



Date: February 21, 2020

To: John Stalvey, Interim Provost

From: Jeff Jessee, Dean of the College of Health and Vice Provost of Health Programs

Cc: Ryan Fortson, Committee Chair & Associate Professor of Justice
Ron Everett, Associate Professor of Justice
Troy Payne, Associate Professor of Justice

Re: AY20 Expedited Program Review Findings

Program/s in this review: Legal Nurse Consultant Paralegal UC & Paralegal Studies AAS-PBCT & Legal Studies BA

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): The Legal Nurse Consultant Paralegal UC, Paralegal Studies AAS-PBCT, and Legal Studies BA are approved by the American Bar Association (ABA).

Campuses where the program is delivered: Anchorage

Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role:

Program options in Legal Studies offered at UAA include the Legal Nurse Consultant Paralegal UC, Paralegal Studies AAS and PBCT, and Legal Studies BA. These program options (along with the Minor in Legal Studies) were created in 2013. They provide a foundational sequence of courses combining theoretical knowledge of the law with skills-based training in American legal practice. They provide professional training to prepare students for graduate education and work in law-related and public service fields. Program graduates are not authorized to provide direct legal services to the public. Instead, they are prepared to become key assets in our efforts to improve the health, safety, and wellness of our people and communities. These program options are particularly central in our efforts to address environmental, behavioral, and mental health issues, among others. The law is a key tool in many public health issues. Student demand varies significantly across program options. Since 2013, the Legal Studies BA has quickly become the preferred program option.

Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity:

There is modest but growing demand for the Legal Studies BA. The number of majors has steadily grown to 30 per year (and continues to increase). Demand for the Paralegal Studies AAS and PBCT is not as strong. However, these programs are offered using a subset of courses from the Legal Studies BA. As a result, there is no additional instructional cost to offer these program options. Demand for the Legal Nurse Consultant Paralegal UC is very low. Only two students have been awarded this degree, and there are currently no students enrolled in the program. Contrary to the Paralegal Studies AAS and PBCT, the Legal Nurse Consultant Paralegal UC requires additional resources (six additional credits of instruction;

three in Legal Nurse Consultant courses and three in Nursing Science courses). The instructional costs for the program options in Legal Studies are fully covered by tuition revenue. In 2019, every dollar invested in instruction generated \$1.25 in tuition revenue. Class sizes vary significantly. Average class sizes could improve. Grade passing rates could also improve, especially in 100- and 200-level courses. In these 100- and 200-level courses, more than one in five grades is a D, F, or W. This highlights the need for additional resources for student support.

Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success:

The quality of the program is exceptional. All program options are approved by the American Bar Association. The curriculum was designed to incorporate a number of high impact active learning assignments. Regular and comprehensive assessments of program student learning outcomes are used for program improvement. The advisory committee is actively engaged in the assessment of program student learning outcomes and the development of recommendations for program improvement. Student feedback is also used to improve the program. Faculty are innovative and demonstrate a strong commitment to student success.

Program Duplication / Distinctiveness:

The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) offers an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Paralegal Studies. The UAF program is also approved by the American Bar Association. The UAA program is distinctive because of its direct articulation into the Legal Studies BA. There are no other baccalaureate degrees in Legal Studies offered within the University of Alaska system.

Commendations and Recommendations:

Given the very low student demand for the Legal Nurse Consultant Paralegal UC, the program should be deleted. There are currently no students enrolled in this program option. The other program options in Legal Studies should be continued. The quality of the program is exceptional, and the program makes an important contribution in our efforts to improve the health, safety, and wellness of our people and communities. Although the program is recommending to recruit a new faculty to replace one who has recently retired, there is insufficient evidence to justify a recruitment at this time. The need for additional faculty should be reconsidered during the normal program review cycle. Further increases in enrollments and class sizes will be needed to justify additional faculty. In the meantime, course schedules may need to be adjusted to address uneven enrollments across courses. The program may benefit from additional attention on enrollment management. The need for additional faculty should be reevaluated after course enrollments improve. In the meantime, the need for additional student support resources should be addressed. The program is encouraged to work with the Student Success Center to determine how to best address that need.

Decision:

Legal Nurse Consultant Paralegal UC – Deletion.

Paralegal Studies AAS-PBCT & Legal Studies BA – Continuation.