s degree for those who wish to study law. In other words, students may be better served by getting a Bachelor’s Degree in sociology or political science. The BAS degree was designed to provide students who have successfully obtained their AAS degree an opportunity to earn the baccalaureate in the same amount of time as anyone else who is seeking a baccalaureate degree. The State of Idaho dictates pretty strictly the credit hour requirements for those degrees, through the Board of Education and the Career and Technical Education Board. We must also be mindful of our accreditation requirements, and of ABA approval requirements.

After much discussion within the college, we decided to offer our students a baccalaureate degree that specifically allows them to call themselves paralegals. By having the two year AAS degree from this program, the students have already gotten the technical, foundational, and “marketplace” skills. Our program offers practical, real world assessed assignments to help them build skills for the real legal services marketplace. The additional upper division courses add another dimension to their exploration of legal theory, taught from a different, more academic

and theoretical perspective. The upper division coursework complements their paralegal skills by helping them build their critical thinking, analysis, and writing skills, with an emphasis on law related course work. If a student does not believe they need the major to succeed in their career or further education goals, they always have the option of choosing a regular BAS degree, which gives them more freedom in selecting their upper division coursework. Although the local market does not necessarily require a baccalaureate degree to hire paralegals, there are many employers nationwide who do require this kind of degree to employ Paralegals. The ABA additionally strongly encourages Paralegal Studies programs to offer this kind of track to Paralegal Studies students who have earned their AAS degree.

On the whole, this BAS degree option offers students the opportunity to earn a baccalaureate degree that is specific for paralegals. The BAS offered is also eligible for law school applicants, and we have had at least one of our AAS graduates with the BAS degree accepted into law school at the University of Idaho. If any changes are made to the Paralegal Studies BAS degree curriculum, it is likely to be in the area of changing the AAS degree requirements as we are contemplating, which will have to be approved by the ISU Curriculum Committee before it can be implemented in catalog year 2017-2018.

To summarize, the Paralegal Studies program recommends the following changes to the curriculum as a result of this program review:

1. Removing unnecessary substantive law course work from the credit requirements to add a law office technology skills course that specifically emphasizes solid keyboarding skills, advanced word processing skills, Excel spreadsheet skills, and exposure to law industry specific software and applications.
2. Adding course objectives to our existing curriculums that include teaching marketing skills for legal services, and workplace soft skills such as diversity and cultural sensitivity.
3. Adding more specific course objectives to our existing curriculums in every course we teach to emphasize basic drafting, proofreading, and grammar skills.
4. Developing a certificate program in Paralegal Studies for those who already have a baccalaureate degree.
5. Specific curriculum change recommendations will be presented to the FAC in a meeting in early September 2016 for their comments and suggestions, with the goal of submitting them to the Curriculum Committee in time for approval and printing in the next catalog year.

Administrative

Both the Program Review Team and the FAC expressed concern that there is only one full time faculty position allotted to this program. This makes it difficult to offer courses more flexibly, especially when students need to off track for personal reasons.

Both the Program Review Team and the FAC expressed support for the program attaining ABA approval, which is the “gold standard” for paralegal studies programs in this country. This is an expensive and time consuming process, and there is some concern acknowledged by the FAC

members that ABA approval will not necessarily make any difference in pay or opportunities for our students in the local market.

In order to address attrition, it would be helpful to build more flexibility into the curriculum. The program has experimented with a certificate program, but with the current course sequencing which emphasizes general education requirements in the first year, it was difficult for the program to offer a certificate worthy program in two semesters. This would be a good time to explore this option again, as we are revisiting the flow of our course sequencing generally.

The program would benefit from hiring a part time paralegal (preferably with an academic degree) to serve as an assistant to the Program Coordinator, and to serve as additional faculty. It will be critical for the program to hire such help if we do seek ABA approval, because one full time faculty member teaching a full course load would not be able to handle the additional administrative work for the year or two it takes to get approval. The ABA itself recommends that course load requirements are removed or reduced for faculty who are coordinating a program approval review by the ABA. Although the process has become largely electronic over the past few years, it is an extremely detailed and time consuming project to gather the necessary information and to present it in the formats required.

Because ABA approval is such a costly process, more research is required by the Program Coordinator to make specific recommendations to the FAC this September. Specifically, research needs to be done into the real time, labor, and hard costs of this process, and we need to know more about how this might ultimately benefit the program and our graduates in quantifiable or assessable ways.

The Program Review Team also suggested the program might explore offering the voluntary paralegal studies certification examinations, offered by various private non-profit credentialing professional associations. Some states accept such certifications as proof of qualification to work as a Paralegal. It is another good way to encourage program excellence, and our students would be earning an additional important professional credential that will follow them throughout their career. More research is necessary to determine the costs and requirements to offer these exams through this campus, and/or to offer preparatory online or hybrid classes for the exams.

Unless the program can address attrition, it is difficult to justify additional resources to be allocated to the program. But unless additional resources can be allocated, and/or our curriculum in some way delivered more efficiently or flexibly, we are not likely to make much difference in attrition.

ABA approval and offering a certificate option as well as offering nationally recognized certification exam options may increase enrollment, and it may reduce attrition because we may attract more motivated students. This is currently an unknown and it may not be possible for us to quantify the potential benefits. Anecdotally, although we are attracting students from all over the region, most of our graduates remain in this region. The local legal market may not be able to support higher wages for our graduates sufficient to warrant this additional investment in their

credentialing. ABA approval and certification options may attract students who will have more portable careers. Local and statewide legal services market research should be conducted.

To summarize, the Paralegal Studies program recommends the following changes to the Administration of this program as a result of this review:

1. The Program Coordinator will investigate the specific hard and soft costs and benefits of obtaining ABA approval. These findings and recommendations will be submitted to the FAC for consideration at the September 2016 meeting for their input and approval before submitting any recommendations one way or another to the Dean of the College of Technology.
2. The Program Coordinator will make recommendations on how to offer a certificate program with a more flexible course sequencing for applicants who have already earned a baccalaureate degree. This will be presented to the FAC for consideration at the September 2016 meeting for their input and approval before submitting any recommendations through the Dean of the College of Technology.
4. The Program Coordinator will investigate the hard and soft costs and any barriers to offering any of the nationally recognized paralegal certification examinations on behalf of the voluntary professional organizations. The Program Coordinator will additionally investigate whether it is possible for us to offer preparatory courses through our program.
4. A legal services study should be completed as soon as possible, both locally and throughout the state of Idaho, to determine if the legal services market would support an ABA approved program, or would desire certified paralegals, by hiring such graduates at competitive wages.
5. A survey of graduates should be completed as soon as possible to determine their career tracks since graduation, for additional input on local market conditions

Recommendations:

Physical Plant: There were no observations or recommendations from either the Program Review Team, the students, or the FAC for changes that need to be made to paralegal program physical plant.

Curriculum:

1. Removing unnecessary substantive law course work from the credit requirements to add a law office technology skills course that specifically emphasizes solid keyboarding skills, advanced word processing skills, Excel spreadsheet skills, and exposure to law industry specific software and applications.
2. Adding course objectives to our existing curriculums that include teaching marketing skills for legal services, and workplace soft skills such as diversity and cultural sensitivity.
3. Adding more specific course objectives to our existing curriculums in every course we teach to emphasize basic drafting, proofreading, and grammar skills.

4. Developing a certificate program in Paralegal Studies for those who already have a baccalaureate degree.
5. Specific curriculum change recommendations will be presented to the FAC in a meeting in early September 2016 for their comments and suggestions, with the goal of submitting them to the Curriculum Committee in time for approval and printing in the next catalog year.

Administrative:

1. The Program Coordinator will investigate the specific hard and soft costs and benefits of obtaining ABA approval. These findings and recommendations will be submitted to the FAC for consideration at the September 2016 meeting for their input and approval before submitting any recommendations one way or another to the Dean of the College of Technology.
2. The Program Coordinator will make recommendations on how to offer a certificate program with a more flexible course sequencing for applicants who have already earned a baccalaureate degree. This will be presented to the FAC for consideration at the September 2016 meeting for their input and approval before submitting any recommendations through the Dean of the College of Technology.
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4. A legal services study should be completed as soon as possible, both locally and throughout the state of Idaho, to determine if the legal services market would support an ABA approved program, or would desire certified paralegals, by hiring such graduates at competitive wages.
5. A survey of graduates should be completed as soon as possible to determine their career tracks since graduation, for additional input on local market conditions.

