

**Site Visit Report  
Reapproval**

**PARALEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM  
Pima Community College  
Tucson, Arizona  
September 16-17, 2024**

**Site Visit Team Members**

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Pima Community College (PCC) has applied to the American Bar Association for reapproval of its Paralegal Studies Program. ABA Standing Committee Chair and Site Visit Team Chair, Robyn Ice, JD, MFA, Director of the General Legal Studies Program at Tulane University; and Michael Speck, JD, Director of the Paralegal Studies Program at Tulsa Community College, performed the virtual site visit on September 16 and 17, 2024.

PCC's Program began operating in 1982 and received its initial ABA approval in August 1987. The Program was most recently reapproved effective August 2016.

The Standing Committee has adopted a policy for the use of virtual visits. In accordance with the Approval Commission's Guidelines for Conducting Virtual Site Visits, the Program Director has elected to hold a virtual site visit. This visit was conducted in accordance with the Standing Committee's policy and the Approval Commission's Guidelines.

The site visit consisted of the following virtual activities:

- Virtual tour of the campus;
- Virtual meeting with Lynnae Thandiwe, J.D., Program Director;
- Virtual Meeting with Dr. Nina Corsen, Campus Vice President;
- Virtual meeting with Dr. James Craig, Dean of Business and Information Technology Division;
- Virtual meeting with Tom Tenney, Director of Instructional Design and Online Learning;
- Virtual meeting with Eric Borin, Paralegal and Business Program Advisor; Amber Rix, Enrollment Advisor for Paralegal Program; and Maira Rodriguez, Director of Virtual Support;
- Virtual meeting with 8 members of the Advisory Committee: Mary Ellen Butera, Rocio Caseñeda, Gwen Gorbette, Jonathan Hildebrand, Erica Marinone, Christina Muckey, Debbie Sutton, and Deimos Thorne (vice chair);
- Virtual meeting with 5 adjunct faculty members: Janette Bloss, Gwen Gorbette, Kasey Coughlin, Shawn Jensvold, and Stanlee West-Watt;
- Virtual meeting with 9 graduates: Paul Birmingham, Molly Burreal, Kim Flaherty, Melanie Garcia, Charlee Martin, Amber Riddle, Tiffany Rivera, Jay Spiegel, and Jenny Staskey;
- Virtual meeting with 5 currently enrolled students;
- Virtual meeting with Michael Tulino, Registrar;
- Virtual meeting with Issac Abbs, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer;

- Virtual library tour;
- Virtual meeting with Emily Besich, Downtown Campus Library Department Head;
- Review of PAR 104-Paralegal Ethics and PAR 101 – Intro to Paralegal Careers, offered in an online format;
- Review of recorded Zoom sessions of portions of PAR 211 - Domestic Relations & Family Law, PAR 208 – 211 – Legal Writing, offered in a blended/hybrid format;
- Examination of student files, student practical assignments, course and faculty evaluations, and graduate and employer surveys; and
- An exit meeting with Program Director, Lynnae Thandiwe, J.D., and Dr. James Craig, Dean of Business and Information Technology Division.

## **SECTION I** **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **G-101 – 107**

#### **Institution**

PCC is a publicly supported community college with a student body of 37,000 students across six campuses. Students are primarily from the Tucson area. The Paralegal Program is located on the Downtown Campus of PCC, and classes are offered in the in-person, remote, hybrid, and asynchronous online formats.

PCC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, was most recently reaccredited in February 2017, and will be undergoing the HLC's re-accreditation site visit in November 2024.

#### **Program**

PCC offers an Associate of Applied Science degree, requiring the completion of sixty-one (61) semester credits, and a Post-Associate Certificate (PAC) in Paralegal Studies, requiring the completion of forty (40) semester credits of legal specialty courses. PCC offers day, evening, and online classes.

In addition to offering classes in asynchronous online format, the Program offers classes in blended/hybrid, and remote synchronous instruction. These formats are described more fully in Section 302 below.

Despite the global pandemic that occurred during the reporting period, enrollments have been steady, with 121 students enrolled in the AAS degree program in the 2021 to 2022 academic year and 57 students enrolled in the PAC program during the same period. During the reporting period, 163 students earned the AAS degree, and 84 students earned the PAC.

## **SECTION II** **ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **G-201**

#### **Goals and Objectives**

The Program has clear goals and objectives stated in measurable terms. The Program's goals are published in the Online College Catalog as Program Learning Outcomes. The goals restate the objectives set forth below as Program Objectives.

The Program's objectives are as follows:

1. Define the boundaries of the paralegal career field, explain the duties assigned and the responsibilities delegated to paralegals, including the knowledge of legal ethics.  
(Paralegal Profession & Ethical Obligations);

2. Demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in person, by telephone, and in writing with lawyers, clients, and witnesses (including interviewing), court personnel, co-workers, and other legal/business professionals. [Communication (Verbal & Written)]
3. Organize, summarize, analyze, and apply factual and legal information for use in preparing legal correspondence, and office, court, and other documents for attorney review. (Critical Thinking)
4. Demonstrate the ability to use both print and electronic sources to find and analyze a variety of legal sources, including statutes, rules of court, rules of evidence, case law and regulations, and the ability to apply them to a given set of facts. (Legal Research)
5. Describe the sources of law, hierarchy and powers of various state and federal courts and demonstrate the paralegal's role during litigation (including notetaking, preparing pleadings, motions, discovery, and other documents). (Courts & Litigation)

The Program's stated Goal of providing "students with the knowledge, skills, values, and abilities to become competent and ethical paralegals who can perform effectively in a variety of legal settings in the private and public sectors" is not published along with the Program objectives, however.

- *Suggestion: The Site Team suggests that the Program's stated Goal of providing "students with the knowledge, skills, values, and abilities to become competent and ethical paralegals who can perform effectively in a variety of legal settings in the private and public sectors" be published along with the Program objectives. G-201.*

### **Program Director Authority and Administration Support**

The Program Director is delegated the authority necessary for developing and implementing the Program. The Site Team met with Dr. James Craig, Dean of Business and Information Technology; and Dr. Nina Corsen, campus president. All administrators who met with the team were extremely knowledgeable about the Program and supportive of its goals.

### **Organizational Structure**

The Program is part of the Business and Information Technology Division. The Program Director reports to the Dean of Business and Information Technology Division, who reports to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The organizational structure of the Program and its place within the institution allows the Program to achieve its goals. The team also met with Tom Tenney and Janice Kempster, Director of Instructional Design and Director of Online Learning; Eric Borin, Program Advisor for Paralegal Program; Maira Rodriguez, Director of Virtual Support; Amber Rix, Enrollment Advisor for Paralegal Program; and Jared Burton, Student Services Operations Manager, all of whom assist the Program Director in fulfilling the leadership functions required in the Guidelines. Communication and coordination are facilitated among faculty members, administrators, and students.

