

American Bar Association  
Standing Committee on Paralegals  
321 North Clark Street  
Mail Stop 19.1  
Chicago, Illinois 60654-7598

APPLICATION FOR REAPPROVAL OF  
PARALEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

**Institution Name:** ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE

**Program Name:** Paralegal Studies Program

**Address:** 2465 Drew Street

**City:** Clearwater      **State:** FL      **Zip:** 33765

**Telephone Number:** (727) 791-2557

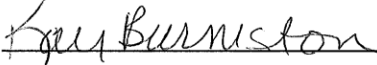
**Fax Number:** (727) 791 - 5925

**Institution Website URL:** www.spcollege.edu

**Program Website URL:** <http://www.spcollege.edu/clw/business/paralegal/index.htm>

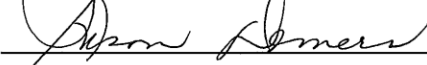
We hereby certify that the information and materials contained in this report and supporting exhibits is complete and accurate to the best of our knowledge.

**Institution President or Dean:** Kay Burniston, Vice President

**Signature:**  \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Director:** Susan S. Demers

**E-Mail Address of Program Director:** demers.susan@spcollege.edu

**Signature:**  \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Submitted:** June 11, 2010

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Produced by the Standing Committee on Paralegals

Revised 10/22/2010

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**American Bar Association  
Standing Committee on Paralegals**

**UNIFORM TABLE OF EXHIBITS**

Include only the exhibits listed and identify with the specified number. If an exhibit does not apply to the program, indicate that it is not applicable. Exhibits marked \* must be provided in the format shown.

Exhibit 1	Enrollment Chart/Students by Program Option*
Exhibit 2	Number of Graduates by Program Option*
Exhibit 3	Organization Chart(s)
Exhibit 4	Advisory Committee Members*
Exhibit 5	Advisory Committee Guidelines or Procedures
Exhibit 6	Advisory Committee Minutes
Exhibit 7	Advertisements and Announcements to Recruit Faculty
Exhibit 8	Composition of Paralegal Program Faculty by Gender and Ethnic Background*
Exhibit 9	Expenditures and Budgets*
Exhibit 10	Assessment Plan/Analysis & Summary of Assessment Results
Exhibit 11	Curriculum for Each Program Option*
Exhibit 12	Exemptions from General Education and Total Unit Requirements*
Exhibit 13	List of Legal Specialty Courses by Term*
Exhibit 14	Legal Specialty Course Information Sheet*
Exhibit 15	Information on Courses Offered in Alternative Formats (if applicable)*
Exhibit 16	Assessment Results for Courses Offered in Alternative Formats (if applicable)
Exhibit 17	Resumes of Persons with Responsibilities for Program Direction
Exhibit 18	Faculty Participation in Professional Development*
Exhibit 19	Faculty Meeting Minutes
Exhibit 20	List of Faculty Members*
Exhibit 21	Resumes of Faculty Members
Exhibit 22	All Promotional Material used by Program
Exhibit 23	Employment and Continuing Education Information on Graduates*
Exhibit 24	Promotional Material for Continuing Education Courses (if applicable)
Exhibit 25	Written Agreement with External Library (if applicable)
Exhibit 26	Inventory of Required Library Resources

**American Bar Association  
Standing Committee on Paralegals**

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**SECTION I**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

G-101 through G-107

A. Name of the Program: St. Petersburg College Paralegal Studies Program

B. 1. Please check the name of the accrediting agency by which the institution is accredited:

- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- Western Association of Schools and Colleges
- Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology
- Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools
- Council on Occupational Education
- New York State Board of Regents

**(G-302(c))**

2. Please indicate the date of the most recent reaffirmation of accreditation.

The Commission on Colleges reaffirmed accreditation in June 2008. The college has been continuously accredited since 1931.

3. Please indicate the current status of the institution's accreditation.

This most recent accreditation remains in effect.

***Note: If there is a change in the institution's accrediting agency or in the status of the institution's accreditation at any time during the period of reapproval, the program must notify the Standing Committee on Paralegals immediately by submitting the Substantive Change Form for Accreditation Status, which can be found on the website for the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Paralegals, <http://www.abaparalegals.org>.***

C. Program Options:

1. Please complete the following for each program option in paralegal studies offered by the institution. (Note: "Program option is defined in G-103.A).

<b>Type of Program Option</b> <i>(i.e., BA/BS; AAS/AA/AS; MA/MS; Certificate [Specify type, such as post-baccalaureate]; Minor, etc.)</i>	<b>Name of Program Option</b> <i>(i.e., Paralegal Studies, Legal Studies, Nurse Paralegal, Legal Nurse Consultant, etc.)</i>	<b>Date Students First Admitted To Option</b>	<b>Date Option Approved by ABA</b> <i>(If not approved as part of your initial approval)</i>
<b>Associate in Science</b>	<b>Paralegal Studies</b>	<b>August 1979</b>	<b>February 2004</b>
<b>Bachelor of Applied Science</b>	<b>Paralegal Studies</b>	<b>January 2006</b>	<b>January 2006</b>
<b>Post-baccalaureate certificate</b>	<b>Paralegal Studies</b>	<b>January 2007</b>	<b>January 2007</b>

Note: Add additional rows as needed.

2. Did you notify the Standing Committee on Paralegals in advance of offering any new program options or ceasing to offer an approved program option?

Yes

3. Complete Exhibit 1, showing the number of students enrolled in each program option listed in item C.1 for the past four years.
4. Complete Exhibit 2, showing the number of graduates in each program option listed in item C.1 for the past seven years.
5. Does the program offer a minor which it does not consider a program option? If so, how do you demonstrate that the minor should not be considered a program option?

The program does not offer a minor in Paralegal Studies.

D. Location of the Program:

1. Are legal specialty courses offered at locations other than the main campus of the institution? If so, please provide the following information:

- a. The addresses of all other locations and the distance from the main campus.

St. Petersburg College  
Clearwater Campus  
2465 Drew Street  
Clearwater, FL

[ Main campus for the Paralegal Studies Program]

Health Education Center  
7200 66 th Street North  
St. Petersburg, FL

9.33 miles from the Clearwater Campus

St. Petersburg/Gibbs Campus  
6605 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North  
St. Petersburg, FL

13.54 miles from the Clearwater Campus

- b. For each location, provide a list of all legal specialty courses offered there for each of the past four years.

#### Clearwater Campus

2006-2007

PLA 1003 Intro to Paralegalism, PLA 1104 Legal Research and Writing, PLA 1361, Interview and Investigation, PLA 1730 Computer-Aided Legal Research, PLA 1763 Law Office Management, PLA 2203 Civil Litigation I, PLA 2223 Civil Litigation II, PLA 2303 Criminal Litigation I, PLA 2433 Business Organizations, PLA 2610 Real Estate Transactions, PLA 2940 Paralegal Studies Seminar and Work Experience, PLA 3700 Professional Responsibility Seminar, PLA 3723 Logic and the Law, PLA 3732 Computers and the Law Office, PLA 3873 Securities Law, PLA 3880 United States Constitutional Law, PLA 4116 Legal Writing Seminar, PLA 4830 Comparative Legal Systems, PLA 4941 Paralegal Studies Capstone

2007- 2008

PLA 1003 Intro to Paralegalism, PLA 1104 Legal Research and Writing, PLA 1361 Interview and Investigation, PLA 1763 Law Office Management, PLA 2203 Civil Litigation I, PLA 2223 Civil Litigation II, PLA 2433 Business Organizations, PLA 2610 Real Estate Transactions, PLA 2940 Paralegal Studies Seminar and Work Experience, PLA 3240 Alternative Dispute Resolution, PLA 3410 Intellectual Property Law, PLA 3474 Labor and Employment Law, PLA 3563 Insurance Law, PLA 3700 Professional Responsibility Seminar, PLA 3723 Logic and the Law, PLA 3732 Computers and the Law Office, PLA 3873 Securities Law, PLA 3880 United States Constitutional Law, PLA 4116 Legal Writing Seminar, PLA 4827 Sports and Entertainment Law, PLA 4830 Comparative Legal Systems, PLA 4941 Paralegal Studies Capstone

2008-2009

PLA 1003 Intro to Paralegalism, PLA 1104 Legal Research and Writing, PLA 1361 Interview and Investigation, PLA 1763 Law Office Management, PLA 2203 Civil

Litigation I, PLA 2223 Civil Litigation II, PLA 2433 Business Organizations, PLA 2610 Real Estate Transactions, PLA 2940 Paralegal Studies Seminar and Work Experience, PLA 3240 Alternative Dispute Resolution, PLA 3474 Labor and Employment Law, PLA 3467 Bankruptcy, PLA 3563 Insurance Law, PLA 3700 Professional Responsibility Seminar, PLA 3723 Logic and the Law, PLA 3732 Computers and the Law Office, PLA 3873 Securities Law, PLA 3880 United States Constitutional Law, PLA 4116 Legal Writing Seminar, PLA 4275 Tort and Personal Injury Law, PLA 4522 Health Care Law, PLA 4554 Environmental Law, PLA 4827 Sports and Entertainment Law, PLA 4830 Comparative Legal Systems, PLA 4873 Immigration Law, PLA 4941 Paralegal Studies Capstone, PLA 4949 Paralegal Studies Certificate Capstone

2009-2010

PLA 1003 Intro to Paralegalism, PLA 1104 Legal Research and Writing, PLA 1361 Interview and Investigation, PLA 1763 Law Office Management, PLA 2114 Advanced Legal Research and Writing, PLA 2203 Civil Litigation I, PLA 2223 Civil Litigation II, PLA 2433 Business Organizations, PLA 2610 Real Estate Transactions, PLA 2940 Paralegal Studies Seminar and Work Experience, PLA 3240 Alternative Dispute Resolution, PLA 3304 Criminal Law and Procedure, PLA 3474 Labor and Employment Law, PLA 3467 Bankruptcy, PLA 3563 Insurance Law, PLA 3700 Professional Responsibility Seminar, PLA 3723 Logic and the Law, PLA 3732 Computers and the Law Office, PLA 3873 Securities Law, PLA 3880 United States Constitutional Law, PLA 4116 Legal Writing Seminar, PLA 4263 Evidence Law, PLA 4275 Tort and Personal Injury Law, PLA 4522 Health Care Law, PLA 4554 Environmental Law, PLA 4613 Real Property Law, PLA 4806 Family Law, PLA 4827 Sports and Entertainment Law, PLA 4830 Comparative Legal Systems, PLA 4843 Immigration Law, PLA 4876 Animal Law, PLA 4941 Paralegal Studies Capstone, PLA 4944 Paralegal Studies Cooperative Work Experience, PLA 4949 Paralegal Studies Certificate Capstone

Health Education Center

2006-2007

PLA 1003 Introduction to Paralegalism, PLA 1104 Legal Research and Writing, PLA 1361 Interview and Investigation, PLA 1730 Computer Aided Legal Research, PLA 1763 Law Office Management, PLA 2114 Advanced Legal Research and Writing, PLA 2203 Civil Litigation I, PLA 2223 Civil Litigation II, PLA 2303 Criminal Litigation I, PLA 2323 Criminal Litigation II, PLA 2601 Probate and Estate Planning, PLA 2603 Guardianship and Elder Law, PLA 2610 Real Estate Transactions, PLA 2800 Family Law I, PLA 2801 Family Law II, PLA 2940 Paralegal Studies Seminar and Work Experience

2007-2008

PLA 1003 Introduction to Paralegalism, PLA 1104 Legal Research and Writing, PLA 1361 Interview and Investigation, PLA 1730 Computer Aided Legal Research, PLA 1763 Law Office Management, PLA 2114 Advanced Legal Research and Writing, PLA 2203 Civil Litigation I, PLA 2223 Civil Litigation II, PLA 2303 Criminal Litigation I, PLA 2323 Criminal Litigation II, PLA 2601 Probate and Estate Planning, PLA 2603 Guardianship and Elder Law, PLA 2610 Real Estate Transactions, PLA 2800 Family Law I, PLA 2801 Family Law II, PLA 2940 Paralegal Studies Seminar and Work Experience