PARALEGAL PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT

APRIL 4, 2016

9:00 am

In attendance:

Scott Rasmussen, Dean College of Technology

Teena Rhoads, General Education Chair

Mary Huneycutt, Paralegal Studies Program Coordinator

Carole Wesenberg, Adjunct Instructor, Paralegal Studies Program (FAC)

Ryan Farnsworth, Adjunct Instructor, Paralegal Studies Program

Fred Zundel, Idaho Legal Aid (FAC)

Traci Harbert, Review Team

Natalie Holman, Review Team

Dr. Gesine Hearn, Review Team

INTRODUCTION

On April 1, 2016, consistent with the accreditation standards set forth by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), and consistent with the Idaho State University (ISU) Academic Program Review Plan, the ISU College of Technology (COT) Paralegal Studies Program underwent its first formal Academic Program Review. This review process is now mandated by ISU policy every five years for all university academic programs that do not hold a national accreditation within their specific discipline.

The Program Review Team was composed of two Program Coordinators for similar Paralegal Studies programs in other State of Idaho College of Technical Education (CTE) colleges, Traci Harbert of Eastern Idaho Technical College (EITC, located in Idaho Falls, Idaho) and Natalie Holman of Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC, located in Lewiston, Idaho). Natalie attended the program review through Skype. The EITC Paralegal Studies program offers certificate options and an AAS degree option for paralegals. The LCSC Paralegal Studies program offers a certificate, an AAS degree, and a BAS degree option for paralegals. The third member of the review team was Dr. Gesine Hearn from the ISU College of Arts and Letters, Chair of the Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Criminology. An initial welcome and orientation meeting was commenced as follows.

Mary Huneycutt, Program Coordinator of the Paralegal Studies program, introduced members of the review team to Dean Scott Rasmussen, Teena Rhoads, department chair, and to each other. Scott Rasmussen expressed his appreciation for the team's willingness to review the Paralegal Studies program. He explained that this process will give the COT an opportunity to learn more about the program by having each review team member identify both the strengths and areas that can be improved upon which will lead to wonderful careers for students. The Dean stated that COT is always looking for ways to improve our programs. He expressed his thanks once again for the review team taking their time to be here.

Mary Huneycutt, Program Coordinator, thanked everyone for coming. She then provided the team with a list of course requirements and sequence that she stated might be helpful. She also provided the team members a copy of the required Paralegal Study courses, the elective Paralegal Study courses and the required general education courses.

9:15 am MEETING WITH PARALEGAL FACULTY

The review team was then introduced to the Paralegal adjunct faculty consisting of Carole Wesenberg and Ryan Farnsworth. The following discussion took place.

Mary: Mary reviewed the courses for a Paralegal Studies AAS degree and a BAS degree. She passed out a list of the Required Course Sequencing for Paralegal Studies. Mary noted that this is not her course design, but the course design that she inherited when she came to work for ISU, which was designed with American Bar Association (ABA) approval in mind. She is hoping to receive more information from the review to help her and the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) to decide whether to make the commitment to apply for ABA approval. Mary noted that the only adjustment she has made since she has been here is to combine the Civil Litigation courses into one 4 credit course upon advice and approval of the FAC.

She noted that there is not a specific law technology course. She has exposed the students to as much as she can embedded in some of her courses. Most recently she has purchased the ACEDS (Association for Certified E-Discovery Specialists) software for electronic discovery training, which emphasizes the technology side of electronic discovery. She is trying it on a one year trial basis.

Team: How many online and/or distant learning classes do you teach?

Mary: Currently we have two online courses. One is Law Office Management and the other is Legal Ethics and Professionalism. All courses are Moodle enabled, with the lectures being recorded in Collaborate. All assignments are downloaded and uploaded in Moodle. All of the courses have a strong online component. There is a strong demand for online courses, but we recognize that it takes a highly motivated students to complete online courses.

Also, the ABA is not a big advocate of online courses. The ABA only allows you to have up to six of your courses online. The Paralegal Studies program has students from all over southern Idaho, with students as far away as Mountain Home.

Team: Have you considered blended classrooms as a way of avoiding online courses? Or have you considered moving class time to accommodate commuter students, maybe one-day courses, late and evening courses?

Mary: We do have night classes and all of our classes are delivered in 3 hour blocks. Carole teaches all of her courses at night. Most classes are concentrated on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday. This schedule helps with distant learners and most of the students.

Team: Tell about the Gen Ed courses that need to be taken. Do the students have to take a government course?

Mary: The students do not have to take a government course. The students are required to take an objective 6 course, which is Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing. The ABA requires 18 hours of General Education courses for the 62 hour AAS degree. The BAS degree requires 120 hours. (Note: The Paralegal Studies BAS requires 120 hours; Mary stated during the meeting it

requires 130 hours. 130 hours is required for some specialty BAS degrees at ISU, but not for Paralegal Studies)

Team: Are the students required to take anything like criminal law or something like that?

Mary: No, for many years the bachelor's degree was just a blended degree. This past year, we proposed and received approval for a BAS degree for Paralegal Studies. Specific courses are required in the additional 18 credits, while others are electives that the students take to earn this degree.

Currently Washington and Utah have a limited law license for paralegals (LLP) to offer legal services on a limited basis. This limited license generally requires a minimum of a bachelor's degree or an AAS degree from an ABA approved paralegal studies program. We see the LLP as a trend, and more states will be offering this type of limited law license.

Curriculum Council at ISU sets the requirements for the catalogue for a BAS degree.

Team: The credits for the Paralegal Studies BAS degree does not match up with ISU requirements for other Bachelor degrees. Why does the BAS in Paralegal Studies require more credits than a Bachelors of anything else on campus? (SEE ABOVE NOTE; the credit hour requirements are the same)

Teena: This is an area where you can put in a recommendation for a program change to get it in-line with the other bachelor degrees on campus.

Mary: We are not allowed to change the number of credits for the BAS degree. That number comes to us from the State Board of Education and Career and Technical Education Board. To declare a "major" in any discipline, 18 credit hours in upper division courses must be completed in that discipline. The current BAS degree with Paralegal Studies major as approved doesn't take into account that 44 credit hours of law specific coursework was completed in the AAS degree. All AAS degree courses are presumed by the CTE Board to be lower division or introductory course work. I do not necessarily agree, and I do think the Paralegal Studies BAS degree as currently configured requires many more substantive law classes than necessary for a practicing Paralegal because the AAS degree program is heavy on substantive law. I understand now that some other programs that offer a BAS degree with a major, take into account that the AAS degree required courses are very similar to the upper division courses, and they do not require the students to retake similar coursework. This is definitely something we should look into revising, depending on how we decide to revise our AAS degree curriculum as a result of this Program Review.

Team: Questions and discussion on Horizontal Alignment ensued.

Teena: Teena explains that the purpose of Horizontal Alignment is to have uniformity to ensure that postsecondary credits earned by a student in a professional-technical education program will transfer at the full credit value to any public Idaho college or university in a like program of study and to ensure that such post-secondary credits will be treated by any such public college or university as satisfying specific course requirements in the student's program of study.

These goals also reach into the high school dual-credit program to establish a consistent base for technical education. The goal is for high school students to be able to complete enough aligned courses in high school to have their first semester completed when they enter college. The State has a schedule of when these courses are to be aligned. Business Technology has already completed its alignment in accounting and administration.

During the CTE Summer Conference this year, course alignment will be presented to the high school teachers by college instructors.

Team: Discussion took place on the standards of the horizontal alignment program, the credentials of the high school instructors and the curriculum. It was explained that this is a new process that is just being proposed. Curriculum is the first item to be reviewed and aligned. The purpose of Horizontal Alignment is to align high school curriculum with CTE curriculum.

Teena: One of the things Mary is working on is to have high school students come to campus to take the same classes that are being taught to ISU students in the Paralegal program. Mary would rather have the students come to campus and take the same courses, taught by the same instructors. This way she knows that the instruction is the same as her students are currently getting.

Mary: Mary expressed her appreciation for the team giving her this time in the review. She asks if there are any other question concerning curriculum before taking a break.

Team: At what point is procedural teaching implemented with practical application? The ABA requires practical application in its approved courses.

Mary: Mary stated that she embeds practical application in most of her courses. She requires her students to complete four practical application assignments in every course. They are assigned at the beginning of the course and the students can see these assignments in Moodle. For instance, in Family Law, the students have to write up a prenuptial agreement and a custody plan. In her Property Law course, they have to write up a real estate contract and deed, and a landlord/tenant pleadings. Civil Litigation is heavy in procedures and they have to complete a summons, complaint, and answer along with mandatory disclosures and discovery. Students are taken to the Federal and state court houses to introduce them to staff and to show them how to file a motion or a complaint.

Team: Are the students doing citations in their Legal Research courses? And if so, how much citation are they doing?

