

Reapproval Site Visit Report

**UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE**

**LEGAL STUDIES PROGRAM**

La Verne, California

March 1 and 2, 2010

Members of Site Team:

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The University of La Verne Legal Studies Department has applied to the American Bar Association for reapproval. Students were first admitted to the Paralegal Program Certificate option in 1972. Students first entered the Legal Studies Bachelor Degree option in 1986. The ABA House of Delegates granted approval to University of La Verne Legal Studies Program in February 2002. This is the Program's first reapproval.

The current site visit was conducted on March 1 and 2, 2010 by Anita Tebbe, Specially Designated Site Team Chair and Program Director; and Alice Bruno, Approval Commissioner and Deputy Chief Clerk of New Haven, CT Superior Court.

The visit consisted of the following activities:

Meetings with Patricia Adongo, Professor of Legal Studies and Chair of Legal Studies Department (Program Director); and Carolyn Bekhor, Assistant Professor of Legal Studies;

Meeting with President Stephen C. Morgan; Provost Greg Dewey; and Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Jonathan Reed;

Touring of Campus;

Examining of collections at University of La Verne Library and at University of La Verne Law Library;

Meeting with Associate Dean of Undergraduate Admissions Ana Liza Zell; Registrar Marilyn Davies; and Academic Records Analyst Patti Nonemaker;

Meeting with Director of Career Services Paula Verdugo;

Meetings with Assistant Director, Regional Campus for Campus Accelerated Program for Adults, Peter Centeno, Jr.;

Meeting with faculty;

Meeting with alumni;

Meeting with advisory committee;

Observing of two classes, Property and Bankruptcy; and American Legal Studies;

Visiting with students;

Reviewing of student records; faculty evaluations, program surveys; and practical assignments; and

Exit meeting with President Stephen C. Morgan; Provost Greg Dewey; Assistant Dean, College of Arts and Sciences Felicia Beardsley; Associate Vice President for University Assessment Aghop Der-Karabetian; Chair of Legal Studies Patricia Adongo; Assistant Professor Carolyn Bekhor; and Administrative Assistant Laura Cantrell.

## **SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **G-101 to G-107**

For over 100 years, the University of La Verne has provided liberal arts education in southern California. The University offers 88 bachelors and masters degrees and four doctorates. The 8,500 students are enrolled in four colleges, including the College of Arts and Sciences, where the Department of Legal Studies resides. The College of Law is provisionally accredited by the American Bar Association and is anticipating that full accreditation will be granted by the ABA House of Delegates in August 2010.

The University has several regional campuses in central and southern California. Legal specialty courses are offered at the main La Verne campus, with the exception of the Legal Research and Writing course. It is regularly taught at the University of La Verne Law School Library. On some other occasions, courses are scheduled at the College of Law in order to accommodate a larger class size.

The attractive La Verne campus is in the heart of the city. La Verne is 35 miles east of Los Angeles. La Verne, which has a population of 35,000, has a small town atmosphere and is located in the beautiful foothills of the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys.

The University of La Verne Legal Studies Department dates back to 1972. At that time students were admitted to the Paralegal Program certificate option. Students applying to pursue the Certificate in Paralegal Studies must have a bachelor degree or sixty semester hours, including a minimum of 18 credits in general education from a regionally accredited college. To receive a paralegal certificate, the student must complete successfully 30 credits. There are about 5 students pursuing the certificate option.

In 1986, the Legal Studies Department began a Bachelor of Science Degree in Legal Studies. Students must have a high school diploma and complete successfully 128 credit hours, including 42-44 credits of legal specialty courses in the major. There are about 75 students who are currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science Degree in Legal Studies. There are over 850 graduates since the inception of the Paralegal Studies Program.

The Legal Studies Department recently began to offer a paralegal minor. This offering is designed for students from other majors who are not taking it for the purpose of preparing to work as paralegals. The program has demonstrated to the American Bar Association that the minor is not a program option and not intended to prepare students to work as paralegals. This

distinction is noted in the program literature. At this date no student has pursued the minor possibility.

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

### **G-201 to G-206**

The University of La Verne Legal Studies Department has published explicit goals, which are included in the college catalog, in various program publications and on the program's website. The objectives are responsive to the needs of the community. College administrators are knowledgeable regarding the goals of the program and supportive of the efforts of the program. The Legal Studies Department Chair has the appropriate authority for development of the program to ensure it meets its stated objectives.

The Paralegal Studies Program is located in the College of Arts and Sciences. Legal Studies Department Chair (Program Director) Patricia Adongo reports to Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Jonathan Reed. All Deans report to Provost Greg Dewey, who reports to President Stephen C. Morgan. Chair Patricia Adongo has the support and confidence of the administration. The program director has a good working relationship with admissions, career services, advising and other University staff.

