



New Program Proposal: Legal Studies Programs Package

Legal Studies Minor
 Legal Nurse Consultant Paralegal Undergraduate Certificate
 Paralegal Studies Associate of Applied Science
 Legal Studies Bachelor of Arts
 Paralegal Studies Post-Baccalaureate Certificate

Executive Summary

(See University Regulation R10.04.020.C)

This is a summary of four interrelated prospectuses. The full prospectuses are available upon request.

Degree/Certificate Title & Responsible Program

Major Academic Unit UAA	School or College COH	Department Justice Center
Complete Program Title Minor, Legal Studies (already approved at institutional level) Undergraduate Certificate, Legal Nurse Consultant Paralegal Associate of Applied Science, Paralegal Studies Bachelor of Arts, Legal Studies Post-Baccalaureate Certificate, Paralegal Studies		
Type of Program		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Undergrad Certificate	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AA/AAS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Baccalaureate
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Post-Baccalaureate Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> Masters	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral

1. Relationship of the proposed suite of programs relative to the Educational mission of the University of Alaska and the MAU.

The Justice Center proposes restructuring its existing Paralegal Studies curriculum to make better use of existing resources within the Justice Center and the College of Health, significantly increase student options and the depth of Justice Center programs, and respond to market demand in the legal field. The reorganization is the result of recommendations by the Paralegal Program’s External Advisory Committee, feedback from the American Bar Association (ABA), information gleaned from a third-party consultant’s survey of employer interest, and consistent student demand for more options in legal studies.

This proposal will convert the existing 60 credit, ABA-approved Paralegal Studies undergraduate certificate into a 60 credit Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Paralegal Studies. The restructuring will also add four interrelated program options:

- a Legal Nurse Consultant (LNC) Paralegal undergraduate certificate for students working on or holding a nursing degree,
- a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Legal Studies,
- a Legal Studies Minor, and
- a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Paralegal Studies.

Together, these five options will comprise the expanded Legal Studies curriculum in the Justice Center. Every Legal Studies student will be encouraged to engage in supervised pro bono service to Alaska legal aid agencies, and may seek to graduate with Pro Bono Service Honors. Each of these program options will be ABA-approved and grounded in a common core of courses combining theoretical knowledge with skills-based training in American legal practice.¹ New program proposals for the AAS, BA, Post-Baccalaureate Certificate, and LNC Paralegal undergraduate certificate are submitted in tandem with this summary; the Minor has been approved by the University and does not require Regents' review or approval.

This proposal, offering a variety of student options and emphasizing public service, furthers the educational mission of the University of Alaska and UAA in a number of ways. First, part of the vision in the UAA 2017 Strategic Plan is to be distinguished for "driving Alaska's social and economic development through education and training for workforce development and high-demand careers." Priority A of UAA 2017 is, in part, to build depth "in programs that support student success, ... workforce development, preparation for high demand careers or respond to high student demand." The proposed addition of five interrelated, American Bar Association (ABA) approved, Legal Studies program options is directly aligned with this vision and strategic priority: it adds depth to Justice Center programs, responds to consistent and long-term demand from students for degree options beyond the paralegal certificate, and provides workforce development in the high-demand legal paraprofessional field. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that this field will continue to grow at a rate much faster than average for the foreseeable future. Nationally, demand for these students is expected to grow by 28 percent. In Alaska, demand is expected to grow by 13.7 percent. The proposal establishes a variety of paths by which different student populations may prepare themselves to meet that demand. These students will graduate ready to fill positions in local, state, and federal agencies; state, federal, and tribal court systems; corporate legal and risk management departments; public interest legal organizations; and private law firms.

Another aspect of UAA's Vision is facilitating the university's "role as a public square" by extending its "partnerships with private and public institutions" through internships and organized volunteer opportunities. Strategic plan Priority A similarly calls for increasing "active student participation in ... service learning." The proposed Legal Studies options further this priority by including internships in the curriculum. In addition, students are encouraged to perform pro bono volunteer service to Alaska legal aid agencies; students who complete the requisite hours of service may graduate with Pro Bono Service Honors. The mandatory internships, together with the incentive to earn Pro Bono Service Honors by volunteering with legal aid agencies, demonstrably strengthen the bond between the university and the community.