Carole: Yes, the course book starts citations in Chapter 8, but Carole starts teaching the students about this in the third class of the semester. Legal citations are taught based on the Harvard Bluebook, although University of Idaho Law School has decided to use the ALWD. The ALWD, however, has become very similar to the BlueBook, and more courts still rely on the Harvard Bluebook citation format. Mary introduces students to legal citations their first semester.

Jessica: Clio is used on the job, and we learned about it in the program. We did not have access to it because the program would have had to pay for it for us to use. We discussed it, and we discussed and understood the deadlines.

Team: Did you learn about civil laws that dictated those deadlines? How were you exposed to the rules?

Lacen: We learned about these is many of the courses we took. We went to the Law library, we learned to Google for information. In Legal Research, we had books that we had to read. One of the activities was a scavenger hunt, we had to do using the resources at hand such as the Bluebook. Our first exposure to legal citation was in the first semester. We were required to have the BlueBook and the RedBook for our program.

Team: What course or subject or program do you wish you would have had that you didn't have in your program?

Lacen: Case Maker. My attorney does not have Westlaw and uses a paper calendar.

Team: Can you synchronize Outlook to your attorney's phone?

Lacen: My attorney does not have a smartphone and uses a paper calendar.

Jessica: We did not learn this in class, but I did learn it on the job.

Team: Are there other softwares that you would have liked to learn in the program?

Lacen & Jessica: Both said they would have liked to learn WordPerfect because both of their attorneys still use it in their practices.

Team: Were you exposed to accounting procedures or fundamental accounting and have you used them in your jobs?

Lacen: My firm has a bookkeeper who manages the trust accounts.

Team: Were you taught how to compute simple interest?

Lacen & Jessica: No

Team: Did you learn how to do a mail merge, electronic filing, and so forth?

Lacen: In our online course and Legal Research & Writing, we were taught to use these items, along with cc and bcc.

Team: Did you do any mock litigation simulations?

Lacen & Jessica: We did not do a mock trial, but had in class discussions, and we had to argue briefs in class. We were also told about open cases in court that we could go and watch.

Team: Did you have proof reading assignments?

Lacen & Jessica: Yes, we had proof-reading in Carole and Mary's courses. Legal Research Writing was heavy on proof-reading. We had a daily exercise called Power Points, where for 15 - 20 minutes daily we would review documents to try and find mistakes.

Team: Did you have writing classes other than the ENGL 1101 and 1102 courses?

Jessica: Legal Research had a large writing component to it. We had to write citations, correct verbs, and spent a large amount of the class writing. Also, my Political Science courses helped prepare me for the Legal Research course in all the writing I had to do for them.

Lacen: My ENGL 1102 prepared me for writing. It was a class that was geared to what I was taking in school and all of my writing assignments were based on what I was doing in my paralegal program. My final paper was a research paper. I contacted a paralegal in Boise to help me with the research and completed a very meaningful paper in my field of study.

Team: Tell us about your exposure to Microsoft Office. What can you do? For instance, can you do a table of contents.

Lacen: Yes, we were taught to do table of contents in our Introduction to Computers course.

Team: How often did you have guest speakers?

Jessica: We had guest speakers in our Property Law course. We had either attorneys or paralegals (mostly from the Racine Law Office) in several other courses. We had social functions where we invited local attorneys and paralegals. This allowed us to have access to the attorneys and paralegals in a less formal situation.

Team: Is there anything you wished you had learned?

Jessica: I would have liked more hands-on with Law Office Management, programs like Clio, and practice with setting tasks or timers on calendaring programs. Time management programs and Beta programs would have been useful.

Lacen: I came into my job feeling well prepared. I was able to be flexible and not feel stressed. I really feel like Mary prepared us for just about anything. Maybe time-tracking software would have been helpful.

Team: Were there other classes you wish you would have taken that would have helped you?

Lacen & Jessica: I came back after graduation and took Legal Research III. I could not fit it into my schedule prior to graduation. I think it should have been a required course.

Jessica: I think the Sociology course Power, Class and Prestige was helpful. It helped me to realize that these things did exist. There is a difference in attitude with people in different income/wealth brackets and with people with gender differences. Having a course on social diversity helped me to understand clients more.

Team: How is Legal Research III different than Legal Research I or Legal Research II?

Lacen: Legal Research III touches on the curriculum that is taught in I and II. In Legal Research II the final assignment is a 10-20 page brief with ten different citations and a table of contents.

Jessica: Legal Research III does similar activities with a larger writing component. It is more challenging in that there is a lot more persuasive writing in this course. For the final, we had to write a brief and read and proof each other's briefs and check the citations.

Team: Did you have formal peer reviews?

Lacen: No, we didn't, but we had to do peer reviews in some of the courses. They were tied into Legal Research.

Team: What made you come to Idaho State University, College of Technology, Paralegal Studies program?

Lacen: During my freshman year of high school I had to do an assignment that compared and contrasted two different jobs. I was assigned flight attendant and paralegal. I became fascinated with the paralegal program after this assignment. When it came time to choose, I was looking at Boise and Pocatello. I looked at the courses, the curriculum and the activities in and around both cities. I decided that Pocatello offered me more of what I was looking for than Boise.

Jessica: I was already a student at ISU. My high school did a mock trial in my senior year and I liked it. I was thinking about nursing, but found I hated it. I started researching what I wanted to do, when I spoke with an advisor after seeing the Paralegal Studies Program on the College of Technology website. After working with the advisor, it was what I decided I wanted to do. I also liked the Political Science component of the course.

Team: Have you received advising while you were here?

Jessica: Mary and Carole were great at advising. They are there for you. They helped with the academic advising and have really helped planning the bachelor's degree. They were realistic and made time for me.

Lacen: The College of Technology advisor was very informative. I came in for the Spring semester and had to wait a full semester to get into the Paralegal program. During that time, I took almost all of my generals during that semester. When I got into the program, I ended up combining my first and second semester courses because the generals were already completed.

Team: Was advising required?

Jessica: No, but I got tons of feedback all the time.

Lacen: We created a Binder with assignments and instructions in it that were really helpful. I still have the binder that helps me in my job.

Team: Were other faculty members also accessible?

Lacen: They were somewhat accessible, but I felt more comfortable with Mary and chose to go to her.

Team: How were the facilities; the labs and the library?

Jessica: Most of the classes are taught here in this building on the second floor. Sometimes we had a class in the Library.

Lacen: The Library staff was very helpful. We used the law library and were not allowed to return books to the shelves. The staff was great at helping us find the items we asked for.

Team: Did you attend a library orientation?

Lacen: I did not take a library orientation, and did not ask if there was a legal orientation.

Team: Would you recommend more online courses?

Lacen/Jessica: No, I would not recommend more online courses. I like the hands on learning approach. I need to be writing things down, and that is more difficult in an online course.

Team: How about Distance Learning? What is your recommendation there?

Lacen/Jessica: Mary recorded all of her courses so if someone was sick and could not attend class, they could jump online and listen as the class was taught. And because it was recorded, we could listen to it anytime we might be confused and just need clarification.

Team: How about hybrid classes. That might be where you get the assignments ahead of time, worked on them, and then went to class and reviewed them.

Lacen/Jessica: We were exposed to some of these types in our online classes.

Team: How about the computer lab? Did you have access to the lab?

Lacen/Jessica: Yes, we had plenty of access to the computer labs.

Team: Did you like the courses in a 3 hour block?

Lacen: This was new to me, but it allowed me to absorb the class and really focus on it.

Jessica: Carole's finals were really long. Sometimes the three hours were not enough.

Team: What would you say the greatest strength and weakness of the program is?

Lacen: I believe I really benefited from my peers point of view. We had time to discuss the cases and get different points of view. I also believe that having smaller classes was a strength. This gave us more time with the faculty and allow them to help where I needed help. This program prepared me for what I needed to do. I was able to find out different things through multiply courses, what I needed in the job. I still email Mary questions from time to time.

Mary did not mold me into this job, but left that up to the attorney I went to work for.

Jessica: I got so much out of this program. It prepared me to work on my own. I am the first paralegal my boss has ever hired. I learned how to be flexible. Sometimes I have to do secretarial duties and I am good with that.

Team: How long did it take you to get jobs?

Jessica: I worked in an internship and that employer hired me.

Lacen: I was hired in January.

Team: Did the advisors help you find internships?

Lacen/Jessica: Yes, they assisted us with our resumes. During the last semester, Mary helped to find an internship.

Team: Just one follow-up question. Did any of your classes talk about different forms of communication with different clients?

Lacen/Jessica: Yes, we discussed writing letters to clients and had mock telephone calls.

The former students were dismissed and the team took a short break before the working lunch.