The Legal Studies Department is treated comparably to other programs at University. The Legal Studies Department Chair has responsibilities similar to those of other program directors. The same support is provided to the Legal Studies Department in terms of staff support, technical support, physical resources, and support for professional development.

The Legal Studies Chair is a full time faculty member who serves on various campus committees, such as the Faculty Assembly and the Student Appeals Committee. The Legal Studies Chair also attends College of Arts and Sciences meetings of the department chairs.

The Advisory Committee possesses the appropriate members to fulfill its role in support of the program and meets all ABA Guideline requirements for composition. Meetings are held semi-annually, usually during the fall and spring semesters. The minutes, which are recorded and maintained and include a list of those in attendance, reflect active participation by members of the committee. Advisory board members are knowledgeable about trends, developments, and issues in the paralegal profession and these matters are discussed at meetings. College members represent a minority of the membership, including faculty, administrators and students.

Some advisory members' attendance has been irregular. The Legal Studies Department should continue to review the composition of the Advisory Committee and monitor members' attendance. The replacement of non-attending members should be pursued by the Chair of the Legal Studies Department.

The University appropriately publishes policies regarding equal opportunity. These policies are fully supported by the Chair of the Legal Studies Department and the college administration.

The Legal Studies Program has a diverse student body which reflects the surrounding community.

Financial resources for the program director, faculty and staff are provided. The budget provides for monies for resources for professional memberships, institutional equipment and supplies, library materials and resources, technical services, assessment activities, and advisory committee meetings.

The University of La Verne is a private four-year institution.

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

#### **G-301**

The University of La Verne Department of Legal Studies offers the following degree and certificate: 1) Baccalaureate degree (Bachelor of Science) in Legal Studies, which requires a total of 128 semester credits, 42-44 credits of legal specialty courses in the major and 2) Paralegal Studies certificate, which requires a total of 30 semester credits of legal specialty courses.

The Bachelor degree students are also granted the same certificate as the certificate students because of a strong recommendation of the Advisory Committee. Both the bachelor and certificate students fulfill the same 30 semester credits of legal specialty courses. According to these community leaders in the legal field, they believe that the University of La Verne paralegal graduates will be more employable if they possess a bachelor degree and a certificate.

From conversations with students, graduates and faculty, the site team concluded that the instructional methodology stresses understanding and reasoning. Each group discussed challenging and valuable practical assignments in numerous legal specialty courses. The team also observed two legal specialty classes, Property and Bankruptcy, taught by Adjunct Professor Michael Dowd, and American Legal Studies, taught by Assistant Professor Carolyn Bekhor. The teachers demonstrated sound teaching methods. They used effective interactive methods with the students and employed relevant materials in order to explain important concepts.

The students and graduates acknowledge quickly the competency and encouragement of the Chair of the Legal Studies Department and faculty. They commented on the positive and supportive environment in which everyone wants the individual student to succeed. The students receive prompt and detailed feedback regarding their assignments and examinations. The students and graduates also commented on the almost 24/7 practice in which the teachers respond to inquiries of the students via email and cell phones. They also mentioned the small number in a class and the ability of the teachers to explain complex matters in a clear and comprehensive manner.

The University of La Verne Legal Studies Program encourages its students to continue with their education if they do not already have a baccalaureate degree. Also, the University of La Verne Legal Studies Program has five articulation agreements with the following California schools:

Fremont College; Fullerton College; Mt. San Antonio College; Pasadena City College; and Platt College.

Current students and graduates remarked that the administration and faculty should consider the addition of new legal specialty courses, such as courses in Entertainment Law and Intellectual Property. The program is encouraged to engage in continual review and evaluation of the curriculum so that it is responsive to changing needs.

Current students and graduates commented on the need for the Legal Studies Department to be responsive to other changing needs of the student and examine new ways to deliver courses, including online, accelerated and day-time course. Finally, the students and graduates suggested that the Legal Studies Department should continue to review course rotation options closely to assure the students' needs can be fully met.

The University of La Verne Legal Studies Department continually seeks to assess whether it is meeting its goals and providing a top level education to paralegal students. It also seeks to determine the learning outcomes of the students. At the basis of the assessment are the five goals and the ten learning objectives of the program.

Some of the different aspects to this evaluation are Indirect Methods and Performance (Direct) Methods. Indirect methods include surveys ( every three year graduates surveys ; every three year employers' surveys; yearly exit surveys of students; and student evaluations of courses each semester.) Performance (Direct) Measures include the senior project; portfolio; student oral reports in senior project; and specific documents completed early in the program compared to those completed near the end of the program in Senior Project and Legal Ethics courses.

At this time, the Legal Studies Department has completed an extensive and valuable mapping for each course concerning the ten objectives. The Legal Studies Department has started this important assessment process and needs to continue implementing its outcome assessment plan of determining specific goals/objectives for individual courses; measuring of goals/objectives; and the use of information for improvement of the program.