Priority C of UAA 2017 calls for expanding educational opportunity and increasing student success by improving "the rates at which students attain their educational goals." The new program options reconfigure existing Paralegal Studies admissions requirements and

¹ The Justice Center will seek ABA approval for these revisions immediately upon Regents' approval.

prerequisites, and facilitate student progress, enabling students to more efficiently achieve the degree of their choice.

Another Strategic Priority in UAA 2017 is focusing “on market share of Alaska’s college-bound students” and “recruitment of highly qualified high school graduates.” This proposal will establish the first Bachelor degree in Legal Studies in Alaska, create the first LNC Paralegal option for nursing students and graduates in Alaska, provide the first Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Paralegal Studies in Alaska, provide a Minor for students seeking a Bachelor degree in another field but desiring law-related workplace training, and provide career training and experience for students seeking a two-year degree that will lead to employment in the legal field. This array of options vastly expands the choices available to Alaska high school graduates with an interest in law; consistently strong student demand for these options indicates this proposal will improve UAA’s ability to attract higher numbers of qualified high school graduates.

2. History of the development of the proposed suite of programs.

This proposal was initiated by UAA’s Justice Center to respond to emerging trends across the country in the regulation of paralegals, implement recommendations by the Paralegal Studies Program External Advisory Committee and ABA reviewers, and meet student and employer demand. The community engagement component of the program was added in response to numerous requests from legal services agencies in the community for student interns and volunteers. These community partners are among the major supporters of the proposed program changes.

Once need for the program was articulated, ABA requirements for approval were reviewed. Guidelines promulgated by the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE) were also incorporated into the program design. Proposed curriculum changes were reviewed by the program’s external advisory committee, which offered feedback and recommendations. Program requirements were revised in accordance with the information gathered from these resources. Program outcomes were identified through consultation with UAA’s Office of Academic Affairs, and review of the ABA Guidelines for the Approval of Paralegal Programs and the American Association for Paralegal Education (AAfPE) Core Competencies for Paralegal Programs.

The greatest challenge in developing this curriculum was ensuring that all of the competencies identified by the external advisory committee, the ABA, and the AAfPE were covered by the curriculum, while at the same time ensuring that students could progress through the program efficiently and graduate on time. Course content and prerequisites were adjusted to ensure that students can complete their coursework without delaying graduation or incurring student loans beyond those necessary to finance the requisite number of credits.

3. Impact of the proposed suite of programs on existing UA programs, including the GER.

The only existing programs that may be impacted by this proposal are the UAA Computer Information Systems (CIS) and Computer Information and Office Systems (CIOS) programs and the UAA English program: the CIS and CIOS programs due to a three-credit technology education requirement in the AAS and English due to a three-credit upper division composition requirement in the AAS and BA. Because the technology education requirement permits such a wide range of course options, neither CIS nor CIOS is likely to notice an actual impact on any one course. The English Department, which may notice slightly higher enrollments in its upper division composition courses, has indicated it can accommodate the proposed change. In addition, one course in Nursing Science will experience slightly higher enrollments due to the LNC Paralegal Certificate; Nursing Science has also indicated it can accommodate that increase.

4. State needs met by the proposed suite of programs.

As noted above, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' most recent Occupational Outlook Handbook shows that "Employment of paralegals and legal assistants is projected to grow 28 percent between 2008 and 2018, *much faster* than the average for all occupations" (emphasis added). Growth of 13.7% is expected in Alaska according to 2012 estimates from the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Thus, these program options provide workforce training in a rapidly growing field. Not only do these options prepare students for high demand careers, they also develop a workforce of Alaskans well versed in researching, analyzing, and applying state and federal regulations, and ready to grow into positions of corporate or public leadership.