## **Planning**

The Program engages in both short-term and long-term planning, under the leadership of the Program Director, with input and assistance from the Dean of the Business and Information Technology Division, the Advisory Committee, faculty, and students. Such planning encompasses the matters set forth in the Guidelines.

## **G-202**

### **Comparability**

The Paralegal Program Director has duties and resources similar to those of the heads of other academic programs within the Business and Information Technology Division, including curriculum and program development, hiring adjunct instructors, physical resources, resources for virtual instruction, and overseeing budget requests. Employment conditions are uniform for similar programs within the Business and Information Technology Division. All program directors and full-time instructors have similar office accommodations and technical and secretarial assistance. All faculty have access to professional development funds. The Program Director serves on decision-making committees within the institution.

## **G-203**

### **Advisory Committee Composition**

The Program Director nominates members to the Advisory Committee. The 29 members currently serving on the Advisory Committee include representatives from all categories required by the Guidelines, including attorneys, public and private sector paralegals, a manager of paralegals, judges, general public representatives, and members from PCC. A majority of the members are appointed from the community the Program serves and are not currently affiliated with the institution. As the Advisory Committee roster includes several internal PCC members, the Site Team confirmed that insiders do not dominate the meetings. The Site Team also confirmed that practicing attorneys participate actively on the advisory committee, including Rocio Caseñeda, who attended the meeting with the Site Visit team.

### **Advisory Committee Meetings**

The Advisory Committee meets two times each year, generally in the fall and spring semesters. The Advisory Committee meets as a whole, with no subcommittees. Meetings generally include attendance by a majority of all required constituencies. The minutes of the meetings include (1) a list of those in attendance along with the constituency they represent; (2) a list of the absent members; (3) the topics discussed; and (4) the actions taken. The Site Team confirmed that the Advisory Committee meeting minutes include lists of those in attendance and the constituency they represent, lists of the absent members, the topics discussed, and the actions taken.

### **Advisory Committee Responsibilities**

The Site Team confirmed that the Program Director and Advisory Committee are aware of the changes made to the Guidelines relating to the Advisory Committee and have implemented the changes, including defining the areas of responsibility set forth in G-203.D and E. The minutes of the meetings demonstrate that the Advisory Committee offers guidance with respect to (1) changes and trends in the field; (2) the job market; and (3) assessing the effectiveness of the total

Program in terms of its curriculum and objectives, the needs of the legal community, and graduate performance. The Advisory Committee also provides guidance in the areas of developing career opportunities for students, publicizing the Program, and evaluating the adequacy of the library resources. The members are familiar with the objectives of the Program and are dedicated to the continued excellence of the Program.

## **G-204**

### **Equality of Opportunity**

PCC has non-discrimination policies in effect which are disseminated online. The PCC Catalog contains a non-discrimination statement as to “race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law in the administration of College educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.” The Student Handbook sets forth a commitment to “ensuring equal access for students with disabilities by collaborating with staff, faculty and administrators.” These policies are supported by PCC’s Access and Disability Resources, Student ADA/504 Coordinator Kehn Hosto, and the office of Access and Disability Resources.

The Program and PCC take proactive steps to recruit a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. The racial composition of the faculty and student body is analogous to the general population served by the University.

## **G-205**

### **Financial Resources**

Pima Community College is part of the State College System. As a public college, it receives approximately fifty percent (50%) of its financial support from annual appropriations from the state’s General Assembly, with the remaining fifty percent (50%) of the budget coming from student tuition. The Paralegal Program receives adequate resources and funding from the College to accomplish its goals. The College provides sufficient support, including access to student services, instructional activities, and library resources. The College also provides sufficient support for students taking instruction through remote synchronous instruction, including access to student services, instructional activities, administrative resources, faculty, and library resources.

Although the Program’s report lists no expenditures for technical and support services, the Site Team confirmed that the Program receives adequate funding for all required categories listed in the Guidelines. As legal specialty classes are offered through remote synchronous and asynchronous online instruction, the Site Team also confirmed that the Program receives sufficient support, including access to student services, instructional activities, administrative resources, faculty, and library resources, to support its remote Paralegal students.

## **G-206**

### **Type of Institution**

PCC is a publicly supported community college.

## **SECTION III** **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

## **G-301**

### **Professional Competence**

PCC offers an Associate of Applied Science, requiring the completion of a total of sixty-one (61) semester credits; and a Post-Associate Certificate (PAC) in Paralegal Studies, requiring the completion of forty-two (42) semester credits.

Certificate candidates must have “earned a bachelor's degree, or an associate degree which is designed to transfer to a university, and which includes a composition course, from a regionally accredited institution” and must complete forty-two (42) semester credits. An AAS degree candidate must complete at least thirty-nine (39) semester credits of legal specialty courses, at least sixteen (16) semester credits of general education courses and six (6) hours of Other Program Requirements.

### **Instructional Methodology**

The Site Team had the opportunity to observe two remote synchronous classes, as well as classes offered in asynchronous format, as described more fully below. In observing the classes and examining student work, the Site Team concluded that the instructors emphasize the skills and understanding needed in the paralegal field. The Program covers all critical paralegal skills needed in the local community. The professors help students master important legal concepts and then apply those concepts to practical assignments that prepare the students to work as paralegals. The Site Team observed the students in the classes interacting with the faculty and with each other.

The Site Team viewed PAR 104—Paralegal Ethics and PAR 101—Intro to Paralegal Careers, offered in an online format. In Paralegal Ethics, the Site Team observed a lecture/discussion about the tort of battery. The lecture was enhanced using PowerPoint slides, and the students were engaged in the presentation, answering questions posed by the instructor, and asking questions about the material. In Legal Research, the Site Team observed hands-on instruction in researching case law in the library.

Students and graduates found the faculty personable and accessible, and, when not in class, students communicate easily with faculty via email or telephone. Students remarked that the Program Director (who also teaches in the program) was especially quick to respond to email even over the weekend.

## **Further Education**

PCC currently has no active, full articulation agreements. Most individual PCC courses, however, will transfer to various other colleges, including the University of Arizona, Arizona State University, and Northern Arizona University, as elective credits. In Fall 2022, the Dean overseeing the program requested that the Paralegal AAS be considered for transfer to The University of Arizona's BA in Law.

Transfer opportunities for higher or additional degrees/certificates are discussed with students as part of the program advising process. The processes for transferring PCC PAR credits to other institutions and for using the completed AAS Degree as a foundation for more advanced degrees at other institutions are discussed in the required PAR 101 – Introduction to the Paralegal Careers course. Students also meet with advisors and the Program's counselor to discuss their long-term goals. In addition, students in PAR 101 receive information about programs of interest at Arizona universities.