12:00 pm MEETING WITH FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FAC)

In attendance: Teena Rhoads, General Education Chair

Sally Beitia, Paralegal, Racine, Olson, Nye, Budge & Bailey

Monte Gray, Esq., Shoshone Bannock Tribes Counsel

Dave Bagley, Esq., Racine, Olson, Nye, Budge & Bailey

Carole Wesenberg, Law Clerk, U.S. Court, Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

Frederick F. Belzer, Esq., Attorney at Law

Fred Zundel, Esq., Idaho Legal Aid

Katre Nye, Paralegal, Sixth Judicial District Court

Jetta M. Mathews, Esq., Moffatt Thomas

Melanie Egli, Medical Staff Director, Portneuf Medical Center

Team: How important is it for Paralegals to be versed in softwares and technology?

FAC: We want them to be versed in word processing, Excel, case management software, calendaring programs, paperless filing systems, and document management systems. We use all of the Microsoft Office products, but some attorneys still use WordPerfect. It was mentioned that a few Federal courts still want proposed orders in WordPerfect format. They want the paralegals to know Outlook and/or G-mail. -Such programs as PCLaw, Beta, Share File, and Trial Prep are all helpful.

Team: What specific skills do you expect the paralegals to know when they come to work?

FAC: The first skill mentioned was a typing speed of at least 55 wpm. Comments were made that maybe they need to take a testing procedure before the end of the program to make sure they can type accurately and quickly. Basic grammar was another basic skill that is expected of

paralegals. They would like the paralegals to be proficient in word processing technology, have a basic understanding of contracts, be able to do numbered lists, and get work done quickly. Being able to take instruction well, and not have the attitude that they know everything is a must. Critical thinking and problem solving is a must. Having good political and people skills would help greatly. The FAC would also like them to be able to get along with people, analyze and diffuse emotions of clients and those they work with.

Team: How important is it to have an understanding of social/cultural/ethnic issues?

FAC: It is really important that they understand that their experience is not necessarily everyone's experience. Sometimes it is hard for a young person "off the farm" to have certain life experiences. It would be great for them to have a course that would help to broaden their insights to cultural diversity.

Team: Would a cultural sensitivity class or workshop help?

FAC: There are people around that don't even have an awareness that they are being insensitive. There are six reservations in Idaho, and there are certain things that one does not say to a Native American. Because people do not understand the culture, inappropriate things are said. For instance, Native Americans acknowledge the past as a path to the future. Ignoring the past upsets Native Americans. So if someone states that this or that event took place in the past and we need to leave it there and move forward, the Native Americans get upset.

People with mental illness is also an area where sensitivity is needed. Low income and high income households are all different cultures. There is not a book to read to learn about this, but it could be incorporated into a class.

Team: What are the regional needs for this area?

FAC: Any paralegal who knows Spanish is worth his or her weight in gold. It would be very helpful to have a paralegal who knew Spanish. Recruit Spanish speaking individuals.

Carole: We currently have three Spanish speakers in our program.

Team: How many Paralegal's handle trust accounts?

FAC: Most firms hire bookkeepers to handle trust accounts. If someone has a background in bookkeeping it would help. We do need the paralegals to have basic math skills and to be Excel proficient. Helping with child support calculations would be helpful.

Team: What do you see the demand for Paralegals being in the next 10 years?

FAC: More firms are using Paralegals, and we think it will keep growing.

Team: Are the firms that use Paralegals, billing their time?

FAC: Most of the firms in Idaho Falls bill the Paralegal's time. It depends on which attorney it is and what the area of emphasis it is. We would really like to see the program become ABA approved. ABA approval really is a big deal.

Team: If the program becomes ABA approved, will the legal industry be willing to compensate for a Paralegal who came through an ABA approved program.

FAC: Attorneys really want control over who is called a paralegal. There is not a licensing requirement in the State of Idaho. Anyone can hang a shingle and say he or she is a paralegal.

After this question, the FAC went with Mary into another conference room for an FAC meeting.

1:15 pm MEETING WITH CURRENT STUDENTS

Students in attendance: Cassidy, Sarah, Jenny, Abby

Team: What is the strongest aspect of the program?

Students: The ability to study different types of law.

Team: What would you like to see changed?

Students: All of the students stated that they would like to see the program expanded into more semesters. They spoke of how extensive it is. Abby reminded the other students that the program had to be finished in two years.

Team: Would you like to have different tracks in the program? One a full time track and an additional part time track?

Students: All of the students responded yes to this question.

Team: Would online classes be helpful? What would you change if you could?

Students: Credit load was the only criticism. All of the students stated that the faculty, lab, and facility were great. Some students have to take summer classes in order to graduate on time. Not all classes are offered every semester. The elective paralegal courses are taught on a rotation basis and students have been known to come back after graduation and take elective paralegal courses. Students have to enroll in the Fall semester in order to take Introduction to Ethics and Introduction to Paralegal, which they have to have before they can take other courses.

Team: How happy are you with the 3 hour class time?

Students: Some of the students liked the 3 hour block and some of them did not like the block. They all said the instructors were really good at giving them breaks so they could get up and stretch and have a bathroom break.

Team: Have the outcomes on the syllabus helped you or are the learning outcomes helpful.

Students: All said they were helpful.

Team: How comfortable are you with Microsoft Office and particularly Excel?

Students: The students all discussed how they used these programs in their Introduction to Computers class and their Law Office Management class. They all felt comfortable using these programs.

Team: Do you have any instruction on accuracy and how fast you type?

Students: All stated that there was not a class provided for typing speed and accuracy. This would have to be a self-study.

Team: Would it be helpful to have a list of online sites that would help with these skills?

Students: Yes, that would be very helpful. It would also be helpful to have the Law Office Management class taught earlier, like in the first semester.

Team: How comfortable are you working with people?

Students: Two of the students stated that they had worked with people in other jobs that they had in the past and they felt comfortable working with different people. Two students mentioned that they had never worked in a secretarial position that gave them that kind of exposure to people. They felt that Mary works hard to prepare them for the emotional and mental part of working with others.

Team: Would embedding people skills in the program help?

Students: All of the students responded that they thought this would be helpful.

Team: How aware are you of the BAS program?

Students: Mary spoke about it in their first and third semesters. Abby mentioned that she is thinking about it, but she has not decided yet whether to pursue the Bachelor's degree. Jenny felt it was a great path for younger students, but at her age she just needed to go to work. Sarah stated that she would be moving to Salt Lake City, and she could get a good job in Pocatello without a Bachelor's degree, but if she is moving to a big city, she will need the Bachelor's degree.

Team: If you could do things differently, what would you do?

Students: Cassidy said she would get all of her General Education courses done and out of the way. Sarah said she would try and spread her classes out more so it wasn't so intense. Jenny, who got the General Education courses out of the way, stated that the core classes are still really intense. Abby said she would look at different tracks and consider the part-time track. Abby stated that she would also have liked to have taken Law Office Management course in the first semester. They all stated that they liked that the classes were recorded.

Team: Does Mary augment her lectures with videos?

Students: Yes, she does, plus she uses Collaborate to record the lectures and it is helpful.

Team: What is the average number of students in your classes?

Students: There are six students who are in the second year class ready to graduate, and about fourteen students altogether.

This was the end of the session with the current students.

PARALEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM REVIEW

Friday April 1, 2016

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome by the College Dean, conference Room 149 RFC
Participants: Dean, Chair, Program Coordinator, Review Team Members
- 9:15 a.m. Joined by Adjunct Faculty to discuss course and program requirements and staff roles and responsibilities; tour of facilities
- 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:15 a.m. Interview discussions with former students
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch (with Faculty Advisory Committee)
- 12:15 p.m. Interview discussions with Faculty Advisory Committee
- 1:00 p.m. Break
- 1:15 p.m. Interview discussions with current students
- 2:00 p.m. Review team meets for discussion of program strengths; areas for improvement;
And general recommendations
- 3:00 p.m. Brief exit interview; outline next steps

*In order to assist the Review Team, Ms. Sheri Kunkel will be available to provide administrative support, including note taking, at key meetings and Team deliberations during the day

**QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE HELPFUL IN PROMPTING FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS
AND FORMER STUDENTS**

Program Review

March 8, 2016

Thanks for being willing to meet with us today. Our goal is to gather information that may be helpful to the faculty and staff in determining the strengths of the program; the areas of relative need in the program; and suggestions you might have for improvements. Your comments and suggestions will be provided to College of Technology staff in summary form only, and will not identify any specific individual as the source.