2008-2009

PLA 1003 Introduction to Paralegalism, PLA 1104 Legal Research and Writing, PLA 1361 Interview and Investigation, PLA 1730 Computer Aided Legal Research, PLA 1763 Law Office Management, PLA 2114 Advanced Legal Research and Writing, PLA 2203 Civil Litigation I, PLA 2223 Civil Litigation II, PLA 2303 Criminal Litigation I, PLA 2323 Criminal Litigation II, PLA 2601 Probate and Estate Planning, PLA 2603 Guardianship and Elder Law, PLA 2610 Real Estate Transactions, PLA 2800 Family Law I, PLA 2801 Family Law II, PLA 2940 Paralegal Studies Seminar and Work Experience

2009-2010

PLA 1361 Interview and Investigation, PLA 1730 Computer Aided Legal Research, PLA 1763 Law Office Management, PLA 2114 Advanced Legal Research and Writing, PLA 2203 Civil Litigation I, PLA 2223 Civil Litigation II, PLA 2303 Criminal Litigation I, PLA 2323 Criminal Litigation II, PLA 2601 Probate and Estate Planning, PLA 2603 Guardianship and Elder Law, PLA 2610 Real Estate Transactions, PLA 2800 Family Law I, PLA 2801 Family Law II, PLA 2940 Paralegal Studies Seminar and Work Experience

St. Petersburg/Gibbs Campus

2006-2007

PLA 1003 Introduction to Paralegalism

2007-2008

PLA 1003 Introduction to Paralegalism

2008-2009

PLA 1003 Introduction to Paralegalism

2009-2010

PLA 1003 Introduction to Paralegalism

2. Did you notify the Standing Committee on Paralegals in advance of offering courses at a new or additional location? ***If not, while continuing to complete this reapproval application, go to the website for the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Paralegals (<http://www.abaparalegals.org>) and complete the Substantive Change Form for New or Additional Locations. This form must be submitted immediately. Do not submit this form as part of this reapproval application.***

**(G-104.N)**

- E. Does the institution offer any programs for the education of paralegals, as defined in G-103 of the Guidelines, which are not included in this report? If so, describe and explain.  
**(G-106.A)**

The only programs for the education of paralegals offered by St. Petersburg College are those offered by this department and included in this report.

- F. State verbatim each recommendation and compliance issue from the site team report of your last site visit and from any related follow-up visits. After each recommendation and compliance issue state the actions that the program has taken to address each issue.

Site team comments are in italics. The college response is in bold.

*The team found the following area of noncompliance at the time of the site visit:*

1. *The Program has had a small dedicated core of advisory committee members, but a full representation of the committee has not been reflected in the committee attendance. At the time of the site visit only two members were present who did not have an employment link with the College. A review of the minutes for the past few years shows a similar attendance pattern. The Program Director has undertaken an advisory committee review initiative, and has added new members to the committee. The recommended deferral period should provide the College with the timeline to build the committee to the true advisory committee status set forth in G-203.*

**Although the recommendation of the site team was to defer, the Commission granted approval to the program in February of 2004.**

**To address the site team's concerns, a number of new members have been added to the committee and attendance at meetings has substantially improved although this remains a continual challenge. The Advisory Committee was used as one of the principal resources in the development of the new four year BAS program option as well as in the development of the post-baccalaureate certificate program. This process gave focus and purpose to the group and seemed to energize the Committee as a whole.**



**Meetings have been held regularly and the College as a whole has placed a renewed emphasis on the contributions of advisory committees in program development and administration. For two years the college held large conference meetings including the members of all advisory committees. These included group instruction in the role of the advisory committee as well testimonials from students. The meetings then broke up into individual advisory committees.**

*The following recommendations do not go to program deficiencies, but rather are offered to further strengthen and enhance the program. The site team makes the following recommendations:*

1. *The College should continue its efforts to provide complete and accurate statistical reporting. The College has recently moved to a new data management system. The team encourages the College to stay committed to its efforts to make that new data management system responsive to the specific needs of the Legal Assisting Program. (G-201).*

**The College has added several new employees to the Institutional Research office which collects data and they have worked closely with the program director to solve some of the issues involving the tracking of students which were of particular concern.**

**With the addition of the four year programs, the program has additional resources at its disposal including personnel dedicated to developing, monitoring and improving measurable goals.**

2. *To realistically reflect the level of practical skills and ethics training being provided by the program, course syllabi must be drafted accordingly. (G-301)*

**The Program Director has worked with faculty members to help them expand their syllabi to more accurately reflect the nature of the work accomplished in the classes. One faculty meeting devoted a period to the development of effective and complete syllabi.**

3. *To adequately reflect the depth of legal specialty courses, syllabi must provide a more complete description of the areas covered by each class session, not just the listing of text chapter headings and/or generic content coverage area headings. (G-301)*

**See response to previous recommendation.**

4. *In the process of curriculum review, the College should remain committed to its efforts to ensure that the depth of instruction in law office technology in its legal specialty required course roster is on target with the demands of the paralegal profession. (G-301)*

**Students are advised at the orientation and repeatedly in the Intro course that skill in dealing with law office technology is a threshold employability skill. Law Office Management is required in all programs. This course includes a substantial component on the uses and applications of technology in the law office. The four year program includes a specific course in Technology in the Law Office. Throughout the program, technologies which are utilized in the law office are illustrated. PowerPoint is required in the litigation class and charting via Smart Draw is required in Logic and the Law.**

5. *The program should develop a more expansive plan for evaluation, review, and improvement of the program through the employer survey process. (G-301 E)*

**A new online employer tool has been created. The prototype of this tool was used for the feasibility study for the new four year degree and is currently being utilized for the spring employer survey. This tool works in conjunction with the online student portfolio which allows employers to view student work via the internet.**

**For the past two years an employer focus group was used to determine the particular knowledge, skills, and technologies employers expect or wish students to have acquired as a result of their education. Several office managers from downtown St. Petersburg law firms participated in the process. As a direct result, the program will begin offering courses at the college's downtown St. Petersburg campus. (A separate substantial change submission is forthcoming.)**

6. *The College should continue to provide the necessary resources for regular attendance at seminars, conferences, and/or workshops designed for paralegal education. (G-401)*

**The College has continued to support membership and participation in a number of legal and paralegal organizations, including membership and participation in AAFPE. With the advent of the four year program and increased enrollment the College has expanded this support. Additionally, the College allowed the Program Director to participate as a member of the Florida Bar President's Special Commission on Paralegal Regulation which required a large amount of time and energy. The result of the Commission's work was Florida Bar Rule 20 which created the new voluntary paralegal registration program entitled Florida Registered Paralegal Program. This has created a large range of new resources from which the program may draw and facilitated relationships with paralegal educators throughout the country.**

7. *The College must remain diligent in its efforts to document faculty meetings. (G-401 H)*

8. *The College should increase its efforts to ensure and document that all faculty members demonstrate a commitment to his or her continued professional growth as a teacher. (G-401 G)*

**The college has recently instituted a comprehensive adjunct quality enhancement program. This program requires that all new adjuncts take an online course focusing on the college, its goals and resources as well as how to succeed in the classroom. Adjuncts will continue to be evaluated annually but in addition, the College will archive data on continuing education. The college has a number of program development activities which are available to adjuncts as well as full time instructors dealing with classroom technology and the Angel learning management system.**

**As a part of the College's re-approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the College selected as its Quality Enhancement Program a focus on Critical Thinking. This program has been rolled out college-wide and includes the development of a Critical Thinking measurement tool, evaluation rubrics and academics materials to be used as resources. Dr. Christy Powers served as the Faculty Champion for the paralegal Studies Program. This involved a program-wide project utilizing a case brief and its evaluation to improve student critical thinking skills. Faculty workshops were conducted on this and Dr. Powers continues to mentor Paralegal Studies adjuncts as the project cycles through the program.**

9. *As faculty openings occur, the program should continue its efforts to recruit a diverse faculty to more accurately conform to student population ratios. The College should also continue to bring diversity to the program through guest lecturers and speakers. (G-403)*

**New hires have added diversity to the program faculty as the statistics included later reveal. Additionally, the program co-sponsors with local bar associations a variety of public lectures on campus which are available to students. The lecturers at these programs, as well as classroom guest speakers, are widely diverse.**

10. *The College should remain diligent in its efforts to ensure that student services are being provided to adequately reflect the time schedule of the predominately evening-based student population of the Legal Assisting Program. (G-502)*

**The college has devoted considerable resources to the development of 24 hour a day online resources. That is, counselors and librarians who are available via email. The college campuses are open two nights a week year round to provide services for the evening student. In the enrollment period for every semester, counselors, advisors and the Associate Provost are available four nights a week until seven as well as the Saturday before classes begin. During the first week of classes, the counseling department adheres to this same schedule.**

**Students can apply to the college, complete the interactive student orientation, and practice the required placement test, all online. A cyber-advisor is available for counseling on weekends and evenings.**

**Student activities offer leadership training programs, evening meals and conferences in the evenings and on weekends.**

**Work Net Pinellas, the local public job services program, has a representative on campus four days a week as well as two evenings.**

## **SECTION II**

### **ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

G-201 through G-206

- A. State the specific goals and explicit objectives of the program. Indicate where these goals and objectives are published, e.g., college catalog, program brochures, websites, etc. (**G-201.A**)

#### **TWO YEAR GOALS**

Stated goals for the two year degree program are:

1. The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze a problem; identify and evaluate alternative solutions; formulate logical solutions to problems; construct logical arguments in support of specific positions; evaluate solutions and arguments; and determine which areas of law are relevant to a particular situation. (Critical Thinking)
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to organize and manage information effectively and the ability to manage time efficiently.(Organizational)
3. The student will demonstrate the ability to interact effectively, in person, by telephone and in written correspondence with lawyers, clients, witnesses, court personnel, co-workers, and other business professionals. (Communication)
4. The student will demonstrate the ability to competently use the tools of research available in a standard law library, "cite check" the legal sources, run a computer assisted legal research program, and incorporate the results of the research into a proper memorandum format. (Legal Research)
5. The student will demonstrate the ability to write various types of documents, correspondence, pleadings, memoranda, and briefs. (Legal Writing)

6. The student will demonstrate the ability to deal with a basic word processing program, a spreadsheet program, and a database as well as presentation software; the student will apply these to solving organizational and management issues in the office setting. (Computer and Law Office Management)
7. The student will demonstrate basic interview and investigating skills including identifying and locating witnesses, potential parties to a suit and experts; preparing for and conducting effective interviews, locating information and obtaining records and using the Internet to obtain relevant and reliable information pertaining to a given situation. (Interview and Investigation)
8. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the types of work paralegals/legal assistants perform, the nature of supervision that must be present, the manner in which their conduct is directed by the ethical guidelines of the American Bar Association, the Florida Bar and the ethical guidelines

Each student in the program is directed to begin a portfolio in the Introduction to Paralegalism course which documents the acquisition of skills and knowledge. The online portfolio handbook articulates these goals which are referred to throughout the program. The website prominently mentions these goals which are those measured in the End of Program Assessment process.

#### FOUR YEAR GOALS

The Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee was commissioned to assist in the formulation of goals for the bachelor's degree program. An additional focus group which had some extensive knowledge of our two year degree program directed inquiry into the question of what additional knowledge or skills are necessary in a four year degree graduate in Paralegal Studies.

The two year goals, developed from the American Association for Paralegal Education Core Competencies, were agreed to compose the professional goals. A four year graduate should possess additional qualities and skills. To that end while students document the basic paralegal core competencies in their portfolio, the four year program goals are stated differently:

1. To develop advanced critical thinking and analytical skills needed to effectively problem solve.
2. To enhance the appropriate use of communication skills within and outside the legal system.
3. To develop the technical skills needed to succeed in the legal profession.
4. To develop students' ability to deliver legal services in a culturally and locally appropriate manner.

5. To provide students' with an advanced knowledge and understanding of the American legal system.

The degree to which the program has succeeded is measured in the Capstone class which the student takes in their final semester.

#### POST-BACCALAUREATE CERTIFICATE GOALS

The goals for the much shorter certificate program are more condensed:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the paralegal profession and its place in the larger American legal system.
2. To develop a working knowledge of basic legal theory and its application in the state of Florida.
3. Prepare students to sit for the Certified Paralegal/Certified Legal Assisting Examination administered by the National Association of Legal Assistants.