PCC advisors and faculty encourage all AAS degree students to work toward completion of a bachelor's degree. Representatives from several Arizona colleges provide on-campus recruiting sessions each semester, to answer student questions and provide information. All PCC students receive information about the Arizona Legal Paraprofessional License and the Arizona Certified Legal Document Preparer License, via a weekly newsletter and informational seminars sponsored by the local bar association, statewide paralegal organizations, and the University of Arizona College of Law. In addition, in PAR 104 (Ethics), students complete assignments addressing both licenses.

In discussing the possibility of additional transfer agreements, the Dean of Business and Information Technology Division stated that Arizona does not allow the type of articulation agreements typically seen in other states but does offer pathways that encourage and facilitate the efforts of students to continue their progress toward four-year degrees after graduation.

## **Assessment**

The Program has a written plan for evaluation, review, and improvement that aligns with the Program's goals and objectives. The plan includes all the elements contained in G-301.E including (1) the program's stated goals and objectives; (2) the assessment tools with the specific questions/activities aligned to measure each stated goal and objective; (3) the way in which input is obtained from graduates and employers of graduates to assess how the program meets its stated goals and objectives; and (4) the frequency with which each assessment tool will be conducted.

The Plan includes several tools to assess Program Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes. These mechanisms include course-embedded assessments; current student surveys; graduate focus surveys; employer surveys; and input from the Paralegal Advisory Committee.

The Program requests that students complete graduate surveys when they are eligible for graduation. Alumni are surveyed every year after they graduate, and employers are surveyed every other year. The Program Director uses Google software to tabulate the surveys and works closely with the college's Strategy, Analytics and Research Department, which analyzes the more

substantial surveys, produces a report, and supports the Program in the collection, analysis, and reporting of complex assessment data.

Each course has several course learning objectives (CLOs), each of which is mapped to a program learning objective (PLO). Each semester, each course and corresponding CLOs are assessed and reported at the end of the semester. The course-level assessment is part of the program-level assessment.

Individual courses and the Program are continuously evaluated using the results of the assessments. The Program Director determines the effectiveness and whether the stated goals of the Program are being met. Furthermore, the Program Director constantly seeks informal feedback regarding the Program from administrators, faculty, and students.

The results of the Program survey of Graduates and the Program survey of Employers of graduates are shared with the Advisory Committee at the Advisory Committee meetings with the faculty at the faculty meetings and with administrators at various times throughout the academic year on an as-needed basis.

No significant changes to the Program have been made during the reporting period as a result of the survey results, but because of changing circumstances in the legal field, minor changes to course content as well as course delivery methods (online/hybrid) have been made. In addition, several courses were moved to a Saturday schedule. A student survey resulted in offering more paralegal summer courses in summer 2022.

The Site team confirmed that the Program Director is aware of the information that must now be included as part of the Program's assessment plan under the revised Guidelines and has revised the plan accordingly to include the four elements listed in G- 301.E. The Program has aligned its specific assessment tools, questions, and activities, including the employer and graduate survey questions, to each of its stated goals and objectives. The Program is obtaining the required input from graduates and employers of graduates to assess program goals and objectives and is using separate instruments or separate questions on a single instrument to obtain the required information from graduates.

The Program is summarizing, synthesizing, and analyzing all assessment data to demonstrate how the Program is meeting its stated goals and objectives and is sharing the assessment results with the relevant constituencies and using the assessment results to make changes to the program.

## **G-302**

### **Post-Secondary Education/Accreditation**

PCC is a post-secondary program and is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. It was most recently accredited in 2017.

## **Curriculum Requirements**

Students must complete 61 credits to earn the Associate of Applied Science degree, including at least 39 semester credits of legal specialty coursework (24 Legal Specialty Required and 15 Legal Specialty Electives), 16 semester credits of general education coursework in at least three disciplines, and 6 credits in other program requirements.

The legal specialty courses required for the AAS degree are:

<u>Course Number</u>	<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Type</u>
PAR 101	Introduction to Paralegal Careers	3	LS-R
PAR 102	Civil Litigation Procedures I	3	LS-R
PAR 103	Legal Research	3	LS-R
PAR 104	Paralegal Ethics	3	LS-R`
PAR 106	Civil and Criminal Evidence	3	LS-R
PAR 202	Civil Litigation Procedures II	3	LS-R
PAR 211	Legal Writing	3	LS-R
PAR 213	Computer Assisted Legal Research	3	LS-R
<b>Total LS-R</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>LS-R</b>

**Choose Courses totaling 15 credits:**

PAR 209	Bankruptcy Procedures	3	LS-E
PAR 203	Tort Law Procedures	3	LS-E
PAR 204	Wills, Trusts & Estates	3	LS-E
PAR 206	Criminal Law Procedures I	3	LS-E
PAR 207	Criminal Law Procedures II	3	LS-E
PAR 208	Domestic Relations & Family Law	3	LS-E
PAR 215	Corporate Law Procedures	3	LS-E
PAR 217	Real Estate Legal Procedures	3	LS-E
PAR 218	Administrative Law: Employment	1	LS-E
PAR 219	Administrative Law: Immigration	1	LS-E
PAR 220	Administrative Law: Social Security	1	LS-E
PAR 290	Paralegal Internship-4.00	1	LS-E
<b>Total LS-E Credits</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>LS-E</b>
<b>Total Legal Specialty Credits Required for AAS</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>LS-R+ LS-E</b>

The PAC requires completion of 42 semester credits, including 39 credits of legal specialty coursework (24 Legal Specialty Required and 15 Legal Specialty Electives), plus 3 credits of other program requirements.

The legal specialty courses required for the PAC are:

<u>Course Number</u>	<u>Course Title</u>	<u>Credits</u>	<u>Type</u>
PAR 101	Introduction to Paralegal Careers	3	LS-R
PAR 102	Civil Litigation Procedures I	3	LS-R
PAR 103	Legal Research	3	LS-R
PAR 104	Paralegal Ethics	3	LS-R`

PAR 106	Civil and Criminal Evidence	3	LS-R
PAR 202	Civil Litigation Procedures II	3	LS-R
PAR 211	Legal Writing	3	LS-R
PAR 213	Computer Assisted Legal Research	3	LS-R
<b>Total LS-R</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>LS-R</b>

**Choose Courses totaling 15 credits:**

PAR 209	Bankruptcy Procedures	3	LS-E
PAR 203	Tort Law Procedures	3	LS-E
PAR 204	Wills, Trusts & Estates	3	LS-E
PAR 206	Criminal Law Procedures I	3	LS-E
PAR 207	Criminal Law Procedures II	3	LS-E
PAR 208	Domestic Relations & Family Law	3	LS-E
PAR 215	Corporate Law Procedures	3	LS-E
PAR 217	Real Estate Legal Procedures	3	LS-E
PAR 218	Administrative Law: Employment	1	LS-E
PAR 219	Administrative Law: Immigration	1	LS-E
PAR 220	Administrative Law: Social Security	1	LS-E
PAR 290	Paralegal Internship-4.00	1	LS-E
<b>Total LS-E Credits</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>LS-E</b>
<b>Total Legal Specialty Credits Required for PAC</b>		<b>39</b>	<b>LS-R+ LS-E</b>

**General Education/Total Unit Requirements**

Students in AAS degree option must complete a minimum of 16 semester credits of general education courses in at least three disciplines, plus 6 other program requirements. The general education courses are rationally sequenced.