- 1) Why did you select the ISU COT Paralegal Studies Program as the place for you to receive your training?
- 2) From whom did you initially hear about the ISU COT Paralegal Studies Program?
- 3) What did you like most about the program?
- 4) What parts of the program have been the most difficult for you or did you like the least?
- 5) What parts of the program have been the most enjoyable and beneficial for you?
- 6) Do you believe that the program prepared you, or is preparing you with skills that you can use to get a job?
- 7) What recommendations do you have that could improve the Paralegal Studies program in the future in, for example:
 - Physical environment?
 - Equipment?
 - Staffing?
 - Teaching?
- 8) What do you wish you would have known prior to beginning the Paralegal Studies program at ISU COT?
- 9) Would you recommend that a friend or family member who is interested in Paralegal Studies come to the ISU COT program?

**QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE HELPFUL IN PROMPTING FEEDBACK FROM
FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- 1) How long have you served on the Faculty Advisory Committee?
- 2) What led you to support the ISU COT Paralegal Studies Program through your service on the Committee?
- 3) What skills do you think are important for a paralegal to be employed and succeed in the legal services market in Idaho?
- 4) Do you think the skills required vary regionally within Idaho?
- 5) Do you think the ISU COT program gives paralegals the skills required to be successful in the real world market?
- 6) What recommendations do you have that could improve the Paralegal Studies program in the future, in, for example:
 - Physical Environment?
 - Equipment?
 - Staffing?
 - Teaching?
- 7) What do you think are the strengths of the program?
- 8) Are there any resources in the legal services community locally or statewide that you think the ISU COT Paralegal Studies program could use more effectively?
- 9) Is there anything else about the ISU COT Paralegal Studies program or the Idaho legal services market that you think it would be important for the Program Review Team to know?

Appendix 3. Paralegal Program Review Report

Required Course Sequencing: Paralegal Studies Beginning 2014-2015

Fall: Year One

ENG 101	English Comp. I	3 cr.
COMM 101	Principles of Speech	3 cr.
PARA 110	Intro. To Paralegal Studies	3 cr.
PARA 111	Legal Ethics and Professionalism	3 cr.
BT 170	Intro. To Computers	3 cr.
		<u>15 hrs.</u>

Note: First semester curriculum is proscribed. Deviations from these courses may only be made with the permission of the paralegal program coordinator. Students who have completed one or more of the general education courses may be eligible to substitute another general education course, or, in the case where a student has completed all of their general education, a student may be allowed to add one or more PARA courses, with coordinator approval. No courses will be offered out of sequence, however, and all students should expect to graduate in four semesters.

Spring: Year One

ENG 102	English Comp. II	3 cr.
GE GOAL	Goal 3 (Math)	3 cr.
PARA 122	Legal Research Analysis and Writing I	3 cr.
PARA 113/115	*Contract Law/Property Law	3 cr.
PARA 117	Criminal Law and Procedure	3 cr.
		<u>15 cr.</u>

Fall: Year Two

PARA 116	Tort Law	3 cr.
PARA 222	Legal Research Analysis and Writing II	3 cr.
PARA Elective (Estates, Family Law or Bankruptcy)		3 cr.
GE GOAL**	Goal 6	3 cr.
GE GOAL **	(Choose course from a required GE goal area)	3 cr.
		<u>15 cr.</u>

Spring: Year Two

PARA 121	Law Office Management	3 cr.
PARA 113/115	*Contract Law/Property Law	3 cr.
PARA 220	Paralegal Internship	4 cr.
PARA 232	Civil Litigation	4 cr.
PARA Elective (Lgl. Rsh & Writ III, Bus. Org.)		3 cr.
		<u>17 cr.</u>

*Property Law Para 115 and Contract Law Para 113 will be offered on alternating spring semesters. This means you must take this course when it is offered to meet degree requirements.

**See catalog for goal requirements and course options; note that per the catalog, you are required to complete one course in human relations to complete your AAS degree.

Idaho State
UNIVERSITY
College of Technology

Program Review Self Study-Paralegal Studies

1. Departmental purpose and relationship to the University mission.

- a. University Mission: The mission of Idaho State University is to advance scholarly and creative endeavors through the creation of new knowledge, cutting-edge research, innovative artistic pursuits and high-quality academic instruction; to use these qualities to enhance technical, undergraduate, graduate, and professional education, healthcare, and other services provided to the people of Idaho, the Nation, and the World; and to develop citizens who will learn from the past, think critically about the present, and provide leadership to enrich the future in a diverse, global society.
- b. Program Mission: The Paralegal Studies program strives to produce graduates who are competent professionals in the legal services environment. The focus is on following all applicable ethics rules, challenging the students to consider the policy reasons behind the law and to think critically by considering arguments they do not personally support.
- c. The role of the program and relationship to the University mission, including the four core themes: Explain in a few concise paragraphs.

Learning and Discovery: The Paralegal Studies program offers a rigorous curriculum designed to give a paralegal a solid grounding in all areas of law they are likely to encounter in a typical paralegal practice. They additionally learn valuable and industry specific technology skills. An emphasis is placed on critical thinking, rather than memorization. The Paralegal Studies program strives to make each day a meaningful one for its students, providing them with an opportunity for learning and discovery.

Access and Opportunity: The College of Technology as a whole provides opportunity for all potential and current students. Remediation, advising, and counseling services are available to encourage all students' success. Services for disabled students are also available. Interpreters for the hearing impaired are a common sight in many classrooms. Every possible accommodation is made to students who demonstrate a need for them. We have students who begin the program right out of high school, and we have students who are retraining for a second or third career. The curriculum is designed to give any student, regardless of where they start, the opportunity to work hard and become a professional paralegal. Many of our students are choosing to further their Paralegal Studies education with a BAS degree.

Leadership in the Health Sciences: Some of our graduates go to work in legal departments in the healthcare industry, helping to write and interpret contracts and other legal documents.

Community Engagement and Impact: The Paralegal program works closely with the local Bar, and with the state and local Paralegal Associations, to find opportunities to network and

Appendix 3. Paralegal Program Review Report

collaborate. Graduates of the program are active in the municipal, health care, small business, and of course, legal environments in their communities.

- d. Has the mission of the Program changed since last review? Yes No
- i. If yes, describe in 1-2 concise paragraphs. If no, is there a need to change? **This will be the first Paralegal program review.**
- e. Provide an overall description of your program including a list of the measurable goals and objectives of the program (both programmatic and learner centered). Have they changed since the last review?
- Yes No
- The Paralegal Studies program offers one credential within the program, the Associates of Applied Science degree. Effective Fall 2016, a customized BAS degree with a Paralegal Studies major is available for those wishing to continue to a baccalaureate degree, with courses available from other programs, departments, and colleges. Currently and for the past several years, a customized independent studies BAS or BAT degree has been available to our students with approval of the College of Technology BAS Degree Committee. Paralegals who obtain a baccalaureate degree will have more career opportunities throughout their lives, although an AAS degree will qualify them for most entry level jobs locally.

Paralegal graduates are not licensed by the state of Idaho upon graduation. No state currently requires paralegals to be licensed, although certain practice areas, such as certified document preparation or limited law licenses, do require licenses in a few states. Voluntary certification through private national professional organizations is available to paralegal professionals. The American Bar Association (ABA) offers a voluntary approval process for accredited paralegal studies programs such as ours, and our curriculum is designed to meet or exceed those approval requirements. The ABA requires at least sixty post-secondary credit hours, including a minimum of eighteen credit hours of general education coursework. The College of Technology AAS general education degree requirements meet those goals as defined by the ABA approval guidelines, and the Paralegal Studies Program requires one additional English 1102 course as a degree requirement, to complete the eighteen general education credit requirements. The ABA requires a minimum of eighteen additional credit hours of “legal specialty” coursework, defined as (1) covering substantive law or legal procedures; (2) developed for paralegals; (3) emphasizing practical skills; and (4) stressing understanding and reasoning more than rote memorization, with interaction and feedback between instructors and students. The remaining twenty-four required credit hours can be at the discretion of the program. The ISU program requires sixty-two total credit hours, including the eighteen general education credits described above. The remaining forty-four required credit hours would all be considered “legal specialty” coursework as defined by the ABA approval guidelines. The ISU program emphasizes critical thinking skills, outstanding communication skills, professionalism, and practical task “real world” assignments are incorporated in every legal specialty class offered. Our curriculum is designed to provide our graduates with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to obtain a license or certification in any jurisdiction if they so choose.

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The Program Coordinator, who is the only full time employee in this program, is an active member of the Idaho State Bar, the local Bar, and specialty Bar Associations. These professional networks assist in placement of interns and graduates. The adjunct faculty are also licensed, practicing attorneys who have special expertise in the areas they are hired to teach, such as Legal Research and Writing, Contract Law, Wills Estates & Trusts, and Bankruptcy Law.