Once again the program goals were developed with the assistance of our advisory committee who as a group has come to an increasing appreciation of the value of program initiated by the Florida Bar.) To that end the capstone in this program is a CLA preparation course and the end of program assessment is the mock exam result.

All goals are disseminated in the Intro class when students are first introduced to the portfolio concept and reinforced with additional portfolio workshops conducted by the Paralegal Society throughout the year. Goals are published on the college website, on the student commons (PLA Commons) and distributed to students as a part of the portfolio guide used in the capstone classes PLA 2940, PLA 4941 and PLA 4944.

- B. Provide an organizational chart showing (1) the academic unit within the institution where the paralegal program is situated; (2) the title of the person to whom the program director reports; and (3) where the program fits within the structure of the institution. Include the chart as Exhibit 3 and highlight the placement of the paralegal program. (**G-201.B - E**)

***Note: If there has been a change in the organizational structure involving the paralegal program which the Standing Committee on Paralegals was not notified of in advance, while continuing to complete this reapproval application go to the website for the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Paralegals (<http://www.abaparalegals.org>) and complete the Substantive Change Form for Organizational Changes Involving the Paralegal Program. This form must be submitted immediately. Do not submit this form as part of this reapproval application.***

- C. Provide information on the advisory committee:

1. Complete Exhibit 4, showing the members of the paralegal program's advisory committee.
2. Include as Exhibit 5 copies of any written guidelines or procedures governing advisory committee activities.

The Advisory Committee Handbook is included as Exhibit 5. In addition the college has a webpage which is devoted to the work of the advisory committees which can be found at: <http://www.spcollege.edu/epicenter/advisory/>

3. How are advisory committee members appointed? What are the appointment terms?

The college president appoints advisory committee members annually for one year terms after seeking input from the department and the college's workforce development staff. The College's EA/EO officer then reviews to insure that the committee meets the College's diversity goals.

4. If the committee has any subcommittees, indicate the specific areas of responsibility, the names of current members, and how often they meet.

The committee does not operate with subcommittees.

5. List below the dates of each advisory committee meeting and any subcommittee meetings held during the past four years. Include as Exhibit 6 copies of the minutes of these meetings. The minutes must include the dates of the meetings, the names of those in attendance, and a record of substantive discussions.

Advisory committee meetings were held:

10/19/06; 3/22/07; 10/2/07; 3/21/08; 10/16/08; 2/26/09; 10/15/09; 4/8/10

Minutes are included as Exhibit 6.

**(G-203)**

- D. Describe the procedures by which the institution maintains equality of opportunity and seeks to avoid prohibited discrimination regarding the treatment of personnel and students.

Equality of opportunity is deeply embedded in the culture of St. Petersburg College. While today the school is considered part of the Florida State College system, the college's roots are in the community college system with its open door policy. The

college has a deeply committed developmental faculty, learning resource centers on every campus, specialized student support programs including those for at-risk students, returning homemakers, students with disabilities and veterans.

Messages about equality abound throughout the college, from the choice of students depicted on marketing materials to flyers announcing support services for those who might need them in the registration area.

The college regularly conducts trainings on these topics. Some are included in the mandatory orientation for new faculty, some in annual faculty enhancement activities, some through the college website.

1. Where does the institution publish its non-discrimination policy or affirmative action plan relating to students and personnel?

The printed college catalog includes these statements. Since more students today rely on the college website and online catalog for their information, these statements are included on the website in several places. The general nondiscrimination statement is linked via a footer on the homepage.

The college's Board of Trustees has promulgated a rule articulating the College's nondiscrimination policy. The Board Rules and Procedures Manual are maintained and revised, as needed, by the College Attorney and Human Resources Director, and is maintained by the Human Resources Office. They are available to members of the College and the general public in the Office of the General Counsel and the administrative offices of each campus. They are also published on the College Web site.

There is a statement via the employment page:  
<http://www.spcollege.edu/Central/hr/jobopenings.php>

2. Where does the institution publish its policy or procedures for the accommodation of students and personnel with disabilities?

The college's Board of Trustees has promulgated a rule articulating the nondiscrimination policy. The Board Rules and Procedures Manual are maintained and revised, as needed, by the College Attorney and Human Resources Director, and is maintained by the Human Resources Office. They are available to members of the College and the general public in the Office of the General Counsel and the administrative offices of each campus

The college offers students a range of Disability resources including learning specialists who counsel students in coping with their disabilities in addition to conducting academic advising. Assistive technology specialists have developed and administer a wide range of assistive technology and auxiliary aids.



Students are advised of these resources in a mandatory syllabus addendum which is distributed to every class at St. Petersburg College. New students go through a mandatory initial orientation online and the Office of Students with Disabilities website is directly linked in this orientation. New freshmen are advised into one of the many sections of Student Success Skills and that class features a number of speakers from the Office of Students with Disabilities. There is an active disabilities community on campus which conducts disability awareness events on campus.

The MAP center (My SPC Answer Place) registers students for classes. This center has a full range of assistive technologies.

Here is the web address for Disabilities Resources  
<http://www.spcollege.edu/central/ossed/index.htm>

3. What methods are used to encourage diversity in the student body of the paralegal program?

The program has close relationships with Student Activities and Student Support Services, the college's minority mentoring program. Program personnel are often guest speakers in the mandatory College Success Skills classes. The Dean (program director) is the founder and co-chair of the Clearwater Bar Association's Student Legal Intern Program, a program aimed at introducing minority high school students to legal professions. The program has a long standing relationship with the local minority bar association. Paralegal students are frequent volunteers at public service events in minority communities which increases community awareness of the opportunities the program presents.

4. Complete the following chart with respect to the ethnicity and gender of the paralegal students in each of the last four years.

Year	% of Minority Students	% of Female Students	% of Male Students
2006-7	23.5%	85.3%	14.7%
2007-8	23.6%	82.6%	17.4%
2008-9	24.8%	84%	16%
2009-10	25.7%	84.2%	15.8%

NOTE: 2009 Census projection for non-white population in Pinellas County is 17.4%.

5. What methods are used to encourage diversity in the faculty of the paralegal program? Please include the steps taken to recruit and retain a diverse faculty. If written advertisements and/or announcements are used, include copies as Exhibit 7.

The Dean (program director) is active in both local bar associations. A variety of local practitioners are encouraged to apply as adjuncts. While there is a limited pool of minority attorneys in our area (many of whom are seriously overcommitted), the college has been fortunate to have a group of diverse and highly qualified applicants.

The college regularly holds an adjunct fair which is widely publicized in the general and special audience media.

6. Complete Exhibit 8 showing the composition of the faculty of the paralegal program by racial/ethnic classification and gender for each of the last four years.

**(G-204)**

- E. Complete the budget chart provided as Exhibit 9, showing (1) the amounts spent for each category of expense for each of the past four years; (2) the budget for the current year; and (3) the projected budget for the next year. **(G-205)**
- F. Has there been a change in institutional ownership or in financial support, which has not been previously reported? *If so, while continuing to complete this reapproval application, go to the website for the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Paralegals (<http://www.abaparalegals.org>) and complete the Substantive Change Form for Institutional Ownership or Financial Support. This form must be submitted immediately. Do not submit this form as part of this reapproval application.*

There has been no change in institutional ownership or in financial support.

*Note: G-201.F requires that the program must engage in planning, including long-range planning, and such planning must encompass the matters set forth in the Guidelines. G-202 requires that the paralegal education program be given status within the institution comparable to other units of similar size and function. Program Directors should be prepared to demonstrate compliance with both of the Guidelines to the site visit team at the time of the site visit.*

## **SECTION III**

### **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

G-301 through G-302

#### **A. Additional Educational Opportunities:**

1. List all articulation agreements your program has with other institutions, including the name of each college and program.

The college has an articulation agreement with Florida Gulf Coast University which allows our two year graduates to articulate into their four year program.

The college has an articulation agreement with Hillsborough Community College which allows their two year A. S. degree graduates to articulate into our four year B. A. S. degree.

In Florida, transferability is facilitated by a common course numbering system. Courses having the same number transfer hour for hour while courses covering similar material are evaluated on a course by course basis.

On November 9, 1999, the State Board of Education adopted an amendment to Rule 6A-10.024 of the Florida Administrative Code. This amendment provides for the articulation of associate in science degrees to baccalaureate degrees and created the Statewide Articulation Manual. This Rule became effective Fall term of 2000.

2. For those programs awarding associate degrees:

(a) Indicate the percentage of program graduates who have transferred to an institution offering a baccalaureate degree in each of the past four years.

2006-07	57%
2007-08	62.5%
2008-09	30%
2009-10	48%

While the college maintains an articulation agreement with F.G.C.U. the majority of our two years graduates who do not already have a four year degree transfer into SPC's four year paralegal studies program. A number of students in the last year have opted to complete an A.A. degree with a number of paralegal electives and moving directly into the four year program without obtaining A.S. degree.

A significant number of our four year graduates are currently enrolled in or have applied for law school.

(b) Describe the methods used to encourage students and graduates to earn higher or additional degrees or certificates upon completion of the program.

**(G-301.C)**

St. Petersburg College was one of the first community colleges in the nation to move to the 2 plus 2 model for what had previously been workforce degrees. Since the four year degree program was initiated in 2001, the college has introduced a number of four year

degree programs including the four year Paralegal Studies program. At the same time the college pioneered a joint venture model called the University Partnership Center in which the college combines with 16 colleges and universities to offer a wide range of four year and graduate degrees. Students are invited to Baccalaureate Expos which feature a SPC's degree programs along with the UPC participants.

Twice each year the Paralegal Studies program partners with Stetson University College of Law to conduct a law school advising session open to high school and undergraduate students who are interested in pursuing a law degree. One former student is currently pursuing an MBA.

- B. Describe the program's plan for evaluation, review, and continuous improvement of the program, as follows:
1. Explain how the program determines the extent to which it is meeting its stated goals and objectives. Include whether the assessment of goals and objectives is part of an institutional plan.

Every program in the college is subject to review as a part of the college's assessment plan. The evaluation of the two year program is the Comprehensive Assessment and Program Review (CAPR) which was last completed in 2007 although data on students completing the two year program is continuously archived and the whole three year process has begun again this academic year.

The college requires that individual courses be reviewed by teaching faculty every three years in an effort to keep curriculum current. The advisory committee is asked to assist in assessing whether the courses meet current needs of the legal community and often suggests changes. The college Curriculum and Instruction Committee approves all proposals for curriculum changes. If the change affects the college catalog it must be approved by the District Board of Trustees. Prior to committee action each proposed curriculum change is approved by the administrator of each campus and center.

Florida Statutes (Section 240.312) requires the review of every major program in the State Community College System every three years. Section 240.311(3) of the Florida Statutes requires the State Board of Community Colleges to "conduct periodic reviews of existing programs." And Section 240.311(4) requires the executive director to "conduct system-wide program reviews of State Board approval."

The report collected by the State Board of Community Colleges is a preliminary review, or a "Level I" review, of 40 vocational programs in the Florida State Community College System. The purpose of this review is to analyze the data available to determine which programs or elements within the programs need further review. The review process would then progress to a Level II or Level III review.

St. Petersburg College program review exceeds the Level I requirements of the State Board of Community Colleges. In an effort to continuously improve the educational services that it provides to the community the College's "Program Review Process" includes students, alumni, local industry leaders, faculty, program directors, provosts, President's Cabinet, and Educational and Student Services.

As a prerequisite to graduation, each student must complete a seminar and work experience class. Part of the requirements for this class consists of 100 hours of volunteer or paid legal assistant work. A portion of the grade is based upon the employer's evaluation. Each student must also prepare a portfolio suitable for presentation to a potential employer. The portfolio should contain documentation of knowledge and skills acquired throughout the legal assisting program. This end of program assessment tool is designed as an internal control device to assess strengths and weaknesses of this particular Associate in Science degree program. It is this evaluation which becomes the raw data for the comprehensive Assessment and Program Review (CAPR).

Capstone courses in both the B.A.S. program and the certificate program provide raw data for similar assessment in terms of meeting program goals.