Students that are in the PAC option must have earned a minimum of a bachelor's degree or an associate degree from a regionally accredited institution. The associate degree must be designed to transfer to a university and must include a composition course. Before admission, students must submit transcripts, which PCC reviews to verify that the underlying degrees meet the criteria. The minimum degree requirement ensures that PAC students have taken the requisite general education requirements. There are no exemptions to the general education or total unit requirements.

In the 2018-2019 academic year, based upon recommendations of the Department of Education and the Higher Learning Commission and financial aid payment concerns, the College directed all programs to reduce total AAS credits to 61-63. At that time, the Program reduced the number of General Education courses required for the AAS from 18 to 15. In the PCC academic catalog in effect for the reporting period and through the site visit, AAS students were required to take six credits in English (WRT I and II); three credits in Arts and Humanities; three credits in Social and Behavioral Science; three credits in Math and Science, along with at least one accounting course and one computer skills course: Accounting - ACC 105 or 211 and Computer Skills - CIS 104 or CIS 120. The computer and accounting courses are specifically excluded from the category of General Education courses under G-302.E.1, however.

Thus, during the reporting period and at the time of the Site Visit, students in the AAS degree program are required to complete 61-63 credits to graduate with the AAS, but only 15-16 credits, rather than the minimum of 18, were General Education courses. With the college curriculum cycle that began in January 2024, the Program Director requested a curriculum change to return an additional three credits of Guidelines-compliant General Education credits back into the AAS and reduce the number of Legal Specialty Electives from 18 to 15 credits. This change will become effective in the Fall 2025 academic year.

The Program will provide information regarding the number of students who graduated without the minimum 18 credits of GE coursework.

- *Compliance Issue: G-302.D requires students to complete a total of at least sixty semester credits or the equivalent, of which at least eighteen semester credits or the equivalent must consist of General Education courses, as defined in G-302.E. As the Program currently requires students to complete 15 credits of General Education course work that meets the G-302.E definition, the Program is out of compliance with Guideline G-302.D and G-302.E.*

### **Writing Proficiency and Oral Communication Competency**

The AAS degree requires completion of both WRT 101 (Writing I) and WRT 102 (Writing II), which are college-level writing courses. The Post-Degree Certificate requires three credits of college-level writing (typically WRT 102).

Students in both the AAS degree and PAC programs are required to take PAR 211-Legal Writing. The Paralegal Program also evaluates written and oral communication skills as one of its Program Goals and as part of the College's continuing assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Finally, all of the Program's legal specialty required/core courses contain writing components and assignments, as do all legal specialty elective courses.

Several legal specialty courses incorporate instruction in oral communication and require that students demonstrate competency by giving oral presentations in class or leading class discussions. In addition, legal specialty courses include in-class group work, which improves students' skills in communicating in small groups. In online and hybrid classes, students participate in online discussions that develop written communication skills.

The Site Team confirmed that students without a degree or with only an AAS degree are not admitted to the certificate option, thereby enabling the Program to ensure that all students meet the writing proficiency, oral communication competency, and general education requirements.

### **General Education Transfer**

General education courses are accepted in transfer. Per PCC policies, the College will accept credits for classes taken at regionally accredited institutions, provided the student earned a grade of C. General education credits are evaluated by the PCC Admissions Office for transferability (Registrar) and for their equivalency to specific PCC general education courses. The Paralegal Program Advisor/Counselor also reviews the evaluated transferred courses for their applicability

to the Paralegal Program's general education requirements. The Office of Admissions and Records reviews appeals of transfer credit decisions.

### **Technology Skills**

The AAS degree requires completion of CSA 104 or CIS 120, and PAR 212 - Law Office Computerization is available as a legal specialty course elective. Individual and group assistance is provided in all legal specialty courses as needed. Since approximately 2020, students have been using Desire to Learn (D2L) aka Brightspace as the learning platform. This platform requires technology skills. In addition, students are offered a brief introduction and more in-depth webinar training on the use of D2L.

### **Legal Specialty Courses**

The Site Team reviewed the practical assignments provided by the Program for each legal specialty course and confirmed that the legal specialty courses emphasize practical skills and include appropriate practical assignments. The legal specialty courses have been designed for paralegals and meet the instructional requirements of the Guidelines. There are no exemptions to the legal specialty course requirements. The only course pre-requisite or co-requisite is PAR 101 – Intro to Paralegal Careers.

### **Ethical and Professional Responsibility**

Legal ethics and professional responsibility are the single most emphasized area in the paralegal studies curriculum. Instruction in legal ethics and professional responsibility begins in PAR 104- Paralegal Ethics, continues in PAR 104-Paralegal Ethics, and accounts for approximately five percent of class time in all other legal specialty courses.

### **Instruction in Legal Research**

Instruction in legal research is provided in PAR 101, Introduction to Paralegal Careers, PAR 103, Legal Research, which covers primarily conceptual and book-based legal research; and PAR 213, Computer-Assisted Legal Research, which focuses upon online research. All three courses are required in both Program options.

All students receive and are trained to use Westlaw subscriptions. In addition, students have access to online materials through alternate websites such as the Arizona Revised Statutes, which are available through multiple websites. Access to many of the resources on Pima college library database are available online. When enrolled in Legal Research, students have access to Westlaw passwords, which can be used at any computer on campus or elsewhere. Introductory instruction is provided in PAR 101, Introduction to Paralegal Careers (an overview); PAR 103, Legal Research

### **Legal Specialty Internship**

PAR 290, Paralegal Internship, is an elective, four-credit hour legal specialty course requiring 150 hours of volunteer work experience (three credit hours) and attendance at six seminar class meetings throughout the semester (one credit hour). The credit hours are awarded on a Pass/Fail basis.

Students take the course in their final semester. Internship applicants must meet various prerequisites before qualifying to apply for an internship. Students apply for the internship course during the semester that immediately precedes the anticipated internship semester. During an Application Meeting, the Program Director, who teaches the Internship class, reviews the applicants' qualifications, site preferences, areas of interest, and general expectations for the course and the internship sites.

Once applicants are deemed qualified, they are matched with an appropriate site. Students who find their own internship sites must seek approval from the Program Director. All potential internship sites complete a Supervisor Application for Intern Sponsorship, which includes a checklist of potential intern duties and list the assignments that the intern will receive. The Program Director then reviews the Supervisor Application to determine if the site meets the necessary qualifications.