The Program has been fortunate to have the strong support of local attorneys, Judges, and paralegals from the beginning. The one full-time faculty member is an active member of the Idaho State Bar, the local Bar, and specialty Bars. She has served in leadership positions for Idaho Legal Aid Services, Inc., and the 6th Judicial District Family Law Section. These professional networks assist in the placement of interns and graduates. The adjunct faculty are also licensed, practicing attorneys who specialize in the areas where they teach. For example, the Legal Research and Writing Instructor has been teaching these required and critical courses for over a decade. She is a full time law clerk to the Honorable Randy Smith, Judge for the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals (federal appeals court), where her primary job is to research, write, and edit federal appellate court opinions. The adjunct is also on the executive committee for the 6th Judicial District Bar. The program is fortunate to have faculty so qualified and professionally connected to teach the core coursework.

The Program has an engaged Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) comprised of Judges, lawyers, and practicing paralegals including Program graduates, which has met once a year. Per PTE requirements, for future academic years the FAC will meet twice a year; once electronically or by conference call, and once in person. This is also a requirement for ABA approval. Several members of the FAC were instrumental in the creation of the Program, and they have remained supportive of the Program from the very beginning. Although the Program invites and encourages all current adjunct faculty to participate in FAC meetings, a majority of the members are not currently affiliated with ISU. The FAC discusses and advises the Program about admission standards; instructors; changes and trends in the field and in the local market; assessing the local market and developing more opportunities for paralegals; promoting the Program; evaluating adequacy of resources; and assessing the overall effectiveness of the program in terms of curriculum, needs of the market, and graduate performance.

A couple of years ago, the Idaho Professional and Technical Education Board explored the idea of offering a hybrid model of delivering Paralegal Studies education statewide, with the collaboration of all statewide Paralegal Studies programs using technology tools. This idea has been tabled at the state level; however, our program remains ready and available to collaborate and develop distance learning opportunities throughout Idaho. For the past several years, we have graduated students who have been commuting from Idaho Falls, and from as far as Mountain Home, Idaho, and Colorado. The ISU Paralegal Studies program is recognized to be perhaps the most rigorous and thorough in the state, and this trend of drawing students from beyond the region is expected to continue. We will continue to use available technology tools to work with students to complete the program successfully even if they cannot physically attend class every week.

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Electronic Discovery is a hot trend in litigation and paralegal training nationwide, and there are very few specialists in Idaho. There is an opportunity to develop a premier training program at ISU in this specialized area, for both paralegals and attorneys. As more individuals and businesses create and maintain their records electronically and using personal devices, it is important in litigation to be able to access relevant evidence electronically, as well as to protect privileges when using electronic document management systems. Paralegals are ideally suited for this type of specialization, because it combines the legal knowledge with high level technology skills. This program is studying the feasibility of developing an E-Discovery course and obtaining the technology tools necessary to give our students a marketplace advantage locally and nationwide.

In 2015, the Paralegal Studies program was invited to assist with the editing of the Idaho Family Law Handbook and Idaho Family Law Formbook. We selected two students to review all of the articles and to verify legal citations and internet hyperlinks, under the direct supervision of faculty. The updated Handbook and Formbook were published with success in October 2015, and the Idaho State Bar Family Law Section would like to continue this collaboration into the future. The Family Law Section contributed \$400 to the program to support this project in 2015, and it is anticipated they will continue to provide us with some financial support annually. This is a “win win” collaborative project, as it is an excellent “real world” project for our students, in addition to providing valuable networking opportunities with legal professionals.

ABA approval is considered a “gold standard” for accredited paralegal studies programs nationwide. Less than 300 of several thousand accredited paralegal studies programs have achieved this credential. It has been a goal of the program to obtain ABA approval since the program began, and our Faculty Advisory Committee continues to recommend we consider this option. It would benefit our graduates nationwide, but it is a costly process in terms of money and personnel time. We are still analyzing the costs/benefits of the ABA approval process, and we will have a firm recommendation whether or not to pursue this approval by April 2016. One concern that has been raised is whether one full time faculty/administrator would be enough to support the rigorous and year long ABA approval process.

2. Describe the quality of the program as assessed by the strengths, productivity, and qualifications of the faculty in terms of student credit hour (SCH), majors, graduates and scholarly productivity.

Last 3 Years	Faculty (Number)	PTE Certified Faculty (Number)	Instructional FTE (#)			Total SCH By FY from Su, Fl, Sp	Total Majors Non duplicated	Total Graduates Non duplicated
			F = Faculty	IA = Instructional Assistant	O = Other Instructional FTE			
			F	IA	O			
2012	1	0	1	0	0	541	31	9
2013	1	0	1	0	0	416	28	13
2014	1	0	1	0	0	461	23	7
Total Number Instructional (FTE)-TTF+GTA+O						SCH/FTE	Majors/FTE	Grads/FTE
Year 1					1	541	31	9
Year 2					1	416	28	13
Year 3					1	461	23	7

* Majors who are actively taking program courses

- a. Provide a brief assessment of the quality of the faculty/staff using the data from the table above as well as any additional relevant data. Programs should comment on details in regard to productivity of the faculty (i.e., some departments may have a few faculty producing the majority of the scholarship), efforts to recruit/retain faculty, departmental succession plans, course evaluation data, etc.

Provide assessment here:

Faculty members are active members of the Idaho State Bar, which requires verified attendance of a minimum 30 hours of continuing legal education, including ethics, every two years. Additionally, the faculty all have Juris Doctor Degrees, the equivalent of a doctoral degree. Although the faculty are not PTE Certified at this time, the full time faculty member has begun the application process to obtain the certification through traditional or alternative routes. The full time faculty member attends regional and national conferences sponsored by the American Bar Association and the American Association for Paralegal Educators (AAfPE) for coursework specific to paralegal education.

The full time faculty member and Program Coordinator has written several scholarly works, and is frequently invited to present Continuing Legal Education programs to attorneys and other professionals in the legal system throughout the state of Idaho. She has published work in The Advocate (Idaho State Bar monthly periodical) and the Idaho State Bar Family Law Handbook. She wrote an article about teaching professionalism to paralegal students for a professional journal, The Paralegal Educator, that was peer reviewed and selected as the cover story for the Spring 2015 issue. The Legal Research and Writing adjunct has also been asked to present CLE’s on legal writing and appellate advocacy to peers throughout the region. Our faculty are recognized as leaders in their fields of practice, with strong written and oral communication skills that are valued in the legal community.

3. Academic Program: Analyze the quality of the program as assessed by its curriculum and impact on students. Complete this section for the program.

- a. For undergraduate programs, compare TSA pass rates of the majors with the College as a whole.

Last 3 Years	Total Students in Program That Took TSA	Annual TSA Pass Rates	
		Program	All Programs
2012	5	100.0 %	88.1 %
2013	11	100.0 %	92.0 %
2014	8	100.0 %	90.7 %

- b. Identify the principal learning outcomes (i.e., what skills does your Program expect students to graduate with). Provide aggregate data on how students are meeting those outcomes. Data should relate to the goals and objectives of the program as listed in 1e. Provide an analysis and evaluation of the data by learner outcome with proposed actions based on the results.

In the following table provide program level information. You may add an appendix to provide more explanation/details. Definitions:

Learning Outcomes: Learning outcomes are statements that describe what students are expected to know and be able to do by the time of graduation. These relate to the skills, knowledge, and behaviors that students acquire in their matriculation through the program (e.g., graduates will demonstrate advanced writing ability).

Assessment Tool: One or more tools to identify, collect, and prepare data to evaluate the achievement of learning outcomes (e.g., a writing project evaluated by a rubric).

Criterion/Target: Percentage of program students expected to achieve the desired outcome for demonstrating program effectiveness (e.g., 90% of the students will demonstrate satisfactory performance on a writing project).

Result: Actual achievement on each learning outcome measurement (e.g., 95%).

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Analysis: Determines the extent to which learning outcomes are being achieved and leads to decisions and actions to improve the program. The analysis and evaluation should align with specific learning outcome and consider whether the measurement and/or criteria/target remain a valid indicator of the learning outcome as well as whether the learning outcomes need to be revised.