2. Attach as Exhibit 10 a copy of the program's written assessment plan, including an analysis and summary of the assessment results.

Attached as Exhibit 10 is a copy of the most recent Comprehensive Assessment and Program Review along with the most recent data collected for the Program Viability Review.

**(G-301.E - F)**

- C. Complete Exhibit 11 showing the total curriculum for each program option included in Section I.C. *If there have been substantial curriculum changes which were not approved in advance of being made, while continuing to complete this reapproval application go to the website for the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Paralegals (<http://www.abaparalegals.org>) and complete the Substantive Change Form for Substantial Curriculum Change. This form must be submitted immediately. Do not submit this form as part of this reapproval application. (G-302)*
- D. Describe the program's sequencing plan for each program option included in Section I.C. **(G-302.E.5)**

**ASSOCIATE IN SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAM**

The suggested sequence of courses listed below is for full time students who are able to attend day and evening classes and seeking an A.S. degree in Legal Assisting. All students must complete three two-part specialty sequences (designated below as Specialties I, II & III) from six specialty areas listed in the college catalog. Since the Legal Assisting program is one designed largely for students who are working full time and able to attend only

evening classes, very few students actually complete the program under the suggested four semester plan. Most students take fewer hours each semester than those suggested due to the academically rigorous nature of the material covered in these courses. The projected schedule gives students an idea of how to begin to plan for their sequence of courses.

For students attending full-time, a four semester suggested sequence of courses:

Fall/Session I – First Semester

Composition I – 3 credit hours

Math – 3 credit hours

Introduction to Paralegalism – 3 credit hours

Interview and Investigation – 3 credit hours

Legal Research I – 3 credit hours

Total credit hours = 15

Winter/Spring Session II – Second Semester

Composition II – 3 credit hours

Social science elective – 3 credit hours

Advanced Legal Research – 3 credit hours

Specialty IA (i.e., Civil Litigation) – 3 credit hours

Business Law I – 3 credit hours

Speech – 3 credit hours

Total credit hours = 18

Fall/Session I – Third Semester

Humanities – 3 credit hours

Specialty IB – 3 credit hours

Specialty IIA – 3 credit hours

Specialty IIIA – 3 credit hours

Financial Accounting – 3 credit hours

Computer Legal Research – 1 credit hour

Total credit hours = 16

Winter/Spring Session II – Fourth Semester

Ethics – 3 credit hours

Legal Assisting Seminar – 3 credit hours

Specialty IIB – 3 credit hours

Specialty IIIB – 3 credit hours

Law Office Management – 3 credit hours

(One computer skills course – 1 credit hour)

Total credit hours 16 credit hours

Total credit hours in program= 64

Below is the suggested sequence of courses for students who already have an AA or BA degree and are not required to take General Education courses.

Semester One:

<u>Track I</u>	or	<u>Track IA</u>
Intro – 3 cr hrs		Intro
Interview and Investigation – 3 cr hrs		Interview & Investigation
Legal Research I – 3 cr hrs		<u>Legal Res. I</u>
<u>Specialty IA – 3 cr hrs</u>		Total credit hours = 9
Total credit hours = 12		

Semester Two:

<u>Track I</u>	or	<u>Track IA</u>
Adv Legal Research – 3 cr hrs		Specialty IA
Specialty IIA – 3 cr hrs		<u>(all other courses in Track II)</u>
Computerized Legal Res – 1 cr hr		Total credit hours = 10
<u>Specialty IB – 3 cr hrs</u>		
Total credit hours = 10		

Semester Three:

<u>Track I</u>	or	<u>Track IA</u>
Computer skills course (if needed)		Specialty IIA
Specialty IIB – 3 cr hrs		Specialty IIB
Specialty IIIA – 3 cr hrs		<u>Specialty IIIA</u>
<u>Law Office Management – 3 cr hrs</u>		Total credit hours = 9
Total credit hours = 9 or 12		

Semester Four:

<u>Track I</u>	or	<u>Track IA</u>
Ethics – 3 cr hrs		Specialty IIIB
Specialty IIIB – 3 cr hrs		Law Office Mgt.
<u>Legal Assisting Seminar – 3 cr hrs</u>		<u>Legal Asst Seminar</u>
Total credit hours = 9		Total credit hours = 9

## BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCES IN PARALEGAL STUDIES

Students entering the program must have completed an A.A. degree which includes all general education requirements. They also have completed 18 hours of PLA prefixed classes including PLA 1003, PLA 1104, PLA 1763, PLA 2114, PLA 2203 and one additional course.

SUGGESTED SEQUENCE OF COURSES

Session 1:		
PLA 3795 LOGIC AND THE LAW		3
PLA 4830 COMPARATIVE LEGAL SYSTEMS		3
ELECTIVE		3
	Total	9
Session 2:		
PLA 3732 COMPUTERS AND THE LAW		3
PLA 3880 U.S. CONSTITUTIONAL LAW		3
ELECTIVE		3
	Total	9
Session 3:		
PLA 4116 LEGAL WRITING SEMINAR		3
ELECTIVE		3
ELECTIVE		3
	Total	9
Session 4:		
ELECTIVE		3
ELECTIVE		3
ELECTIVE		3
	Total	9
Session 5:		
PLA 3701 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY SEMINAR		3
PLA 4909 PARALEGAL CAPSTONE COURSE		3
	Total	6
TOTAL		42

Students will be required to take at least two courses (the required courses) each semester. Since SPC's student body is a part-time student body, some students may elect to take only two courses per semester.



## POST BACCALAUREATE CERTIFICATE

The program is designed to be a part-time program with students taking three courses per semester in a cadre system for two semesters followed by the final semester of Professional Responsibility and the Capstone class in preparation for the CLA exam.

### SUGGESTED SEQUENCE OF COURSES

#### Semester 1:

PLA 1003 INTRODUCTION TO PARALEGALISM	3
PLA 1104 LEGAL RESEARCH AND WRITING	3
PLA 1361 TECHNIQUES INTERVIEW & INVESTIGATION	3
Total	9

#### Semester 2:

PLA 1763 LAW OFFICE MANAGEMENT	3
PLA 2114 ADVANCED LEGAL RESEARCH	3
PLA 2203 CIVIL LITIGATION I	3
Total	9

#### Semester 3:

PLA 3701 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY SEMINAR	3
PLA 4XXX PARALEGAL CAPSTONE COURSE	3
Total	6

TOTAL 24

#### E. General Education Requirements:

1. How is the distribution requirement for three disciplines within the general education component met? (**G-302.E.2**)

The college requires that all graduates of A. S. degree programs met general education requirements in Communications (ENC 1101, ENC 1102 and SPC 1600), Mathematics, Social Science, and Humanities.

Students are required to take seven general education courses as part of the program. The general education courses include: Composition I and II, a college level math, Ethics, Introduction to Speech Communication, and electives in Social Science and Humanities. Students are also required to take Financial and Managerial Accounting as well as Business Law.

All B.A.S. candidates must satisfy the college's entire general education core which includes classes in seven disciplines.

Post-baccalaureate certificate students must document their degree with official transcripts before acceptance into the program.

2. What method(s) is/are used to determine whether students demonstrate writing proficiency at the college level? **(G-302.E.3)**

Students entering the college are tested in three basic skills areas: reading, writing and math. For those who do not perform well on these tests, developmental courses are required before entering Composition I. Recent SAT scores may be substituted for the college's placement test in some cases. By statute each student is required to take college writing classes which the student must pass with a grade of "C" or better.

Throughout the program Paralegal Studies students are asked to demonstrate their proficiency in writing through numerous memoranda and research and writing projects within the different legal specialty courses. E.g. PLA 1003 Introduction to Paralegalism includes a number of writing assignments including book reports, an interview of a legal assistant and a research paper on a current legal issue.

3. What means are used to ensure that students demonstrate competence in oral communication? **(G-302.E.4)**

The college requires that a public speaking course be completed as a part of the general education core in the two year degree program.

Students in the four year degree program participate in a variety of public speaking activities including a mock trial in the required Logic and the Law class and a required capstone presentation.

Students in the certificate program have a required capstone presentation.

4. If credit is given by examination or through other means for general education courses, what methods are used to determine whether credit should be granted? Indicate how evaluation for equivalence is conducted and whether there are limits on the amount of credit that is earned through such means. **(G-302.E.6)**

In 2001, as part of Senate Bill 1162 relating to education governance reorganization, the Legislature required the Articulation Coordinating Committee (ACC) to establish passing scores and course and credit equivalencies for Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams. The DANTES/DSST and Excelsior College exam equivalents were not

required by the bill, but recommendations were made for these exams as well under the authority of State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.024.

The ACC Standing Committee on Alternative Ways of Earning Credit, a group consisting of postsecondary faculty and academic administrators, reviewed each examination and determined the appropriate course(s) for which postsecondary credit should be granted. These course equivalencies and associated credit were presented to the ACC for review and adoption.

In addition to the AP, IB and CLEP examination equivalencies required in 2001, the ACC also determined equivalencies for Advanced International Certificate in Education examinations in 2003 after the program was added to section 1007.27, F.S., as an acceptable acceleration mechanism during the 2002 school code rewrite process.

If a student achieves the score listed on an AP, AICE, IB or CLEP exam, state universities and community colleges must award the minimum recommended credit for the course or course numbers listed, even if they do not offer the course. Up to 45 total credit-by-exam credits may be awarded. This credit is guaranteed to transfer across all public postsecondary institutions. Institutions may award more credit than the minimum listed by the ACC, but not less. There are also restrictions on the course numbers that can be used. In addition to the increased transferability of courses, the ACC guidelines allow for students to have met the general education, common prerequisite, and Gordon Rule requirements as if they had taken the course at the receiving institution and should be treated no differently from credit earned in the same courses at the receiving institution.

5. If general education credit is accepted in transfer, what policies govern the acceptance of transfer of general education credits completed at other institutions? How are the courses evaluated to ensure that they meet the definition of general education and the breadth contained in these Guidelines? **(G-302.E.6)**

Transfer students must have left their previous college(s) in good standing, eligible to return to the last college attended, and: have received a regular high school diploma, or received a G.E.D., or have earned a degree from a regionally accredited college or university. A student is classified as a transfer student if the student had previously registered at any other college or university, regardless of the amount of time spent in attendance or credit earned.

Florida community colleges and universities are participants in a Common Course Numbering System administered by the Florida Department of Education. This system facilitates ease of transfer between like courses through out the state. Out of state courses are examined individually by the college registrar who consults with the Legal Assisting program director.

Because of the importance the college places on general education, all students are expected to satisfy the general education requirements. The student may either

successfully complete the required courses at this college or transfer course work taken at another regionally accredited institution. A department offering a required general education course may allow for alternative satisfaction of the course competencies. For example, since the mathematics course required for the program is a single semester of college level math, and a number of students will go on to earn bachelor's degrees, a higher math may be used rather than general education mathematics.

- F. How does the program ensure that students have technology skills (other than electronic legal research skills) that are appropriate for employment as a paralegal? **(G-302.G)**

Students are counseled as to the imperative nature of technological skill as they enter the Paralegal Studies program. Students begin the program with a disparity in computer skills; some are experts, some are neophytes. The program encourages those with skills to expand their expertise, perhaps into graphic and web areas but all must achieve an acceptable level of expertise. Former students now in the field serve as guest speakers emphasizing the need for advanced computer skills. These presentations are often illustrated with presentation software or internet applications.

Students must complete computer skills courses as part of their degree. Technology topics are often included in the Paralegal Society meetings. Local Bench/Bar seminars on technology topics are available to SPC students at a reduced rate. The college partners with local bar associations for a series of continuing education programs aimed at the law office professions. A number of these programs deal with current technology issues including digital evidence.

The introductory class requires all student papers to be word processed. Law Office Management includes a comprehensive unit on law office software. Each specialty area introduces the student to legal specific software available in that legal area. For example, the Civil Litigation course introduces the student to popular case management and document management software. The probate course introduces the student to the court approved program marketed by the Florida Bar. All SPC graduates must meet a minimum computer literacy competency.

- G. If the program admits and graduates students who have not met the general education or total unit requirement of **G-302.H**, complete the chart provided as Exhibit 12, showing information about students receiving exemptions from the general education and/or total unit requirements for each of the last four academic years.