The program's assessment findings should be shared with the advisory committee and faculty. The program's assessment plan will also be strengthened when the finding are implemented in order to improve the quality of education for the paralegal students.

### **G-302**

The Accreditation Commission for Senior College and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accredits the University of La Verne. The University has been accredited since 1955. The date of the most recent affirmation of accreditation is 1991, affirmed in a letter of March 3, 2000. The date of the most recent Commission Action is June 23, 2000. The University is in the first stage of re-accreditation, having completed an approved Institutional Proposal in fall 2007, with a scheduled visit and evaluation by WASC to take place in spring 2010.

The University of La Verne Department of Legal Studies offers a baccalaureate degree in Legal Studies, which requires a total of 128 semester credits, including 42-44 credits of legal specialty courses in the major.

**Prerequisites**

Students must complete college-level English and six units of general education prior to taking legal specialty courses. LS 301 American Legal Studies is a prerequisite for all other courses, except that it can be taken concurrently with LS 304 Legal Research and Writing.

LS 304 is a prerequisite for all courses except LS 301 American Legal Studies. LS 365 Litigation I is a prerequisite for LS 368 Litigation II. LS 311 Law Office Computer Applications requires as a prerequisite that the student either have a prior course in Microsoft Office or pass a test that the department gives. LS 498, Paralegal Internship required that the student must have taken eight legal studies courses and completed LS 365 Litigation I and preferably LS 368 Litigation II.

**Core Requirements**-All of these course are required.

<u>Course Number</u>	<u>Name of Course</u>	<u>Credit Hours</u>
LS 301	American Legal Studies	4
LS 304	Legal Research and Writing	4
LS 307	Legal Ethics	2
LS 311	Law Office Computer Applications	4
LS 365	Litigation I	4
LS 368	Litigation II	4
LS 380	Torts	4
LS 390	Contracts	4
LS 499	Senior Project	2

**Electives**-Three of the following courses are required.

LS 321	Family Law	4
LS 328	Property and Real Estate Transactions	4
LS 330	Bankruptcy	4
LS 331	Business Organizations	4
LS 340	Special Topics	4
LS 345	Immigration Law and Procedures	4
LS 350	Wills, Trusts and Probate	4
LS 370	Criminal Law	4
LS 498	Paralegal Internship	2

## **General Education Requirements for Baccalaureate Degree**

Traditional students (those entering the University who are under 25 years of age) complete the 128 total hours for a baccalaureate degree through general education requirements. General education courses range from two to four semester credits.

- Three English courses
- One Mathematics course
- Three Humanities courses
- One Fine Arts course
- Three Social Science courses
- Three Natural Science courses
- One Value and Critical Thinking Course
- Five International/Intercultural Courses

Campus Accelerated Program for Adult Students (those entering the University who are over 25 years of age) take the same general education courses as the traditional students with three exceptions: they are not required to take International/Intercultural Experience; and Service Learning and are required to take two humanities and two social sciences courses.

The University of La Verne offers a Paralegal Studies Certificate. Students must have either a Bachelor Degree or 60 semester hours, including a minimum of 18 general education credit hours, from a regionally accredited college. The general education courses must include at least three semester hours in college level English composition and 15 credit hours from at least three of the following academic areas: social and behavioral science; English composition and literature; foreign language; mathematics; humanities; natural science; and appreciation or history of the arts.

The 30 required legal specialty courses for the Paralegal Studies Certificate are the following ones:

<u>Course Number</u>	<u>Course Name</u>	<u>Credits</u>
LS 301	American Legal Studies	4
LS 304	Legal Research and Writing	4
LS 307	Legal Ethics	2
LS 311	Law Office Computer Applications	4
LS 365	Litigation I	4
LS 368	Litigation II	4
LS 380	Torts	4
LS 390	Contracts	4

The Certificate students fulfill their general education courses before starting the Paralegal Studies Certificate Program at University of La Verne since they are required to have at least 18 hours of general education in at least three different disciplines. The Bachelor of Science students earn a degree in Legal Studies by taking over 40 credit hours in general education and the remaining credit hours in electives.



The Bachelor of Science students are required to take three courses of English and Communications. Upon completion of these fundamental courses, the Legal Studies students demonstrate writing and oral communication proficiency at the college level.

The certificate student has either completed a bachelor degree or has 60 semester hours, including a minimum of 18 hours in general education. Three credit hours of the general education must be in basic English composition.

The Bachelor of Science students take some of their general education courses before their legal specialty courses. Students complete English 110 and six additional semester hours of general education prior to taking legal specialty classes. At least 18 hours of general education must meet department approval.