Learning Outcomes (most programs will have multiple outcomes)	Assessment Tool (e.g., portfolios, rubrics, exams)	Target/Criteria (desired program level achievement)	Results	Analysis
<p>Intro to Para Studies Para 110: Understand role of the paralegal in the delivery of legal services.</p> <p>Para 110</p>	<p>Quizzes, Midterm, Final exam; weekly independent research assignments reviewed in class; written practical (“real world”) assignments; guided group assignments; class discussion.</p>	<p>80%</p>	<p>89.3%</p>	<p>Every student who completes the required course work must earn at least a “C” (80%) or better as a final assessment in every class in order to stay in the program. Quizzes and exams are assessed with reference to an objective grading key, and graded written work is assessed with reference to an objective grading rubric that is shared with the students in advance. Non graded work is assessed by the instructor through oral and written feedback and a class participation grade. Percentages have been calculated with reference to grades achieved in the courses identified.</p>
<p>Intro to Para Studies Para 110; Law Office Management Para 121; Legal Research and Writing Para 122 & 222: Understand basic technical and substantive skills necessary to provide competent and ethical legal services</p>	<p>Quizzes, Midterm, Final exam; weekly independent research assignments reviewed in class; written practical (“real world”) assignments; guided group assignments;</p>	<p>80%</p>		

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<p>PARA 110 PARA 121 PARA 122 PARA 222</p>	<p>class discussion; successful completion of the AAfPE Exit Exam.</p>		<p>89.3% 87.1%% 86.9% 100%</p>	
<p>Intro to Para Studies Para 110; Law Office Management Para 121: Identify and describe the structure and proper operation of a law office, including calendaring; maintaining client property, files, and accounts; law firm record keeping; managing electronic files; managing billing and timekeeping; and law office accounting. PARA 110 PARA 121</p>	<p>Quizzes, Midterm, Final exams; weekly independent research assignments reviewed in class; written practical ("real world") assignments; guided group assignments; class discussion.</p>	<p>80%</p>	<p>89.3%% 87.1%</p>	
<p>Intro to Para Studies Para 110: Paralegal Internship Para 230: Prepare for a professional job search in the industry and continuing</p>	<p>Completion of a 135 hour internship program in a real legal services environment; completing</p>	<p>80%</p>		

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<p>professional development.</p> <p>PARA 110</p> <p>PARA 230</p>	<p>resumes and LinkedIn profiles at the beginning and at the end of the program; quizzes, midterms and finals; guided group discussions.</p>		<p>89.3%</p> <p>91.1%</p>	
<p>Intro to Para Studies Para 110; Ethics Para 111; Civil Litigation Para 232. Identify and apply the minimum mandatory ethical duties and the aspirational professional standards for legal professionals</p> <p>PARA 110</p> <p>PARA 111</p> <p>PARA 232</p>	<p>Quizzes, Midterm, Final exams; weekly independent research assignments reviewed in class; written practical (“real world”) assignments; guided group assignments; class discussion.</p>	<p>80%</p>	<p>89.3%</p> <p>87.6%</p> <p>93%</p>	
<p>Contract Law Para 113: Understand the principles and vocabulary related to the formation, defects in formation, performance, and remedies of contracts</p> <p>PARA 113</p>	<p>Quizzes, Midterm, Final exams; weekly independent research assignments reviewed in class; written practical (“real world”) assignments; guided group</p>	<p>80%</p>		

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	assignments; class discussion.		100%	
<p>Property Law Para 115: Understand the legal principles and vocabulary related to the practice of property law, including obtaining and transferring legal title to real property and personal property, and debt security, and all related legal documentation.</p> <p>PARA 115</p>	Quizzes, Midterm, Final exams; weekly independent research assignments reviewed in class; written practical (“real world”) assignments; guided group assignments; class discussion.	80%	91.5%	
<p>Tort Law Para 113: Understand the legal principles and vocabulary related to the practice of tort law, including the elements necessary to prove torts claims and legitimate defenses, and calculating damages available in tort actions; and policies behind the American tort system.</p> <p>PARA 113</p>	Quizzes, Midterm, Final exams; weekly independent research assignments reviewed in class; written practical (“real world”) assignments; guided group assignments; class discussion.	80%		

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			100%	
<p>Criminal Law and Procedure Para 117: Understand the principles and vocabulary related to criminal law practice, including the common elements of frequently encountered crimes;</p> <p>frequently encountered legal defenses; and constitutional rights applicable to criminal convictions; and the criminal process from investigation through all levels of appeal.</p> <p>PARA 117</p>	<p>Quizzes, Midterm, Final exams; weekly independent research assignments reviewed in class; written practical (“real world”) assignments; guided group assignments; class discussion.</p>	80%		
			83.04%	
<p>Legal Research & Writing, Para 122 & 222. Understand the basic elements of legal research and analysis, including where to locate primary and secondary legal source material to answer specific legal questions; and formulating logical, sound, and persuasive legal arguments.</p>		80%		

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<p>PARA 122 PARA 222</p>			<p>86.9% 100%</p>	
<p>Legal Research & Writing, Para 122 & 222. Apply the basics of the Uniform System of Citation by locating correct citation from a legal source and using it correctly in legal writing; Identify, describe, and apply the concepts of updating primary and secondary sources of law by using print materials and electronic resources PARA 122 PARA 222</p>	<p>Class discussion; Graded practical assignments; Guided group activities; Midterm and final examination writing</p>	<p>80%</p>	<p>86.9% 100%</p>	
<p>Civil Litigation Para 232. Understand the principles and vocabulary related to civil litigation practice, including locating and interpreting procedural law in state or federal court; formal and informal discovery; motions practice;</p>	<p>Quizzes, Midterm, Final exams; weekly independent research assignments reviewed in class; written practical (“real world”) assignments; guided group</p>	<p>80%</p>		

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<p>evidence admission and objections; case management and preparation of a trial notebook; trial presentation; witness preparation; jury instructions; post-judgment motions; and appeals and enforcement of the judgment.</p> <p>PARA 232</p>	<p>assignments; class discussion.</p>		<p>93%</p>	
<p>Civil Litigation Para 232. Model appropriate techniques for initial client contact; interviews of clients and witnesses; investigation and identification of claims and issues</p> <p>PARA 232</p>	<p>Quizzes, Midterm, Final exams; weekly independent research assignments reviewed in class; written practical (“real world”) assignments; guided group assignments; class discussion.</p>	<p>80%</p>	<p>93%</p>	
<p>Intro to Para Studies Para 110; Legal Research and Writing</p>	<p>Quizzes, Midterm, Final exams; weekly</p>	<p>80%</p>		

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<p>Para 122 & 222; Civil Litigation Para 232. Identify and describe the structure of the legal system at the local, state, and federal levels</p> <p>PARA 110</p> <p>PARA 122</p> <p>PARA 222</p> <p>PARA 232</p>	<p>independent research assignments reviewed in class; written practical (“real world”) assignments; guided group assignments; class discussion.</p>		<p>89.3%</p> <p>86.9%</p> <p>100%</p> <p>93%</p>	
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c. Provide aggregate data on student majors satisfaction (e.g., exit surveys), capstone results, licensing or certification examination results, employer surveys or other such data that indicate student satisfaction with the program and whether students are learning the curriculum (for learner outcomes, data should relate to the goals and objectives of the program as listed in 1e).

Student Satisfaction (e.g., exit survey data on overall program satisfaction).* If available, report by year, for the last 3 years			Learner Outcomes (e.g., capstone, licensing/certification exam pass-rates) by year, for the last three years				
Year	N	Result (e.g., 4.5 on scale of 1-5, where 5 highest)	Year		Name of Exam	Program Result	National Comparison ±
1		Majority of students rate the program overall as “superior” on the quality of classes and instructors and overall educational experience. Most students respond that Legal Research and Writing and/or Internship requirements provide the most practical real world knowledge.	1	4.52	TSA AAfPE Exit Exam	100%	
2		Majority of students rate the program overall as “superior” on the quality of classes and instructors and overall educational experience. Most students respond that Legal Research and Writing	2	4.73	TSA AAfPE Exit Exam	100%	

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		and/or Internship requirements provide the most practical real world knowledge.					
3		Majority of students rate the program overall as “superior” on the quality of classes and instructors and overall educational experience. Most students respond that Legal Research and Writing and/or Internship requirements provide the most practical real world knowledge.	3	4.53	TSA AAfPE Exit Exam	100%	

d. Provide aggregate data on how the general education goals are assessed in the program.

The General Education curricula for the AAS degree must contain a minimum of fifteen (15) credits, so distributed in the following areas: Written Communication (ENGL 1101) Oracle Communication (COMM 1101) Mathematical Ways of Knowing (Objective 3) Social and Behavioral Ways of Knowing (Objective 6) Institutionally-Designated Competency Areas (defined by program)	Results	
	The outcomes will be assessed on a 5 year rotating schedule by the sponsoring department. In the General Education Department, as part of the review process for each objective, the assessment instruments will be presented to the program review committee for review and discussion based on an identified rubric.	
	ENGL 1101	85%
	ENGL 1102	83%
	COMM 1101	74%
Objective 3 Mathematical Ways of Knowing	78%	

Note: Not all programs evaluate every goal/skill. Programs may choose to use assessment rubrics for this purpose.