N/A The program does not admit nor graduate students who have not met the general education or total unit requirement.

- H. Complete the chart provided as Exhibit 13, showing the legal specialty courses offered for each of the past four years. **(G-302.I)**

- I. For each legal specialty course listed in Exhibit 13, complete the Course Information Sheet provided as Exhibit 14. **(G-302.I)**
- J. Does the paralegal program include an internship or other field experience as a legal specialty course? *Yes* If yes, provide the following information:
1. the systematic plan for developing, assigning, monitoring, and evaluating internships or other field experiences;
  2. the number of hours on the job needed to earn credit;
  3. how the program ensures that students and sponsors understand expectations;
  4. how the student, sponsors, and program faculty communicate during the course of the internship or other field experience;
  5. how the program ensures that the work emphasizes paralegal skills and competencies.
- (G-302.I.1.d)**

For the A.S. degree program a required internship is included in PLA 2940, Legal Seminar and Work Experience.

Students are advised that while obtaining the internship placement is their own responsibility, the Program Director will help them obtain positions should the need arise. When students have no previous office experience they are encouraged to volunteer early in the program to assist in local bar association offices, lawyer referral or the Guardian Ad Litem program. Local legal temporary placement agencies actively recruit legal assisting students for short-term and long-term employment. The program administrator and faculty are active in local bar activities and as a result have a number of contacts within a range of local law firms, corporations and government offices who will assist in placing students. For those students whose full-time work prohibits a full internship, there is a virtual law office assignment in which the student must complete a range of assignments in one of four areas-civil, criminal, business or probate. These students must keep time sheets as if this were a law office and the instructor acts as the supervising attorney. Those students who are using current employment to satisfy the 100 hour Work Experience portion of the course are encouraged to expand their job responsibilities.

This internship consists of 100 hours of work experience.

The program has developed materials to explain generally the purpose of the internship, the role of the employer/supervisor and the duties of the intern on the job as well as class responsibilities.

Students turn in weekly logs of time spent at the internship. Supervisors are asked to initial these logs. The instructor speaks with the internship placement at the beginning of the internship answering any questions and again at the midpoint to determine the student's success. The supervisor completes a written evaluation at the completion of the internship

To make certain that the internship involves actual paralegal responsibilities and not merely administrative duties, students identify objectives for the experience with the assistance of the course instructor and enter into a performance contract with their supervisors and the instructor. Students are visited on the job by the seminar instructor at least once during the semester. The seminar class meets weekly to discuss a variety of employment related skills and issues. Often workplace problems serve as topics of class discussion. Employers are asked to evaluate the students' performance. Students prepare a portfolio which includes a log of the hours worked to introduce the student to the concept of billable time and accountability. Students are asked to assess their internship experience and draw conclusions for their future career path based upon experiences in this process.

The B.A.S program offers the option of 1 hour, 2 hour or 3 hour co-operative education legal specialty classes. Students must complete online job skills/job readiness assignments before placement in an internship position. The opportunity for such internships is regularly advertised on the PLA Commons student bulletin board. Interns must apply and interview for all positions. Professor Christy Powers develops these relationships and matches students with interview possibilities. Recent internships have included private law firms, governmental offices including the Tampa office of the United States Attorney as well as private industry placements. Students must maintain weekly logs, complete a journal and a paper reflecting on the experience as well as be evaluated by their direct supervisor.

- K. Which course or courses provide instruction in ethics and professional responsibility? Approximately how many hours in each program option are devoted to teaching this subject?  
**(G-302.I.3)**

Students in all programs are first introduced to legal ethics and professional responsibility in PLA 1003, Introduction to Legal Assisting. This course covers how legal professionals are regulated, the importance of ethical rules governing the conduct of attorneys and how these rules affect paralegal practice, the extent to which the paralegal profession is regulated, and the kinds of activities that paralegals are and are not legally permitted to perform. The A.S. students also do a more in-depth study of ethics and a paralegal's responsibilities in the Legal Seminar class. Approximately one-half of the Legal Seminar class is devoted to legal ethics. An approximate overall time in the two-year Paralegal Studies program devoted to teaching legal ethics is 24 contact hours.

The college also requires a general ethics course as part of the Paralegal Studies curriculum. This course includes a study of legal ethics and requires a research paper focusing on the code of ethics in the student's chosen field.

Students in the B.A.S program and the certificate program are required to take PLA 3700 Seminar in Professional Responsibility for a total of 47 contact hours devoted to legal ethics and professional responsibility.

- L. Which course or courses provide instruction in legal research?

PLA 1104 Legal Research and Writing and PLA 2114 Advanced Legal Research and Writing are required in all programs.

In electronic research?

Basic electronic research skills are taught in PLA 1003. College librarians do a library orientation for all sections and emphasize the college's extensive electronic resources. So much emphasis does the college place on these resources that when the Program Director/Dean conducts the orientation sessions, one of the college librarians is a significant part of the program.

PLA 1730 Computer Assisted Legal Research is required in the Associate in Science degree program and available to all other students.

Approximately how many hours in each program option are devoted to teaching legal research? **(G-302.I.4, G-601.I - J)**

PLA 1104 Legal Research and Writing and PLA 2114 Advanced Legal Research and Writing are required in all programs for a total of 6 credit hours or 90 contact hours devoted to the combined topics of legal research and legal writing. Electronic research is covered in two class sessions in these courses for a total of 6 contact hours.

The A.S. degree program requires a 1 credit hour (15 contact hours) course PLA 1730 Computer Assisted Legal Research.

The B. A. S. degree requires an additional 3 credit (45 contact hours) course, PLA 4116 Legal Writing Seminar.

While these courses directly address themselves to the teaching of legal research and writing skills, students throughout the program are given extensive writing projects all of which are critiqued and returned to students to build these vital skills.

M. Does the program cross-list any legal specialty course with other programs or majors offered by the institution? If so, list and explain. **(G-302 and G-503)**

No legal specialty course is cross-listed with any other program.

Students in the A.S. degree program may take Business Law I, Business Law II, or Real Estate Practices and procedures as part of their electives. These classes are not treated as legal specialty classes.

Students in the B. A. S. program may take Administrative Law or Legal Issues in Managing Technology as electives. These classes are not treated as legal specialty classes.

- N. What policies govern the acceptance of transfer of legal specialty credits completed at other institutions? Include criteria for accepting courses in transfer, procedures to protect the academic quality and integrity of the program, limits on the number of legal specialty courses that may be accepted in transfer, and where these policies and procedures are written. The criteria must include procedures for ensuring that programs provide at least ten semester credits or the equivalent of legal specialty courses through traditional classroom instruction as provided in G-302.J. **(G-302.I.6)**

Paralegal Studies Program  
Transfer Policy and Practices

1. Transfer students should have left their previous college(s) in good academic and disciplinary standing, must be eligible to return to the last college attended and:
  - A. have received a College Ready or standard high school diploma or
  - B. receive a GED or
  - C. have earned a degree from an accredited college or university.
2. A student who has previously applied to, been accepted, and registered at an accredited college or university, is classified as “transfer” even if the student withdrew before earning any credits.
3. Credits earned at an institution listed in the Transfer Credit Practices (TPC) Booklet and/or other guides published by the American Council on Education, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experience in the Armed Services and NAFSA: Association of International Educators and which represent collegiate coursework relevant to the degree, with course content and level of instruction resulting in student competencies at least equivalent to those of students enrolled in the College’s undergraduate degree programs, will be accepted by the College. In addition, the College will honor credits granted through programmatic partnerships with secondary schools (dual credit and international articulation agreements) and the Statewide Common Course Numbering System Articulation Coordination Committee. Florida Statutes require that after a Florida university or community college has published its general education core, that the integrity of that curriculum shall be recognized by the College and the public universities and community colleges. Once a student has been certified by such an institution on an official transcript as having completed satisfactorily its prescribed general education core curriculum, regardless of whether the associate degree is conferred, the College shall require no further such general education courses. Official transcripts from all previously attended post-secondary institutions must be received by the College’s Records’ Office (to be sent directly from the institution) by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> academic session in which the student is enrolled.
4. Course work completed and transcribed from regionally accredited institutions or from American Bar Association approved programs outside the Florida Community College System or Florida University System will be evaluated by the Paralegal Studies Dean or his/her designee for specific course equivalencies and how transferred credit will be applied toward specific degree requirements.
5. The Legal Assisting Program does not evaluate or accept life experiences for credit.



6. Transfer of credit is allowed only for courses in which the student earned a grade of “C” or better.
7. At least 25% of the total credits for the degree must be earned at St. Petersburg College of which 12 credit hours must be in the major.

When students transfer into St. Petersburg College their transcripts are evaluated by Central Records. Those transferring in PLA credits meet with the program counselor to discuss their past paralegal education so that they can be placed into the proper course work. This discussion includes a review of previously taken online course work. Those classes which were taken online are noted in the student file. The transcripts of all proposed graduates are checked by either or both the assigned counselor and the Dean. A portion of this transcript check is to assure that at least ten semester hours are taken face to face. (At the current time, it is impossible for students to graduate from SPC without that number of credits given the nature of our current online offerings. The safety was put in place to prevent any future issues should the college increase online offerings in the upper division or add online lower division offerings.

- O. What policies govern the award of legal specialty credit by course challenge, examination or portfolio? Include procedures to protect the academic quality and integrity of the program, limits on the number of legal specialty credits that may be earned through such means, procedures for evaluating and approving the award of such credit, and where these policies and procedures are written. **(G-302.I.6)**

No legal specialty courses can be awarded by challenge, examination, or portfolio.

- P. Are any legal specialty courses offered through alternative delivery formats, such as compressed, accelerated, hybrid with 50% or more online instruction, hybrid with less than 50% online instruction, or fully online courses? If so, indicate which courses were submitted for approval or certified in advance of being offered and when the courses were approved or certified. Hybrid courses containing less than 50% online instruction do not require prior approval. ***If courses are being offered in alternative delivery formats which were not submitted for approval or certified in advance of being offered, go to the website for the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Paralegals (<http://www.abaparalegals.org>) and complete either the Substantive Change Form for Courses Offered in Alternative Formats or the Substantive Change Form for Courses Offered in Alternative Formats Certification while continuing to complete this reapproval application. This form must be submitted immediately. Do not submit either of these forms as part of this reapproval application. (Refer to G-302.J for interpretations relating to alternative formats.)***

At this time, the college offers only four classes through alternative delivery formats, Health Care Law, Immigration Law, Legal Writing and Bankruptcy Law. All of these classes are offered in the BAS program. Health Care Law (online) was approved in June of 2008. Immigration Law (online) was approved in January of 2009. The Bankruptcy Law (online) and Legal Writing Seminar (hybrid) were certified in November of 2009.

No classes in either the A.S. or certificate programs are offered online.

Q. For each method of alternative delivery used in each of the past four years:

1. Explain how the program ensures that students take at least ten semester credits or the equivalent of legal specialty courses through traditional classroom instruction or the equivalent as defined in **G-302.J.1**.

The transcripts of all proposed graduates are checked by either or both the assigned counselor and the Dean. A portion of this transcript check is to assure that at least ten semester hours are taken face to face. (At the current time, it is impossible for students to graduate from SPC without that number of credits given the nature of our current online offerings. The safety was put in place to prevent any future issues should the college increase online offerings in the upper division or add online lower division offerings.

2. Provide as Exhibit 15 a detailed course outline for each course showing how the hours devoted to classroom time and the structured instructional activity outside of class or in online instruction are equivalent to the number of classroom hours that are normally required to award credit for such a course.
3. Explain how courses were selected for delivery in the alternative format and how the courses were developed.

The college has a huge online offering including a number of degrees which are offered entirely online. The faculty at St. Petersburg College are encouraged to develop online courses which have rich multi-media content. The college Instructional Technology department devotes many hours to assisting in the development of quality online and hybrid courses. Every face to face course also has a learning management system module devoted to it, so instructors are familiar with instructor utilize online contact for at least publication of their syllabus and emergency contacts.

The few courses in the Paralegal Studies program selected for online offering are those that have a large technological or forms component and therefore seemed a good fit for this instructional methodology. With the assistance of the Instructional Technology department, our faculty have built content- rich online offerings.