Site supervisors provide written evaluations of the interns at mid-term and at the end of the semester. Students also provide a written self-evaluation at the end of their experience. Interns also discuss their experiences at seminar meetings throughout the internship semester. Students receive written information about the Internship via emails, online announcements, and verbal discussions with instructors. All information emphasizes the expectations for both the initial application and the internship experience.

Interns maintain a daily "Learning Journal" documenting the activities they perform. The internship faculty checks this journal in the middle and end of the semester. Interns meet as a group with the Internship Faculty formally at least six times throughout the semester and share material from their journals and experiences, while the Internship Faculty shares career development information in the meetings and in the course's Brightspace learning platform. Individual students and intern sponsors may also meet individually with the Internship Faculty at any time.

### **Legal Specialty Independent Study Courses**

The Program offers no legal specialty courses as independent study courses.

### **Legal Specialty Transfer**

The policy governing acceptance of transfer of legal specialty credits was developed by the Program Director and approved by the Program's Advisory Committee. The written policy is distributed to personnel in the college admissions and counseling departments and published in PCC's online catalog under the Paralegal Program. In short, a maximum of 18 legal specialty credits can be accepted in transfer from another ABA-approved paralegal program.

The Program policy will accept transfer of up to 18 credits of Legal Specialty courses taken at other accredited institutions, provided the courses meet PCC's general requirements for credit transfers and (a) were earned in an ABA-approved program and (b) were evaluated by PCC'S Paralegal Program Director to ensure that each course is equivalent in content level and length.

The Site Team confirmed that the Program's transfer policy for legal specialty coursework, including the limits on the number of legal specialty credits accepted in transfer, is published in the PCC catalog and is available to prospective students and current students.



### **Asynchronous Online Legal Specialty Courses**

The Program offers several legal specialty courses in an online asynchronous format. The Program currently offers the following online asynchronous courses:

- PAR 101-Introduction to paralegal careers
- PAR 102-Civil Litigation Procedures I
- PAR 104-Paralegal Ethics

With the number of alternative delivery courses presently offered by the Program, all students must complete a minimum of nine semester credits in a synchronous format at PCC. This is the case even if a student transfers in the maximum number of legal specialty credits in an asynchronous format. If the Program should add additional courses in asynchronous instructional formats, the Program will need to review how it will ensure students take at least nine semester credits in synchronous instruction.

The Site Team observed two online asynchronous courses and met with the Director of Instructional Design and Online Learning and confirmed that the courses were designed in accordance with the policies and practices in place at the PCC for asynchronous online courses. The College uses the Desire 2 Learn (D2L) platform. The Site Team verified the use of appropriate structured instructional activities, as well as systematic interaction among students and between students and the instructor. The assignments, tests, and projects are similar to those provided in the traditional class format. Faculty provide prompt responses to student questions and prompt feedback on assignments. Students log in using individual student IDs.

The Site Team also confirmed that formal training and assistance for faculty training and assistance for faculty teaching asynchronous online courses is available through the Department of Instructional Design, and that all faculty are required to take at least two levels of five-week training courses before they are permitted to teach. The Director of Online Learning, as well as the students and faculty, all confirmed that the College provides technology support to both faculty and students. Students are screened through the advising and registration process to ensure success in the online environment. Students are required to take an online orientation course before they are permitted to take online asynchronous classes.

The College has a system for assessing the effectiveness of the online asynchronous format using student surveys taken online during the course and other methods. The Site Team reviewed sample survey instruments that revealed overall student satisfaction. The students and alumni present during the visit also indicated overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the online asynchronous classes.

### **Blended/Hybrid Legal Specialty Courses**

The Program offers several legal specialty courses in a blended/hybrid format. The Program currently offers the following blended/hybrid courses:

- PAR 101-Introduction to paralegal careers
- PAR 102-Civil Litigation Procedures I
- PAR-103-Legal Research
- PAR 104-Paralegal Ethics

- PAR 106- Civil and Criminal Evidence
- PAR 202-Civil Litigation Procedures II
- PAR 206-Criminal Law Procedures I
- PAR 207-Criminal Law Procedures II
- PAR 208-Domestic Relations & Family Law
- PAR 209-Bankruptcy Procedures
- PAR 215-Corporate Law Procedures
- PAR 217-Real Estate Legal Procedures

Given the current number of alternative delivery courses presently offered by the Program, all students are assured of completing a minimum of nine semester credits in a synchronous format at PCC, even if a student transfers in the maximum number of legal specialty credits in an asynchronous format. If the Program should add additional courses in asynchronous instructional formats, the Program will need to review how it will ensure students take at least nine semester credits in synchronous instruction.

The Site Team observed the blended/hybrid courses. These courses include 30 hours of face-to-face instruction and 15 hours of online instruction. The Site Team also met with the Director of Instructional Design and confirmed that the courses were designed in accordance with the policies and practices in place at the College for blended/hybrid courses. The Site Team verified the use of appropriate structured instructional activities for the online portion of the course. The assignments, tests, and projects are similar to those provided in the traditional class format. Faculty provide prompt responses to student questions and prompt feedback on assignments. Students log in using individual student IDs.

The Site Team also confirmed that formal training and assistance for faculty training and assistance for faculty teaching blended/hybrid are available through the Department of Online Learning. The College provides technology support to both faculty and students. Students are screened through the advising and registration process to ensure success in the blended/hybrid format.

The College has a system for assessing the effectiveness of the blended/hybrid format using student surveys taken during the courses and other methods. The Site Team reviewed sample survey instruments which revealed overall student satisfaction. The students and alumni present during the visit also indicated overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the blended/hybrid classes.

### **Compressed Legal Specialty Courses**

The Program offers no legal specialty courses in a compressed format.

### **Remote Synchronous Instruction Legal Specialty Courses**

The Program has offered several legal specialty courses through remote synchronous instruction. The Program currently offers the following courses through remote synchronous instruction:

- PAR 101-Introduction to paralegal careers
- PAR 102-Civil Litigation Procedures I
- PAR 103-Legal Research
- PAR 104-Paralegal Ethics

- PAR 106- Civil and Criminal Evidence
- PAR 203-Tort Law Procedure
- PAR 204-Wills, Trusts & Estates
- PAR 208-Domestic Relations & Family Law
- PAR 211-Legal Writing
- PAR 215-Corporate Law Procedures
- PAR 213-Computer Assisted Legal Research
- PAR 218-Administrative Law: Employment
- PAR 219-Administrative Law: Immigration
- PAR 220-Administrative Law: Social Security
- PAR 290-Paralegal Internship
- PAR 202-Civil Litigation Procedures II

The Site Team observed several courses delivered through remote synchronous instruction, presented via Zoom. The Site Team verified that courses taught through remote synchronous instruction include in real time faculty-to-student and student-to-student interaction. Therefore, it appears that the instruction provided through this interactive video system should be considered synchronous instruction.