For programs with tech prep courses, provide the assessment of such courses over the last three years (disaggregated by each year) that assures grading standards (e.g., papers, portfolios, quizzes, labs, etc.) course management, instructional delivery, and content meet or exceed those in regular on-campus sections.

Academic Year	Region 5 Enrollment	Fiscal Year	Articulated Credit	Entered Program	Other Majors
2012	0	2012	0	0	0
2013	0	2013	0	0	0
2014	0	2014	0	0	0

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Provide information here:

- e. Indicate whether the program is accredited by a specialty accrediting body including the next review date and concerns from the last review.

Provide information here: No specialized academic accrediting body reviews the Paralegal Studies program. The American Bar Association offers a voluntary approval process for paralegal studies programs of all types which is prestigious, but expensive to obtain. We are still analyzing the costs/benefits of pursuing this approval.

- f. Provide a brief assessment of the overall quality of the program using the data from 3a – 3f and other information you may collect, including outstanding student work (e.g., outstanding scholarship, inductions into honor organizations, publications, special awards, academic scholarships, student recruitment and retention).

Provide assessment here:

Our students have enjoyed a 100% pass rate on our Technical Skills Assessment, which is the American Association for Paralegal Educators (AAfPE) Model Exit Exam. It is a very challenging examination testing substantive knowledge on all required coursework in paralegal studies. We are the only paralegal studies program in Idaho that requires our students to pass a rigorous, comprehensive, and substantive exam at the completion of the program. It is a good indication that our students are retaining the legal knowledge they acquire in the program. Additionally, our students are highly demanded in the legal services market locally. Students have applied and qualified for a number of academic scholarships over the past three years, and one of the students, a former START student, was recognized as an outstanding College of Technology student in 2015.

4. Analyze the student need and employer demand for the program.

- a. Utilize the table below to provide data that demonstrates student need and demand for the program.

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Majors					Employment of Majors								
Last 3 FYs – Su, Fl, Sp	No. Who Enter The Program	Graduate Within One Year	No Enrolled One Year Later That Did Not Graduate	1 Year Attrition %	Total No Of Grads	Total No Of Additional Completions	Average Salary Full-time In The Field	Employed In State %	Employed Related To The Field	Employed % Outside The Field	Cont. Ed.	Projected Growth National	Projected Growth Idaho
2012	15	0	10	33.3 %	7	0	12	100.0 %	28.6 %	42.9 %	28.6 %	2011 - 2022	
2013	14	0	11	21.4 %	11	0	12.75	100.0 %	27.3 %	36.4 %	27.3 %		
2014	13	0	10	23.1 %	6	0	18.5	100.0 %	33.3 %	0.0 %	66.7 %	18.0 %	16.0 %

	Race/Ethnicity by Major Entering the Program									Employment of Majors								
	Non-resident Alien	Hispanic	American Indian Alaska Native	Asian	Black	Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander	Caucasian	Multi-race	Unknown	Non-resident Alien	Hispanic	American Indian Alaska Native	Asian	Black	Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander	Caucasian	Multi-race	Unknown
2012	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	6	0	0
2013	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	10	0	0
2014	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0

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Provide a brief assessment of student need and demand using the data from the table above. Include the most common types of positions, in terms of employment, graduates can expect to find.

Provide assessment here:

Paralegal Studies continues to enjoy high rates of enrollment, between 12-16 students a year, but we do have attrition. Approximately one quarter to one third of our students will not graduate in four semesters, and some change career goals midstream, or drop out due to family or personal circumstances. There are a number of students who continue their education with a baccalaureate degree, and those numbers are not reflected above. This chart represents a “snapshot” of what students reported a few months after graduation. Better follow up data would be useful.

Students admitted to the Paralegal Studies program are representative of the Idaho population in general. They are predominately white with occasional multi-race students being enrolled. Most of the students are female, but have had one or two male students enroll every year. Efforts will continue to be made to enhance the cultural, racial, and gender identity diversity of the program’s student body going forward.

Salaries reflected in this chart are consistent with economic forces in the market. It has taken several years for the legal services market to recover from the 2008-2010 recession. Salaries and placement should continue to rise as the labor market recovers. According the Bureau of Labor Statistics, paralegals locally start with a salary of approximately \$13.50/hour. That is consistent with anecdotal experience from attorneys and paralegals in the local market. One of the goals of the program is to track graduates over longer periods of time to make some objective assessment of the market value of the paralegal studies degree.

5. Analyze the revenue, cost and resources of the program. Indicators may include tuition and fees, local fund revenue, grant funding, donations, expenditures, etc.

- a. Provide a brief assessment of the revenue, cost, and resources of the program.

Tuition and fees are generated by enrollment of Paralegal Studies students. Some fees are assessed to students to help pay for high quality legal research software. A local account as been set up for the program for donations and miscellaneous income items. This account does not see significant activity. The program does not receive any grant funding. The Paralegal Studies program is a relatively inexpensive program to run. It is lean; most of the costs are for personnel. Fortunately many attorneys enjoy teaching and are willing to serve as adjuncts for a low cost. The Paralegal Studies program for the past three years has produced significant and high quality credit hours for a relatively low amount compared to other programs in the College.

Appendix 3. Paralegal Program Review Report

- b. Provide a brief assessment of the facilities, equipment, and maintenance needs.

The classrooms and computer labs are adequate for current needs. We are exploring the possibility of adding legal technology classes to the curriculum, and if that occurs we would need to invest in additional specialty software accessible by the students. This is in very preliminary stages.

- c. Describe the budget planning and decision making processes including how fiscal priorities are established.

Short term and long term budget needs are discussed during weekly meetings with the Department Chair. We operate within the budget for the current fiscal year, and plan ahead with the Program Coordinator and Department Chair for extraordinary future expenses. For the past three years, we have had sufficient resources to meet our needs using this method.

- d. Library Resources:

Are holdings appropriately aligned with curricula needs? What is the role of library resources in teaching and research?

Students pay for access to a high quality legal library and search tool, WestlawNext. We additionally maintain a largely out of date print law library in the Roy F. Christensen Building, Room 263; as well as at Oboler Library. The trend nationwide is to abandon maintenance of print materials in favor of electronic providers, which are kept current and provide ease of use. Providing access and training in WestlawNext is consistent with this trend. Citation form remains the same between print material and electronic material, so we continue to teach our students how to navigate the print materials before transitioning to the electronic materials. Understanding the proper use of print and electronic law libraries is a key learning objective for our students.

6. Report on the Program’s goal (s) from the last review. List the goal (s), data that may have been collected to support the goal, and the outcome.

(For Last 3 FYs)	Goal (s)	Assessment Data Analyzed	Outcome
N/A	This is the first self study.		

7. Summary and Recommendations

- a. Set forth a summary of the report including an overview evaluating the strengths and concerns. List recommendations for Program improvement that have resulted from this

report (relate recommendations back to information provided in any of the categories and to the goals and objectives of the program as listed in 1e). Identify three year goal (s) for the Program to be accomplished in time for the next review.

Provide assessment here:

Strengths: The program continues to attract high quality professionals to teach the courses and to help students understand the “real world” of providing legal services in the community. A pass rate of 100 percent on the AAFPE Exit Exam is a good indicator that our students are learning the legal foundations they will need to have a successful career in this field. The instructors stay current on legal and technology trends in the industry, and they share that knowledge with students to make sure they are market ready upon graduation. The instructors are dedicated to teaching Paralegal Studies students all aspects of professionalism, including outstanding oral and written communication skills; analytical skills; critical thinking skills; resourcefulness; reliability; and organization.

Concerns: The largest concern is the personnel investment in the program. The program could benefit from the addition of more technology based courses, but with one full time instructor who also administers the program, this may not be realistic without hiring additional adjunct or part time support. Although the Paralegal Studies curriculum is designed to meet or exceed the approval requirements of the American Bar Association, it is likely that our long term follow up of our student placement and salaries would be considered a significant weakness. The data we have is inadequate to draw firm objectively based conclusions about the value of a paralegal studies degree in this community. Additionally, the ABA might be concerned that maintaining a quality legal education with only one full time employee will not be sustainable over time.

Goals:

1. Develop additional required legal technology course work for the core curriculum.
2. Develop effective tracking mechanisms for graduates of the programs to determine long term career placement and salaries available. Recommend semi-annual contact with alumni and maintenance of that data.
3. Develop continuing professional development options for alumni through this program, including offering CLE’s or specialty refresher course work.
4. Explore fully cost/benefit analysis of ABA approval with Faculty Advisory Committee and set specific goals.
5. Enhance budget to provide for at least one additional part time instructor or administrator to support these goals.