4. Provide information on how students are screened to assess their ability to succeed in the alternative format or otherwise trained or prepared to succeed in taking course work in this format.

Every course at St. Petersburg College whether face to face, hybrid or online has an online component in the learning management system utilized by the college. (This is currently the Angel system.) The college made the decision to require this of every instructor after the hurricanes of 2005 disrupted instruction in colleges all across the state. This online back-up is part of the college's emergency preparedness plan. All students and instructors are made aware of this particularly from June through November. Every student in the program has access to Angel including a student Commons where information is distributed about courses, the program and job listings.

There is an Angel tutorial incorporated into every course but also available through the Commons. There is also an on-campus Learning Support Center available to all students should they need additional assistance. The college provides telephone support 364 days of the year through the Help Desk.

5. Provide information on the training and support for the development and instruction of courses delivered in the alternative format.

Every instructor must complete the basic Angel training class which prepares all instructors under the Emergency Preparedness Plan. There are two additional levels of online course training. One is to prepare to teach an online course without any additional development needed. The highest level training prepares developers. The Instructional Technologists on all campuses assist instructors in customizing their courses. Courses offered online must go through the college's Flexible Access Review process to insure that the class not only meets the curriculum requirements but that it is easy to navigate, consistent with other online offerings and rich in a variety of learning styles.

6. Provide information on the assessment that is conducted to determine the effectiveness of the alternative format and attach as Exhibit 16 a summary of the results of such assessment of the last four years.

Student evaluation of every course is combined with the procedure for the evaluation of faculty. This evaluation is conducted every terms of the academic year. Some of the items on the questionnaires are directly related to the performance of the teacher, while others provide data that address the course, online courses have a number of questions directed to issues arising only in the online environment. The summary results of student evaluations are given to each faculty member with an interpretive sheet explaining how he or she compares with other faculty at the college.

Informal course evaluation also occurs through discussions between the Dean and faculty members and the Dean and students. Students are encouraged to share their concerns about courses, textbooks and instructors with the Dean at their earliest possible convenience. Students often comment about courses to the support staff. These comments often result in course improvement.

7. Additionally, for totally online courses, provide the following additional information:
- a. What means are used to ensure that there is interaction between faculty members and students, and among students?

The faculty orientation emphasizes to all faculty, both full-time and part-time, that there should be continuous connection with online students. Faculty are encouraged to respond within twenty-four hours and students have grown to expect this level of attention. When faculty will be away and not able to interact as frequently, they communicate this to the students to relieve their anxiety.

Each day the Dean receives a “4 day log-in report” indicating which classes have not had communication with their instructor for 4 days.

- c. By what means are faculty members accessible to students?

Online instructors are expected to keep “office hours” and these office hours are published on syllabi and on the college website. Students may communicate via email, telephone or schedule a face to face appointment.

- c. How do faculty members respond to students who have questions? How is feedback given to students on assignments and tests?

Questions are handled through threaded discussions, private email, and telephone conversations when necessary. Papers submitted through a dropbox system are downloaded, marked on electronically and returned to the student.

- d. What technical support is provided to ensure proper functioning of the system and back-up in the event of technical difficulties?

The College’s Help Desk is operational for 364 days a year around the clock. The technical support staff is on call 365 days a year.

- e. What system is used to verify the identity of students submitting work or taking a test at a distance?

**(G-302.J)**

Students at a distance must designate a proctor for distance exams at the beginning of the course. Tests are then released to the proctor who verifies the identity of the student. All students in the program must submit a certificate of authenticity with every piece of work submitted.

## SECTION IV

### FACULTY

G-401 through G-403

- A. Identify the name and the title of the person who serves as program director. Indicate whether this position is full-time. If the position is not full-time and the person designated as program director does not serve the institution on a full-time basis, identify the person responsible for the program who is full-time with the institution. **(G-402)**

Susan Demers, Dean, Paralegal Studies, is the full-time employee who serves as the program director.

- B. Has the person identified as the program director been in his/her position for fewer than four years? If so, provide the name or names of the person or persons who have served in this capacity for the past four years with dates of service, status as full-time or part-time, and indicate the reasons for the change. **(G-402)**

Susan Demers has served in this position for each of the last four years.

- C. If there has been a change in the program director during the past four years, did the program notify the Standing Committee on Paralegals of such change in the program director? *If not, while continuing to complete this reapproval application, go to the website for the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Paralegals (<http://www.abaparalegals.org>) and complete the Form to Report Change in Program Director. This form must be submitted immediately. Do not submit this form as part of this reapproval application.*

- D. Provide as Exhibit 17 a resume for the person designated as the program director. If the program director is not full-time, provide a resume for the person responsible for the program who is full-time with the institution. Also, provide a resume for all other persons having substantial responsibilities for program direction or administration. Each resume must include the beginning date of service with the institution and the program, relevant professional qualifications, and experience working with paralegals and/or as a paralegal. **(G-401.A - D)**

- E. For the program director and each person having responsibility for program direction and administration (including where the program director is part-time, the person responsible for the program who is full-time with the institution) indicate how much time is devoted to the program and to other duties, using the three categories below. Be sure to show the approximate time allocation during the year for each area, e.g., percentages of full-time or actual hour amounts for each person.

1. Program-related administrative duties. 70%
2. Duties that are not related to the paralegal program. 10%

3. Teaching. (If the person teaches for the institution, specify the usual full-time teaching load at the institution and the amount of release or reassigned time, if any, that is given for direction of the program.) 20%

**(G-402)**

- F. Please indicate who has primary responsibility for each of the following functions that relate to Guideline requirements: **(G-402)**

FUNCTION	NAME AND TITLE OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Defining major program objectives	Susan Demers, Dean
Representing the program throughout the administrative and academic structure of the institution	Susan Demers, Dean
Determining the financial needs and formulating the program budget	Susan Demers, Dean Kay Burniston, VP
Attracting, selecting, and retaining qualified faculty and encouraging faculty professional development	Susan Demers, Dean
Advising program students	Susan Demers, Dean Angel Bates, Counselor
Assuring the proper organization and operation of the advisory committee	Susan Demers, Dean
Maintaining liaison with the legal, paralegal, and paralegal education communities	Susan Demers, Dean
Identifying and responding to the occupational and educational needs of the community	Susan Demers, Dean
Arranging and monitoring internships or other field experiences, if offered	Susan Demers, Dean Prof. Christy Powers
Handling placement or coordination with the central placement office	Susan Demers, Dean Prof. Christy Powers
Evaluating the adequacy of the library/information resources	Susan Demers, Dean Rebecca Frank, Librarian
Coordinating the educational program	Susan Demers, Dean
Evaluating the overall program including regular assessment of the legal community, students, graduates, and employers as required in G-301.E	Susan Demers, Dean Leigh Hopf, Director of Baccalaureate Program Support Services

- G. What measures are taken to support and encourage the professional growth of the program director and all faculty members in the paralegal program as both teachers and professionals? Complete Exhibit 18, listing the program director's and each faculty member's participation in such professional growth activities during the past four years. **(G-401.F - G)**

The program requires that all faculty are licensed members of the bar and must maintain that license through continuing education. The College regularly partners with local bar

associations to host continuing education programs by providing facilities. Those affiliated with the college are then given free or reduced admission. Regular faculty meetings always feature some teaching tip exchange or educational component and links to articles featuring discussion of college issues are regularly forwarded to faculty.

The College is a member of AAFPE. Susan Demers and Sean Scott have both presented at conferences. Professor Scott is active in the Southeastern Academy of Legal Studies in Business. Mrs. Demers is active in local bar associations, the Florida Bar and has been a speaker at ABA programs. Professor Powers is active within the Clearwater Bar Association as is Professor Scott. All faculty members are frequent presenters with local bar in continuing education programs.

Each year the college hosts a large conference on teaching which focuses on teaching those with disabilities and learning challenges called Bridging the Gap. All college employees and instructors part-time and full-time are encouraged to attend. This three day conference pays homage to the College's roots in the open access community college tradition while giving teachers the latest in learning research.

- H. List below the dates of each paralegal faculty meeting held during the past four years. Include as Exhibit 19 copies of the minutes of these meetings. The minutes must include the dates of the meetings, the names of those in attendance, and a record of substantive discussions. **(G-401.H)**

August 17, 2006; January 10, 2007; August 15, 2007; January 3, 2008; August 14, 2008; January 7, 2009; August 20, 2009; January 7, 2010

- I. Complete Exhibit 20, showing all faculty members who are now teaching and who have taught legal specialty courses for each of the last four years. **(G-401, G-403.A)**
- J. As Exhibit 21, provide an updated resume for each faculty member listed in Exhibit 20. Each resume must include a description of the faculty member's professional qualifications, including experience working with paralegals or as a paralegal. **(G-401.A, C - E)**
- K. What clerical, technical, and other support services are provided to faculty members? **(G-403.B)**

A departmental administrative specialist supplies clerical support. An instructional technologist serves the Clearwater campus and thus is the main contact point for solving technical issues. The college Help Desk has rescued several instructors when issues arose during evening classes.

## **SECTION V**

### **ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES**

G-501 through G-503

- A. What are the admission requirements and procedures used to select students? Indicate what printed or electronic publications of the program and institution contain admission requirements and procedures. **(G-501)**

All students admitted into the A.S. program must have a high school diploma or its equivalent. A completed application, an application fee, and a copy of the applicant's high school diploma are submitted to the college's Admissions Office. Those requesting the transfer of college credit into the program must submit an official transcript. This transcript is evaluated in the Registrar's Office as to course equivalencies. If the applicant has a college degree, then an official transcript is required. Each applicant is required to attend an orientation seminar. Because St. Petersburg College has an "open door" admissions policy, this seminar serves as an advising tool, providing students with realistic expectations of jobs and/or salary.

Students admitted into the Bachelor's program must have an A.S. in Paralegal Studies. Students with an A.A. may be admitted upon completion of 18 designated PLA hours.

Students admitted into the Certificate program must have graduated with at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university, must have a 2.0 overall grade point average and must meet the College's Computer/Information Literacy Competency Requirement.

These requirements are found in the College's print catalog, the College's online catalog and on informational website pages devoted to the Paralegal Studies Program.

- B. Provide as Exhibit 22 copies of all print catalogs, advertisements, promotional materials, brochures, flyers, and copies of all website pages that feature the paralegal program. Indicate on the catalog cover the numbers of the pages of the catalog that refer to the paralegal program. If your institution does not have a print catalog, provide copies of any online catalog pages related to the paralegal program and include the URL address of the online catalog. **(G-501.A - B)**
- C. Indicate where statements are published in the institution's and program's literature that explain that paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public except as permitted by law. Indicate which of the documents provided in Exhibit 22 contain this statement and the page number on which the statement appears in each such document. **(G-501.A.3)**

The official catalog description of the degree program at pages 139 and 239 carries this statement as does the website.



- D. Describe how the required orientation to the paralegal profession is provided to new students. Include information on materials provided, when the orientation takes place, and what persons are involved in the process. **(G-502.A)**

Students entering the program are required to attend an information session/orientation seminar which details all three programs. These programs are held twice a semester or six times a year. Career information including the fact that paralegals cannot engage in direct delivery of legal services in Florida is included. Students are directed to web sites which include salary information. The Dean or one of the faculty members discusses the kinds of skills necessary to succeed in the career as well as those necessary to succeed in the rigorous classes in the program. The program counselor discusses the curriculum for all three programs in detail. Prerequisites and sequencing is discussed along with realistic expectations in terms of the number of classes in which to enroll term by term. Distributed at this time is a rotation chart which details which classes will be offered semester by semester and campus by campus. Students are introduced to the PLA Commons, the online support community for the program.

Librarian Donna Kelly makes a presentation familiarizing students with the online resources available and tries to impress upon students the rigor of the program and the resources available to meet such rigor with success.

Typically either a recent graduate or a student nearing completion of the program will be available to give advice on how to be successful in the program.

A question and answer period follows to address specific questions.