The Site Team met with the Director of Instructional Design and confirmed that the courses were designed in accordance with the policies and practices in place at the College for remote synchronous instruction. The Site Team verified the use of appropriate structured instructional activities, as well as systematic interaction throughout the course among students and between students and the instructor. Faculty provide prompt responses to student questions and prompt feedback on assignments.

The Site Team also confirmed that PCC provides formal training and assistance for faculty training and assistance for faculty teaching remote synchronous courses through the Department of Instructional Design.

The Site Team met with the Director of Online Learning and confirmed that PCC provides technology support to both faculty and students. Students are screened through the advising and registration process to ensure success in the remote synchronous environment. An online orientation for students is required before students take remote synchronous classes.

The College has a system for assessment of the effectiveness of the remote synchronous format using student surveys taken online during the courses. The Site Team reviewed sample survey instruments which revealed overall student satisfaction. The students and alumni present during the visit also indicated overall satisfaction and effectiveness of the remote synchronous classes.

### **Changes in Delivery Method Due to COVID-19**

The Program transitioned its traditional and blended classes to synchronous/asynchronous class delivery during the Spring 2020 semester, impacting 9 traditional legal specialty courses and 3 blended courses.

The legal specialty courses offered by the Program in Spring 2020 are:

<b>Name of Legal Specialty Course</b>	<b>Delivery Method at Start of Spring 2020 Term/Semester*</b>	<b>Delivery Method(s) Used to Complete the Spring 2020 Term/Semester*</b>
PAR 101	Traditional	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 102	Traditional	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 103	Traditional	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 104	Traditional	asynchronous online
PAR 106	Traditional	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 202	Blended/hybrid	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 207	Blended/hybrid	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 208	Traditional	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 211	Traditional	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 213	Traditional	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 290	Traditional	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 215	Blended/hybrid	asynchronous and synchronous online

In Summer 2020, the Program taught 3 synchronous/asynchronous legal specialty courses. The legal specialty courses offered by the Program in Summer 2020 are:

<b>Name of Legal Specialty Course</b>	<b>Delivery Method at Start of Summer 2020 Term/Semester*</b>	<b>Delivery Method(s) Used to Complete the Summer 2020 Term/Semester*</b>
PAR 218	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 219	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 220	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online

For Fall 2020 the Program taught 13 legal specialty courses in a synchronous/ asynchronous format. The legal specialty courses offered by the Program in Fall 2020 are:

<b>Name of Legal Specialty Course</b>	<b>Delivery Method for Fall 2020 Term/Semester Courses*</b>	<b>Delivery Method(s) Used to Complete the Fall 2020 Term/Semester*</b>
PAR 101 (2 sections)	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 102 (2 sections)	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 103	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 104	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 106	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 202	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 204	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 206	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 209	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 211	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 213	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 217	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 290	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online

For Spring 2021 the Program taught 12 legal specialty courses in a synchronous/asynchronous format and 1 course in an asynchronous format. The legal specialty courses offered by the Program in Spring 2021 are:

<b>Name of Legal Specialty Course</b>	<b>Delivery Method for Spring 2021 Term/Semester Courses*</b>	<b>Delivery Method(s) Used to Complete the Spring 2021 Term/Semester*</b>
PAR 101	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 101	Online	online
PAR 102 (2 sections)	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 103	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 104	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online

PAR 106	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 202	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 207	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 208	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 211	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 213	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 290	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online
PAR 215	asynchronous and synchronous online	asynchronous and synchronous online

Based upon the policy adopted by the Standing Committee on June 9, 2020, and the authority given to the Approval Commission to determine under what circumstances the Guidelines are deemed to be satisfied when a program operates in accordance with its institution's policies addressing changes necessitated by the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Site Team confirms that the delivery method for all Spring 2020 courses should be considered the delivery method adopted at the start of the semester.

### **G-303**

#### **Adequacy of Library Resources and Collection Requirements**

The PCC law library collection is housed in the library on the Downtown Campus. The College is also affiliated with the Daniel F. Cracchiolo Law Library, James E. Rogers College of Law, at the University of Arizona, which is two (2) miles from the Downtown Campus.

The University of Arizona's College of Law Library's written confirmation states that "students may use print materials in the law library collection while in the building" but that they "may not, however, check out materials from the law library." Additionally, PCC students may not "have access to Lexis, Westlaw and certain other databases" as the affiliated law library does "provide a limited number of computer workstations where other research databases may be accessed by all members of the public."

The library resources are adequate for the courses taught. All materials required by the Guidelines are current and are included in the print collection, with some exceptions. The citator resource, legal encyclopedia, and several periodicals devoted to the Paralegal profession are current and accessed electronically through NEXISUNI. All students have access to NEXISUNI, to which they may log by entering their "MyPima" username and password via the PCC Library Webpage.

The Site Team confirmed that the mix of print and electronic resources meets the needs of the Program. The library includes numerous up-to-date texts and other resources about the paralegal profession. Any outdated print resources in the library are clearly labelled.

Instructors regularly schedule guided tours of and presentations at the affiliated Daniel F. Cracchiolo Law Library for PCC students. Students in the Legal Research class make at least one trip to the affiliated law library as a class.

The PCC Downtown Campus Library is open Monday through Thursday. 8 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; and Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The affiliated library is open to the public, including PCC students, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Saturday.

PCC library assistance is provided by the librarians at the Downtown Campus. In addition, librarian Emily Besich is assigned to the Paralegal Program. The Program has a dedicated webpage on the PCC library webpage with links to a variety of tools including items such as reference information, books, articles, websites, legal writing and citing information and legal forms.

At the affiliated Daniel F. Cracchiolo Law Library, law librarians are available to assist any member of the public, including paralegal students.

### **Evaluation of Library Resources**

The Program Director, faculty and Advisory Committee work to maintain the law library collection in a way that best serves the needs of the students. Emily Besich, Downtown Campus Library Department Head, met with the Site Team and is extremely supportive of the Paralegal Program.

## **SECTION IV** **FACULTY**

### **G-401**

#### **Qualifications of Program Director**

Lynnae Thandiwe is the Program Director, having assumed the position after the retirement of Gwen Gorvette in May of 2024. She is an attorney and has experience working with paralegals. Before joining the Program as an instructor, Ms. Thandiwe was actively engaged in the practice of law, where she supervised paralegals. Ms. Thandiwe is well respected at PCC and the legal community. She is an active member of the Arizona Bar Association and the local paralegal organization. To date, Ms. Thandiwe has not attended a paralegal educator conference, such as those presented annually by the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE) in both in-person and virtual formats.