The Justice Center commissioned a consultant to obtain input from the legal and justice communities regarding this proposal. One respondent noted that "the pervasiveness of local, state, and federal regulation across Alaska, more so than in other states, creates more demand for nonlawyers with this type of training." In general, respondents felt that the proposed restructuring of Justice Center programs "will greatly improve the quality and availability of legal studies in Alaska, fill a variety of existing and future unmet needs, allow Alaskans to stay in state to study and work, prepare more Alaskans for law school, provide professionals for a wide spectrum of employment opportunities, and ... contribute to a better informed populace more conversant with legal concepts."

5. Student opportunities, outcomes, and enrollment projections.

Throughout the country and in Alaska there is increased emphasis on use of paraprofessionals to improve access to and reduce the costs of professional services. The rapid rise in the number of these positions is forecast to continue for the foreseeable future. A recent survey published in the American Bar Journal ranks paralegal 13th among the top 200 job opportunities. Private law firms are the largest single category of employer, but there are numerous other opportunities in both the public and private sectors. In Alaska, some of the largest employers of legal paraprofessionals are the oil companies and Alaska Native

corporations. Other employers include federal, state, and municipal agencies; state and federal prosecutors and defenders; court law libraries and clerks offices; insurance companies; estate and trust departments of banks; hospitals and health care organizations; real estate and title insurance companies; unions; legal aid organizations; consumer organizations; environmental organizations; and any organizations with risk management or regulatory compliance departments.

Graduates of the programs will be able to produce superior university-level written documents and oral reports; apply the rules of professional ethics governing lawyers and nonlawyer staff, and the rules governing the unauthorized practice of law in Alaska; apply legal terminology and foundational principles of substantive and procedural law; conduct legal research; synthesize primary and secondary legal authorities and draft memoranda of legal analysis; conduct legal investigations, manage discovery, and draft legal pleadings that conform to the rules of civil procedure; and relate legal rules to client problems in the performance of entry-level paralegal duties in a private law firm, public legal service agency, or law department.

Expected enrollments in the first five years of the program are 4,412 (headcount of filled course seats). Majors and minors in the suite of programs are expected to number 87 by the fifth year after implementation.

6. Faculty and staff workload implications.

Restructuring of the existing paralegal program will be accomplished by adding seats in existing courses and by hiring two new full-time tenure track bi-partite faculty. These two new faculty members are currently being recruited using existing funds and will support all five of the proposed program options in Legal Studies. Existing staff and faculty will not be reassigned. However, existing faculty will see an increase in workload due to having additional students in their courses. These increases will be manageable under existing workload agreements, and will not negatively impact student learning outcomes. Similarly, existing staff resources are sufficient to accommodate an increase in students. In addition to teaching four courses per semester, new faculty will also provide advising to prospective and current students. The increase in advising responsibilities will therefore not impact existing staff and faculty.

7. Fiscal Plan for the proposed suite of programs.

Financial projections are based on both revenue and expense projections for the department supporting the five proposed reconfigured/new programs. Revenue projections are based on projected course enrollment increases as the result of implementing all five proposed programs, which are based on market demand and student interest. Revenue projections are conservative (for example, they assume that all tuition revenue is from in-state students). Revenue projections also assume a slow growth in student course seat enrollment from 65% of enrollment goals in FY13 to 100% in FY17.

Expense projections are based on the costs associated with two new full-time tenure track faculty and adjunct professors for two courses. These positions are already funded, recruitments are in process, and will be filled regardless of the approval of these programs. Expense projections also include a modest allocation for travel, contractual services, and commodities. Personnel costs are projected to increase by 3.5% each year. There are no new appropriations required for the implementation of the five proposed programs. Instead, these programs are being supported by a reallocation of existing and projected revenues within the College of Health and the Justice Center. Starting in FY13 (Year 1), new tuition revenue is expected to exceed the new expenses associated with these five new program options by \$64,045. By FY17 (Year 5), new revenue is expected to exceed new expenses by \$159,916.

**Table ES7.1
Incremental Expenses, Revenues, and Balances**

Year	New Expenses	New Revenue	Balance
Yr 1	164,080	228,125	64,045
Yr 2	170,797	263,223	92,426
Yr 3	177,681	298,318	120,637
Yr 4	184,740	333,415	148,675
Yr 5	191,047	350,963	159,916