This information is repeated in each of the Intro classes since it has been our experience that students are overwhelmed during the enrollment process and generally fail to appreciate all of these important details. Each semester the Dean makes a pilgrimage to each Intro class to convey details of the portfolio, the PLA Commons and the Paralegal Society. Students with further questions are encouraged to make individual appointments.

- E. Describe the student services provided in each of the following areas and provide the name and title of the person(s) responsible for the following:
1. Course selection, advisement, and registration.

Extensive online information minimizes the time spent in the mechanical steps of registering; students can apply, attend orientation and be counseled (via e-mail) online. Registration is accomplished through an on-line system navigable with any web browser. Full-time professional counselors are available to assist students in the decision-making process regarding career and academic planning and personal choices. (During registration, an on-line counselor is available for extended hours.) Academic Advisors in the Counseling Office can assist students in choosing appropriate coursework to achieve their academic and career goals. Angel Bates is designated as the counselor for the program and oversees specific student issues with departmental assistance.

Paralegal Studies students are given planning worksheets at the program orientation. A published rotation schedule for courses allows students to plan their course selection in advance. Each semester when specific schedules are announced, the Dean visits all paralegal classes to discuss specific issues and counsel individual students. Office appointments are available should the student require additional time. Recently large numbers of legal assisting students have taken advantage of the immediacy of e-mail to have their counseling questions addressed in that manner.

## 2. Career counseling.

The College's Job Center administered by Jim Gonyea maintains offices on all campuses including the Clearwater Campus where the Paralegal Studies Program is located. Interest tests, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, are available to all students through this office. The college also offers a Career and Life Planning course into which a number of Paralegal Studies students are advised. Individual career testing is available as well. The Dean and faculty engage in extensive career counseling on both a formal and an informal basis. As students progress through the program they are encouraged to obtain employment in the law field to gain experience. Shadowing and volunteer work are encouraged from the Intro classes onwards. The Job Center provides services to those seeking employment, with listings of part and full-time local and national job opportunities in the legal assisting field. Every week local law firms contact the college seeking entry level and experienced employees. The staff attempt to match students and potential employers as closely as possible however all job leads are posted online within the PLA Commons and available to all students enrolled in the program.

## 3. Support programs such as remediation and tutoring.

The Student Support Services (SSS) Program is a limited access program designed to increase student retention and success by providing various support services to those who qualify. The philosophy behind the program is that all students, when made aware of proper academic resources, instruction, mentoring and counseling, can and will succeed. Some of the services provided are a variety of workshops, seminars and activities on How to Succeed, tutoring in many subjects, visits to four year colleges and universities, use of a textbook and equipment lending library, exposure to cultural/enrichment activities, and many more. Denotra Showers is in charge of the SSS program on the Clearwater Campus.

The college has a Learning Support Center on each campus, which offers tutoring for general education and accounting courses. On the Clearwater Campus, the Commons is under the direction of Matt Bowen who is directly supervised by the Communications Dean, Martha Campbell. Students needing assistance in legal classes can arrange tutors or study groups through the instructor, Dean, Paralegal Society or the online PLA Commons.

The College has also contracted with SmartThinking for online tutoring since such a large proportion of our student body take classes online. SmartThinking allows students to

submit writing projects online and receive feedback within a 24 hour period from qualified tutors. Dean Martha Campbell administers the contract with SmartThinking.

4. Student organizations and associations.

The Paralegal Society is an active group which is open to all students in the Paralegal Studies program. The organization holds two monthly meetings which feature speakers on a variety of topics. The Paralegal Society has sponsored a series of briefing workshops to assist students in the development of close reading skills and analytical skills. The Society holds an annual Law Day celebration which this past year had over 100 attendees. The Society also serves as a conduit for information about and as the organizer for a number of pro bono activities. This past year students have taken part in Homeless Connect, a large multi-entity project which organized services for the homeless in our county. Paralegal students also participated in homeless court, assisting Judge Jim Pierce, one of the instructors in the program, with the delivery of legal services to the homeless. The need for such a program became clear after the Homeless Connect project revealed a wide range of legal services needed by the homeless. Dr. Christy Powers is the sponsor in charge of the Paralegal Society.

Officers in the Paralegal Society are active participants in Student Government and thus have input into a wide range of campus activities.

St. Petersburg College is the home of several chapters of Phi Theta Kappa, the national community college honorary. These chapters are multiple award winners and many Paralegal Studies students are active members in these groups.

Rod Davis is in charge of Student Life (student organizations and student associations) on the Clearwater Campus.

5. Other services or activities.

The Women on the Way program and the Male Outreach Initiative offer services to students in extreme conditions. Services range from counseling to assistance in obtaining appropriate interview clothing. Academic assistance and book financing are also available. Dr. Kathleen Griffin is in charge of Student Services on the Clearwater Campus where the program is housed. Dr. Tonjua Williams is in charge of Student Services college-wide.

**(G-502)**

F. Describe how graduates are assisted in securing suitable employment by answering the following questions:

1. How and when does the program assist students in developing resume writing, interviewing, and job search skills?

Students are first asked to prepare a resume in the Intro class and as a part of the portfolio process. Law Office Management features a section on hiring which looks at the resume as a hiring tool and as a way of marketing the student. Resumes are dealt with again in all capstone courses.

Interviewing is an essential paralegal skill but job interviewing requirement particular skill both as the interviewer and as the interviewee. Students conduct mock employment interviews in Law Office Management and in the capstone courses. Job search is covered in both courses. Students in PLA 2940 go through a variety of job search drills including resume writing, working with employment services, and interview preparation and protocols

The Paralegal Society has offered assistance in job search at its monthly meeting. The college job center as well as the library offer many materials to assist in resume preparation and the job search process.

2. How does the program provide information and resources about current paralegal employment opportunities?

Every student is enrolled in the PLA Commons, an online community devoted to the students in the program. Program information is posted regularly. The Job Board is one of the most popular features of this Commons. Local attorneys seek employees as well as interns through this listing service.

3. What is the name and title of the person who has the chief responsibility for the employment/placement services?

James Gonyea, Career Development Specialist is in charge of the college employment/placement services.

**(G-502(a) and G-502.C)**

- G. Complete the form provided as Exhibit 23, showing employment and related information for all graduates for each of the past four years. **(502(a), 502.C - D)**

- H. What methods are used to give students the opportunity to express their views and make suggestions regarding the paralegal program? **(G-502.E)**

A formal student evaluation of courses is combined with the procedure for the evaluation of faculty conducted each semester. From the earliest orientation program, students are encouraged to share their concerns about courses, textbooks and instructors with the Dean at their earliest possible convenience. Students often comment about courses to the support staff as well as the faculty and the librarians.

At the end of each semester the Dean conducts a focus group comprised of that semester's graduates asking that they evaluate the overall program, individual classes, individual instructors, instructional techniques and textbooks. Every so often it becomes obvious

either from student comments, complaints or just a reading of the evaluation tools that a problem needs addressing. The usual approach is to convene a focus group of 5 to 7 students and ask for their candid opinions. These result in lively discussions and often times the students fail to agree on problem or solution. The Dean encourages students to speak with her privately if they have concerns that cannot be articulated in a group. Our graduate survey also solicits suggestions for improvement.

Current and former students are included in the focus group selected for program review.

- I. If the program provides continuing education for its graduates and/or paralegals, list the continuing education offerings for the past four years. Include any promotional flyers or materials as Exhibit 24. **(G-502.F)**

At this time the program alone does not offer paralegal specific continuing education opportunities although the college does partner with the Clearwater Bar Association to provide such opportunities by allowing students to apply for credit using Florida Bar approved programs.

- J. If non-paralegal students are enrolled in any legal specialty classes, provide information for each term for the last four years showing (1) the name and number of course(s); (2) the total number of students enrolled; (3) the number of non-paralegal students enrolled and (4) the reason that non-paralegal students are permitted to enroll in each course. **(G-503)**

No paralegal students have been enrolled in specialty classes at this time. Only students who have met the prerequisite class requirements are permitted to take classes in the Paralegal Studies program.

## **SECTION VI**

### **LIBRARY**

G-601

- A. Which law library facilities does the program rely on to meet the requirements of the Guidelines? Check all that apply.

Law school library.

City, county, or bar library.

Section of the institution's library.

A library collection and area set up specifically to serve the paralegal program.

**(G-601.A, 601.E)**

- B. If the program relies on a library that is not located on the institution's campus, provide the following information:

1. Distance of the library or libraries from the institution's facilities, including all

locations where paralegal classes are held.

**Stetson Law Library**

1401 61<sup>st</sup> Street South, Gulfport, FL 33707

(727)562-7000

Hours: 9:00am – 5:00pm (Monday – Friday)

10:00am – 5:00pm (Saturday)

12:00pm – 5:00pm (Sunday)

<http://www.law.stetson.edu/tmpl/library/internal-2nfb.aspx?id=1292>

**Distance from:**

Clearwater Campus	16.14 miles/26 minutes
Health Education Center	7 miles/17 minutes
Downtown	7.5 miles/15 minutes
St. Petersburg/Gibbs	2.7 miles/8 minutes

**Pinellas County Law Library** (supplemental)

324 South Ft. Harrison Avenue, Clearwater, FL 33756

(727) 464-3411

Hours: 8:30am – 4:30pm (Monday – Friday)

<http://www.jud6.org/LegalCommunity/LawLibraries/aboutthelibraries.htm>

**Distance from:**

Clearwater	4.68 miles/11 minutes
Health Education Center	13.2 miles/27 minutes
Downtown	21 miles/36 minutes
St. Petersburg/Gibbs	16.3 miles/33 minutes

2. Understanding or written agreement between the library and the program regarding student use, including accessibility and permission to provide onsite instruction. If there is a written agreement, include as Exhibit 25.

**(G-601.F)**

- C. Provide the following information about library use and accessibility for each library listed in A above:

1. What are the hours of library operation?

A. Clearwater Campus Library

Monday - Thursday 7:30am – 9pm

Friday 7:30am – 4pm

Saturday 10am – 5pm

B. Stetson Law Library

Monday – Thursday 7:00am – 10:00pm

Friday	7:00am - 6:00pm
Saturday	9:00am - 6:00pm
Sunday	9:00pm – 10:00pm

C. Pinellas County Law Library  
Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm

2. Is instruction in legal research permitted within the library facility? State restrictions, if any.

Library instruction is permitted in the college libraries and Stetson Law Library. In addition, instruction is provided within campus classrooms equipped with computers for full access to online resources. Instruction includes orientations, legal research methods, plagiarism, and proper attribution as requested by instructors.

2. What kind of assistance (including staffing) is provided to students when using the library?

### **St. Petersburg College. M. M. Bennett Libraries**

#### **Overview**

St. Petersburg College is a vibrant institution, with strong roots in the community college system. The M. M. Bennett Library serves the six campuses of the college with campus specific library collections and college-wide resources in print and electronic formats. Facilities include quiet and collaborative study spaces, Wi-Fi, open computer access, adaptive technology workstations (JAWS, ZoomText), and print/scan/copy services.

#### **Overall Library Collections**

The M.M. Bennett Libraries of St. Petersburg College support college programs with resources and materials specifically to meet the educational needs of students and faculty.

The collections of the college libraries presently consist of

- Approximately 334,763 total print volumes and materials
- Approximately 1,992 serial and periodical subscriptions
- 26,540 audiovisual titles
- Approximately 66,648 electronic books
- 120+ electronic research databases including *Lexis Nexis* and *Legal Periodicals and Books* (Wilson)

#### **Library Instruction and Liaison Work**

Critical to owning resources, librarians market and provide instruction in the use of library resources and services. Strong communication with faculty insures the collection and instruction leads to the desired course outcomes.

- Each faculty and new student group is introduced to library services and library resources for their particular program through presentations, informational packets or ongoing discussion.
- Information Literacy principles are identified for subject areas and will be incorporated into research lessons.
- Research handouts and online tutorials are developed for subject specific areas.
- A Computer/Information Literacy initiative has been implemented by the College (August 2002). Students must demonstrate computer and information literacy competencies prior to enrolling in online courses and as a graduation requirement. Students can demonstrate competencies through a one credit hour course or by passing an online examination.