- *Suggestion: The Site Team suggests that the Program Director and, if possible, other full-time or adjunct faculty, be encouraged to attend paralegal education conferences, such as those presented annually by AAfPE, either in the in-person or virtual format. G-401.*

### **Qualifications of Faculty**

The Director is the only full-time faculty member, and the others are adjuncts. After she retired, the former Director, attorney Gwen Gorbette, returned to the faculty as an adjunct. Other part-time, adjunct faculty members include attorneys, and paralegals. The faculty members have experience in the fields in which they teach. Students and graduates expressed a high level of satisfaction with the faculty. They described the instructors as excellent teachers, highly approachable, and eager to help with classes and career issues. The faculty were also knowledgeable about the paralegal profession.

### **Professional Development**

The PCC Teaching and Learning Center contributes to instructor and student learning at the college by hosting workshops, lectures, learning communities, fellowships, conferences, mentoring, and other professional development opportunities throughout the year. Most part-time faculty have taken advantage of professional development opportunities during the reporting period. All the full-time faculty have undertaken professional development opportunities on and off campus.

### **Faculty Meetings**

The Site Team confirmed that the Program Director is aware of and has implemented the changes made to the Guidelines relating to the faculty. During the reporting period and up to the time of the Site Visit, the faculty has met twice annually as required by the Guidelines, except in the Spring of 2019 when the Director was on medical leave. The Site Team reviewed minutes of the meetings, which include lists of attendees and absentees, including their full-time or part-time status, along with a record of the topics discussed and actions taken.

### **G-402**

#### **Program Leadership**

The Program Director is full-time and is responsible for all functions that relate to Guideline requirements. The Program Director spends approximately 35% of her time each week in program-related administrative duties, 50% of her time teaching, and 15% of her time on duties not related to the Program. A usual course load at PCC is fifteen (15) credit hours per semester, with the Director receiving six (6) hours of release time. It appears that the Program Director is able to devote adequate time and effort to Program leadership.

### **G-403**

#### **Teaching Conditions**

The size of the faculty is commensurate with the number and type of courses offered and the number and needs of students served. The Faculty Resource Center provides the adjunct faculty with a variety of support services, including clerical/copy services, mailboxes, access to media/technology support, and workspaces with computers and telephones. Space is provided for adjunct faculty to meet privately with students. Full-time faculty receive support services from the Division Dean's office and the IT and instructional media services departments.

## SECTION V ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES

### G-501

#### **Student Admissions and Recruitment**

PCC has an open admissions policy that allows all individuals to further their educational interests. The specific college policies regarding eligibility for admissions are detailed in the online Catalog and state that admission to PCC does not guarantee admission to a specific degree program or to all courses. Students applying for the Post Degree Certificate program must have earned from a regionally accredited institution a bachelor's degree or an associate degree that was designed to transfer to a university and which includes a college-level composition course. PCC must have received the transcript and verified acceptance of the degree before students are admitted to the program. Students who have not completed a college-level composition course must take WRT 101 or WRT 102 at PCC.

#### **Program Literature**

Program information is available on the College's website, and in the Catalog and Student Handbook. The Program literature and promotional materials are accurate, truthful, and not misleading and include a statement that students must take at least nine semester credits, or the equivalent, of legal specialty credits through synchronous instruction. The program literature also includes a statement that paralegals may not provide legal services directly to the public, except as permitted by law. The ABA logo and identifying mark are used appropriately in the electronic or print promotional materials.

### G-502

#### **Orientation to the Paralegal Profession**

Orientation to the paralegal profession occurs primarily in PAR 101 - Introduction to Paralegal Careers, which is required for all Program students and is a prerequisite for all further PAR courses. PAR 101 defines and examines the role, responsibilities and ethical standards of the paralegal profession and contains an introduction to the professional paralegal associations. Topics covered in PAR 101 include paralegal employment and regulation, career expectations, places of employment, and related fields. PAR 101 also introduces students to the ethical rules of the legal profession and the legal restrictions on the practice of law by non-lawyers.

PAR 104 - Paralegal Ethics includes a more in-depth treatment of attorney supervision of paralegals and the unauthorized practice of law. Prior to his retirement in May 2024, the Program Advisor, Uvaldo Martinez, provided sessions for new and continuing students on program requirements and registration. The current Program Advisor, Eric Borin, continues in this role. The Program Director circulates a weekly newsletter for paralegal students that includes items about relevant CLE, talks, or webinars sponsored by the local bar association, the Legal Services Alliance, whose membership includes paralegals and other legal support professionals, and other paralegal organizations. The newsletter also lists current local job opportunities and apprises students of the paralegal skills and experience that local employers require.

### **Student Advising**

Advising and assistance with course selection/registration are available to paralegal program students through the Advising/Counseling Center. The Program's Liaison Counselor Eric Borin. Each PAR 101 student is required to visit Mr. Borin and review the Program's requirements, including course sequencing, general education requirements, and paralegal class requirements. Students receive general advising information about registration, financial aid, and other basics from the college's enrollment advisors and financial aid staff.

### **Student Services**

PCC's Learning Center fosters student learning, persistence, and retention by supporting classroom instruction and helping students develop the knowledge and skills to succeed in college and beyond. All tutoring at Pima Community College is free to currently enrolled students. Students can make appointments for our virtual tutoring sessions (via Google Meet) or come to campus for our drop-in, face-to-face tutoring services. Online (24/7) tutoring through NetTutor is available in most subjects. Paralegal students also have access to a paralegal tutor who is a graduate of a paralegal program.

PCC's Office of Access and Disability Resources (ADR) assists students with documented disabilities, developing service plans that address specific, appropriate accommodations to enhance and support students' academic success. The students' advocates work closely with them throughout their college experience. The ADR's Access Technology includes screen reader software, voice recognition software, scan and read text-to-speech software, screen modification/magnification software, and other devices/software.

The College offers an array of live and virtual events on career counseling, resume and cover letter writing, Desire to Learn (D2L) training on the electronic learning platform, tutoring services, and transfer services. The Downtown Campus of PCC hosts a number of community activities and forums in its large public room.

An open student area called the Atrium is available for student club productions/presentations and/or outside organizations. The Learning Commons inside the library has regular contests and events, including help for students with their personal electronic devices and study groups to address various study skill sets.

### **Career Services**

Career counseling services are available through the Employer Engagement and Career Services (EECS), which provides a variety of services, including identifying interests and skills, exploring career paths and programs of study, and resources for career planning and academic success. PCC also offers free Success Support courses to help students achieve their educational, career and personal goals. Success Support courses cover study skills, critical thinking, transfer strategies and career exploration and preparation.

Assessments are available to assist students in exploring their skills, strengths and interests through Career Interest Profiler and Careers Skills Match. Students may also contact a Career

Counselor for assistance in choosing a career pathway or program of study. The primary counselor currently responsible for guiding Paralegal students is Eric Borin.