### **Library Website 24/7**

The web site (<http://www.spcollege.edu/central/libonline/>) of the M.M. Bennett Libraries serves as a gateway to library services. Its services and collections continue to be developed to better support program needs and online learners:

- Collections - subject specific web sites and resources were identified, evaluated and added to assist students and faculty with research (see Help Guides>Paralegal)
- General guides on citation styles (RefWorks, Blue Book)
- AskALibrarian offers online research assistance.

Program and campus librarians continue to work with faculty, students and administrators to determine collection and service needs to support the programs. As technologies and program needs evolve, new delivery systems will be explored.

- Six day per week access to print Paralegal collection
- 24/7 access to electronic collections including *Lexis Nexis*, *Legal Books and Periodicals* (Wilson), and *WestLaw*
- Interlibrary loan and distance delivery services
- 5 fulltime librarians at Clearwater Campus, 17 college-wide each holding Master's Degrees in Library and/or Information Science
- One-on-one and group instruction
- Virtual and face-to-face Reference services
- Research handouts and tutorials
- Student orientations/instruction
- Wi Fi
- Open computer access
- Adaptive technology workstations with JAWS and ZoomText (additional services provided through the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (OSSD))
- Self Service printers/ scanners/copiers
- Citation tools (*RefWorks*)
- Quiet and collaborative study spaces



### Stetson Law Library

- ABA Accredited
- Seven day access to library facility and collections
- Core collection as defined by the American Bar Association in Standard 606.
- 5 fulltime librarians with Master's Degrees or above
- Reference Service
- Webliographies/Subject Guides
- Student orientations
- Open computer access
- Self Service Copiers
- Quiet study areas

### Pinellas County Law Library (Supplemental)

- Onsite library staff assistance
- Comprehensive Florida and Federal Law print collection
- Westlaw and Shepard's Online
- Links to legal resources on the web
- Copy/ Fax services

### **(G-601.C - D)**

- D. How does the program evaluate the adequacy of the library and information resources? **(G-601.B)**

#### **St. Petersburg College Library Collection Development**

As is stated in the SPC Faculty Manual, it is the policy of SPC through its libraries to select, commensurate with budgetary and space allocations, books, electronic resources, audio-visuals and related materials that support

1. The aims and objectives of the college.
2. The content of courses offered in the curriculum of a given campus.
3. The teaching methods of faculty members of a site.
4. The special needs of the students of a site.
5. The needs of distance learners and faculty.

The college also supports the tenet that academic integrity and responsibility to the college community include free access to materials representing divergent points of view concerning controversial problems and issues.

Material purchases are developed through formal collection development policies and procedures. Library staff determines institutions with similar programs, and propose literature and resources that best represent current practices. Campus library staff use various recommended selection aids (Choice, etc.), as well as published standards and guidelines outlined by professional, regional, and national accrediting bodies, to assemble lists for potential purchase. The library collection of electronic books, databases and

websites is extensive and offers students and faculty easy access from remote locations. The library supports Interlibrary Loan services through the LINCC, OCLC, and Docline.

As the curriculum is the most important influence on the development of the M. M. Bennett Library collection, librarians obtain suggestions and advice about materials selection from the faculty and the administration. A librarian assigned as liaison to the program attends and participates in new student orientations, has developed expertise with legal research methods and materials, provides instruction, and creates learning aids including the LibGuide for the Paralegal Program. Recommendations from students are welcomed. Curriculum and Instruction Committee minutes are reviewed to note new course development and any changes in major learning outcomes that warrant additional resources. Selection and budget allocation responsibility is retained by the library. Faculty members are surveyed regularly to measure how well the library serves the needs of the programs and courses of study. Administrators are consulted on a regular basis for selection advice and significant additions to the collection also will be reported to the campus administration. Library Material Request forms are available on the library homepage and in each library for faculty, staff, students, administrators and others to make suggestions for library materials for consideration.

#### Tools

- AcqWEB
- Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Web Reviews
- Choice
- Reviews from library review journals (print or other)
- Reviews from other reputable discipline related journals
- Sites included in university subject listings: Rutgers, Berkeley, etc.
- Virtual Acquisitions Shelf
- Professional Association's publication recommendations: American Bar Association (ABA), National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA), National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA)
- Library Catalogs for universities known for excellent paralegal/legal programs and collections

#### Assessment

- Each April the St. Petersburg College Libraries administer an annual survey to provide opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to provide feedback on its services and resources.
- Librarians invite suggestions for improvement during instruction sessions and informal one-on-one assistance provided in the library.
- Through liaison visits with faculty, librarians assess needs for future resource and service development.

#### **Stetson Law Library**

The Stetson Law Library serves a law school accredited by the American Bar Association and thereby, complies with the standards for evaluation of library services and resources requisite to accreditation.

**Pinellas County Law Library** collection and service evaluation ensures the mission stated below:

*“The Pinellas County Law Libraries are committed to providing cost effective and timely access to significant print and non-print legal resources at the local, state, and federal level useful to the Courts of the Sixth Judicial Circuit, the practicing Bar, Pinellas County Agencies, and the public in their search for law-related information and their pursuit of justice.”*

- E. If your program has an affiliation with an ABA approved law school that allows paralegal students full use of the hard copy collection in the law school’s library, submit as Exhibit 26 the following:
1. A letter from the law school librarian confirming that paralegal students can use the law library’s hard copy collection.
  2. An inventory of the paralegal periodicals and texts required by G-601.G.7 - 8.

A letter from Stetson University College of Law Librarian Rebecca Trammell is included as Exhibit 26. A list of their paralegal holdings is also included.

The Stetson Law Library is at the southern end of the county. The college maintains a research collection on the Clearwater Campus in northern Pinellas County.

- F. If your program does not have an affiliation with an ABA approved law school, submit as Exhibit 26, an inventory of materials in the collection under each of the following categories, noting the most recent update.
1. State code(s).
  2. State or regional reporter(s).
  3. State or regional digest(s).
  4. A resource for checking validity and currency of primary source materials, e.g., Shepard’s Citations.
  5. Legal encyclopedia(s).
  6. Texts, practice manuals, and form books for all legal specialty courses. *(Include name, author, edition, date of publication, and publisher. Be sure to include the materials for every legal specialty course.)*
  7. Local and state bar journals, legal newspapers, and periodicals devoted to the paralegal profession.
  8. Texts and other resources (not listed in #7 above) about the paralegal profession. *(Include name, author, edition, date of publication, and publisher.)*
  9. Law dictionaries.

The college also maintains a law library on the Clearwater Campus and that documentation is included in Exhibit 26 as well.

**(G-601.G)**

- G. Does your program provide access to (1) a resource for checking the validity and currency of primary source materials, e.g., Shepard’s Citations; (2) a legal encyclopedia; (3) local and state bar journals; newspapers, and periodicals devoted to the paralegal profession; or (4)

law dictionaries, **exclusively** in electronic format? If so, provide the following information to demonstrate compliance with Guideline interpretations:

1. Indicate which collection requirements noted above are met exclusively through electronic access.
2. Indicate what electronic resources are used to meet the requirement(s). N/A

**(G-601.H)**

H. What access do students have to research materials and resources in electronic formats? List and describe each electronic format (i.e., subscription services, Internet access, etc) including the number of passwords if applicable and the number of terminals at which students may access materials in each format. **(G-601.J)**

The M. M. Bennett Library at St. Petersburg College provides over 130 subscription databases to all students remotely and on campus via the web. The databases cover a wide range of subject areas and include access to scholarly and popular material in ebooks, journals, magazines, news sources, government documents, streamed digital collections, and more. The college libraries provide more than 200 open access computers. In addition the following resources provide targeted support of the Paralegal curriculum:

**Paralegal LibGuide:** <http://spcollege.libguides.com/content.php?pid=101648&sid=764199>

A guide designed to connect students with St. Petersburg College print, and electronic paralegal resources. It includes an extensive list of web resources as well.

Library Home » Help Guides Home » Paralegal Resources Admin Sign In

## Paralegal Resources

Last update: May 25th, 2010 URL: <http://spcollege.libguides.com/paralegal> [Print/Mobile Guide](#) [RSS Updates](#) [SHARE](#)

[Home](#) [Lexis Nexis Academic](#) [Westlaw](#) [Websites](#) [Other Databases for Legal](#) [Print Legal Collection](#)

[Home](#) [Print/Mobile Page](#)  [This Guide](#) [Go](#)

### Lexis & Database Access

- Logon to Lexis Nexis & SPC databases
- Westlaw
- Lexis Nexis – Campus Only

### Florida Bar Association

- Florida Bar Association Rules of Procedure - Professional Practice

Comments (0)

### Lexis Nexis Academic - News

Lexis Nexis Academic has a new Easy Search Front page.

- Search Cases from Easy Search

Or use US Legal on blue Sidebar for:

- Federal & State Cases
- Shepard's® Citations
- Landmark Cases
- Federal Statutes, Codes & Regulations
- State Statutes, Codes & Regulations
- Law Reviews
- Legal Reference
- Patents
- Tax Law

- Logon to Lexis Nexis & SPC databases
- Search Operators - Westlaw & Lexis Nexis Compared [i](#)  
Both Westlaw & Lexis Nexis Academic use advanced search protocols for more precise searching. See this comparison of how to use wildcards, boolean operators & other protocols.

### Research Tutorials

- New Lexis Nexis Easy Search
- Case Research via Lexis Nexis - Basic
- Lexis Nexis Business Information Search
- Music Law
- Lexis Nexis Academic\_ New Full Searching

### Subscription Services: (web accessible remotely and from over 200 open access library computers)

- Wilson's Legal Periodicals and Books (unlimited access by student number)  
*Legal Periodicals Full Text* includes scholarly articles, symposia, jurisdictional surveys, court decisions, legislation, books, and book reviews.  
Coverage dates: Indexing 1981+, Abstracting 1990+, "select" Full Text 1995+
- Lexis Nexis Academic* (unlimited access by student number)  
Provides access to primary and secondary source materials such as case law, statutes, regulations, legal news, and law reviews. See itemized below:
  - Law review articles from over 500 publications
  - Legal news from more than 300 legal newspapers, magazines, and newsletters
  - U.S. Supreme Court decisions from January 1790 to present, searchable by majority opinion, minority opinion, concurring opinion, counsel, or headnotes
  - U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decisions
  - U.S. District Court decisions from 1789 to present
  - Decisions from Bankruptcy Courts; U.S. Court of International Trade; Tax Courts; Courts of Customs and Patent Appeals, and Veterans, Commerce, and Military Courts

State court decisions at all court levels for all 50 states and territories

All Federal laws from 1988 to the present

Federal regulations: Federal Register, Code of Federal Regulations, U.S. Attorney General Opinions, and Federal Acquisition Regulations and Supplements

Codes for all 50 states and territories, plus constitutions, court rules, and Attorneys General opinions

The IRS bulletin, IRS regulations, ABA Tax Lawyer, AICPA Tax Adviser, and more

Patents from 1971 forward, searchable by keyword, patent number, classification number, lawyer, assignee, inventor, or summary

European Union law from the CELEX database and international case law from a number of other countries

Law school directories, including the Martindale-Hubbell Law School Directory and NALP National Directory of Law Schools

Source: <http://academic.lexisnexis.com/online-services/academic/academic-content-legal-research.aspx#>

- *WestLaw* (128 student passwords)  
Westlaw provides access to primary law, legal analysis, and litigation materials, KeyCite and 24/7 research assistance.

## SECTION VII

### PHYSICAL PLANT

G-701 through G-703

A. Describe the office space that is assigned to the program director, staff, and faculty in the program. **(G-703.A)**

The program occupies office space in the Social Science building on the Clearwater Campus. The administrative assistant and the dean occupy two large offices which provide a reception area and a conference area.

Faculty offices are in the adjoining hall along with an adjunct office. The same building houses the new courtroom which will accommodate bench trials, jury trials and appellate oral argument and has an auditorium seating capacity of 66 outside the well of the courtroom.

B. Describe the areas where students may meet privately with faculty and staff. **(G-703.B)**

***Note: G-701 and G-702 require that the physical facilities, space, equipment and other instructional aids be sufficient and suitable for the program. Program Directors should be prepared to demonstrate compliance with both of the Guidelines to the site visit team at the time of the site visit.***

Students can meet privately with faculty and staff in any one of five offices.