The seminar portion of PAR 290 - Paralegal Internship provides direction and assistance in resume writing, interviewing and job search skills. The Career Services Office, managed by Denise Kingman, assists all PCC students with resume writing and preparation of cover letters. Resumes completed in the Career Center are reviewed by a Career Center Specialist or Counselor. The Career Center also assists students with interview preparation and other job search skills.

The Program works with the Career Services Office to provide opportunities for students to connect with local employers through job listings through MyCareerLink, the College's online career services site, which serves as a forum for employers to list employment opportunities and for students to upload their resumes. Job listings are also offered through announcements by adjunct faculty and the Program's weekly paralegal newsletter.

### **Information on Employment/Educational Status**

Based on a review of the graduate placement and employment records and discussions with alumni and students, the Site Team found that the Program is regularly obtaining and maintaining substantially complete information regarding the employment and ongoing education status of its graduates. The graduate placement records, including those submitted for the reporting period and the updated records for summer 2022 through Spring 2024, reflect good response rates and employment of graduates throughout the legal community in Arizona and elsewhere. A significant number of graduates are working as paralegals, with several pursuing BA degrees at the University of Arizona and elsewhere, and others are preparing to enter law school or masters of law or jurisprudence programs. Several current students reported that they are already employed as paralegals and are completing the AAS or PAC to advance in their careers.

Although the Program provided updated employment data regarding each semester's graduates, it appeared that the Program may be gathering this information less frequently than six months after graduation in some years.

- ***Suggestion: The Site Team suggests that the Program ensure that it is gathering information on employment and/or educational status within six months after students graduate. G-502(D)***

### **Student Views**

Students may express their views and make suggestions regarding individual Program courses in written form each semester, via a college-wide survey instrument that includes both standardized questions and spaces for anonymous student comments. These surveys are conducted in every class, with the results are consolidated from all classes and provided to each instructor after grades have been submitted. Students in the Paralegal Internship class complete a survey in which they may express their views about the internship experience and make suggestions regarding the Program, the faculty, and specific courses. After graduation, Paralegal students may express their views and make suggestions regarding their Program experience via the

written PAR Graduate Survey and the all-encompassing College Graduate Survey, which invites comments about all aspects of their PCC experience. In addition, the Program Director has an open-door policy and invites all paralegal students to express their views and make suggestions regarding the Program at any time while they are pursuing their degrees at PCC.

### **Continuing Education Courses**

PCC does not offer continuing legal and paralegal education courses.

### **G-503**

#### **Non-Degree Students**

Students must have completed all prerequisites before enrolling in paralegal courses. Non-paralegal students who wish to take a legal specialty course must obtain permission from the Program Director. The progress, content, level, and quality of legal specialty courses are not adversely affected by having non-majors in the courses.

## **SECTION VI** **PHYSICAL PLANT**

### **G-601**

#### **Physical Facilities – On-Campus Instruction**

Courses are taught in classrooms located in the Academic Building on the Main Campus where the Business Division is located. The Site Team observed a class taught in a room with flexible seating; there were tables and chairs as well as individual desks for students. As a program within the Business Division, the Program has available to it three computer labs. All classrooms are equipped with chalkboard space, video monitors and screens. Two classrooms are designated as “smart classrooms” and have specialized multimedia equipment. PAR 105 (Legal Research) is taught in both an assigned classroom in the Academic Building and in the Library.

Courses are taught in multi-purpose classrooms in the main building on the Branch Campus. The classrooms are furnished with tables and chairs and are equipped with a computer, video monitor and screen. A computer lab is available for instructional purposes and a separate small lab is available for student use. Students can gather in areas in the library as well as in empty classrooms and computer labs on both campuses.

#### **Physical Facilities – Asynchronous and Remote Synchronous Instruction**

The Site Team confirmed that adequate support is provided to the Program to offer asynchronous online and remote synchronous instruction. The institution uses Desire2Learn as its learning management system. The institution provides training to both faculty and students in the use of the D2L platform. The Program uses a template for the design of legal specialty classes so that there is consistency in the design of the courses. Faculty and student meetings are conducted through Zoom.

## **G-602**

### **Equipment, Technology, Support Services & Other Facilities**

Computer labs are available to students and faculty on both campuses, and the Site Team observed students using individual laptop computers. The Program uses various classrooms in the Roosevelt Building on the Downtown Campus. All classrooms have computers and whiteboards. Classes for PAR 213, Computer Assisted Legal Research, and PAR 212 Law Office Computerization are held in classrooms where all students have a computer. Various study areas are available throughout PCC, including study areas in the library, which include computers.

The Downtown Campus has a café that serves hot and cold food between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Vending machines are also available in various locations. Student lockers and lounges are available for students' use.

## **G-603**

### **Office Space – On-Campus Instruction**

The Program Director has a locked private office at the Downtown Campus, where the Program is housed. The office has file cabinets to store ABA documents and student records along with a computer. A printer is located across the hall from the office.

The full-time faculty member has office space, including a computer, around the corner in the same wing of the faculty offices at the Downtown Campus. A printer is located across the hall.

Students may meet privately with the Program Director or full-time faculty in their respective offices. Students may meet with adjunct faculty in the Faculty Resource Office, which is in the same building as the offices for the Program Director and the full-time faculty. Students can also meet privately with instructors virtually.

### **Office Space – Asynchronous and Remote Synchronous Instruction**

The Program Director, faculty, and staff are provided with institutional Zoom accounts to meet privately with students and others for advising and counseling.

## **CONCLUSIONS, COMPLIANCE ISSUES AND SUGGESTIONS**

The Paralegal Studies Program at PCC is an established program under the capable direction of Lynnae Thandiwe, J.D., Program Director. The students and graduates expressed a high level of satisfaction with the instruction received and their preparation to enter the paralegal profession. The administration, including at the highest levels, is interested in and supportive of the Program.

At the time of the visit the Site Team identified one compliance issue:

- *Compliance Issue: The Guideline G-302.D requires that associate of arts degree programs require students to complete a total of at least sixty semester credits or the equivalent, of which at least eighteen semester credits or the equivalent must consist of General Education courses, as defined in G-302.E. As the Program currently requires students to complete 15 credits of General Education course work that meets the G-302.E definition, the Program is out of compliance with Guideline G-302.D and G-302.E.*

Therefore, the Site Team recommends that approval of the Paralegal Program at Pima Community College be **deferred** to provide time for the Program to address this area of noncompliance.

To further enhance the Program, the Site Team also suggests the following:

1. *The Program's stated Goal of providing "students with the knowledge, skills, values, and abilities to become competent and ethical paralegals who can perform effectively in a variety of legal settings in the private and public sectors" be published along with the Program objectives. G-201.*
2. *The Program Director and, if possible, other full-time or adjunct faculty, be encouraged to attend paralegal education conferences, such as those presented annually by AAfPE, either in the in-person or virtual format. G-401.*
3. *The Program ensure that it is gathering information on employment and/or educational status within six months after students graduate. G-502(D).*