Students, who are pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in the Department of Legal Studies, can fulfill the general education requirements by transferring qualifying course work completed at other colleges and universities. Credit is also awarded through credit by examination, which includes College Level Examination Program (CLEP), US Department of Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTE) and by having completed Advanced Placement courses/examinations during high school. Majors must take a minimum of 24 semester hours of upper-division Legal Studies course from the University of La Verne. A maximum of two courses can be transferred in the Certificate Program.

The Department of Legal Studies requires that its students complete LS 311, Law Office Computer Applications. The course focuses on the use and practical applications of computers in the law office. While the basics of word processing, presentation programs, databases, and spreadsheets are reviewed, the main purpose of the course is to provide students with practical experience with specialized legal software such as litigation or case management software, timekeeping and calendaring software, and legal research software. In order for students to take this course, they are asked to pass an examination which demonstrates a basic level of proficiency in Word or Excel, or to have completed a basic course in Microsoft Office. The examination was created by the computer department and is administered by the Department of Legal Studies.

The University of La Verne does not graduate students who have not met the general education requirements.

The legal specialty courses meet all the Guideline criteria: 1) covers substantive law or legal procedures or process; 2) has been developed for paralegals; and 3) emphasizes practical skills.

The University of La Verne Legal Studies Department offers a two hour credit Internship course, which requires each student to complete successfully 90 work hours. The Internship course is not a required class and few students avail themselves of this opportunity. The program director is responsible for locating, placing and supervising the internship. The internship meets all the criteria of systematic comprehensive plan; sufficient hours on site to justify credit; and clear understanding of course expectation, with emphasis on practical paralegal work. The Legal Studies Department should encourage students to take advantage of internship opportunities

available in the metropolitan area. The Department should obtain assistance from the alumni and pursue a collaborative effort between the University of La Verne Law School and the Legal Studies Department concerning clinical opportunities for paralegal students.

The Legal Studies Program has rational sequencing of its legal specialty courses. The paralegal students fulfill the prerequisite courses before taking advanced courses.

LS 307-Legal Ethics, a two hour credit course, is a legal specialty course required of all paralegal students. According to the students, graduates and faculty, Legal Ethics is also taught “across the curriculum” and incorporated in every legal specialty course.

Legal Research is introduced in LS 301, American Legal Studies (4 credit hours) and taught in depth in LS 304, Legal Research and Writing (4 credit hours.) Although the American Legal Studies course introduces students to the concept of computer-assisted legal research, Legal Research and Writing provides introductory practical experience in electronic legal research using Lexis and/or Westlaw. The technology course, LS 311, Law Office Computer Applications (4 credit hours), provides further practical experience to their studies in electronic legal research. The students gain other experience throughout the Department of Legal Studies as instructors of other legal specialty courses are directed to include course work that calls for the student to apply their manual and electronic legal research skills.

No exemptions are allowed from the 18 credit hours of legal specialty requirement.

Transfer courses are accepted in the Bachelor of Science degree but majors must take a minimum of 24 semester hours of upper division Legal Studies courses from the University of La Verne. A maximum of two courses can be transferred in the Certificate Program. This policy is in writing and is accessible to students.

There are no legal specialty courses taught through the alternative delivery method through the University of La Verne Department of Legal Studies. The program discontinued offering online courses in Fall 2006 after the main online instructor discontinued teaching at the University. There are no immediate plans to resume online courses but students asked that this issue be revisited by the program.

## **SECTION IV-FACULTY**

### **G-401 to 403**

Patricia Adongo is an attorney and is the Chair of the Legal Studies Department (Program Director) and a full-time professor. Chair Adongo has been serving as Program Director since August 2003. Another full-time teacher, Assistant Professor of Legal Studies, Carolyn Bekhor, helps Professor Adongo in meeting her duties as program director. Assistant Professor Bekhor has been assisting since September 2007. Program Director Adongo spends about 40% of her time on program-related administrative and other duties. Assistant Professor Bekhor spends about 25% of her full-time hours on program-related administrative and other duties. Chair Adongo and Assistant Professor Bekhor have an excellent professional relationship and this is a

significant reason for the success of the program. Both are also outstanding teachers and admired by the students, graduates, and colleagues.

Both full time faculty members of the Legal Studies Department are required to teach 12 credits per semester. The Legal Studies Department offers classes in the fall and spring semesters. No summer courses are offered. Release time of one class, 4 credit hours, per semester is given in order for the Program Director to manage the program responsibilities and, as needed, for Assistant Professor Bekhor to assist with ABA reporting requirements.

Program Director Adongo has done an exemplary job of program administration. She is knowledgeable regarding the developments in paralegal education. She is a well-respected national educator. Ms. Adongo has been active for a number of years in the national organization for paralegal educators, the American Association for Paralegal Education. Patricia Adongo also serves on the American Bar Association Approval Commission, a group of 13 educators who visit paralegal programs throughout the nation in order to check on their compliance status with the ABA Guidelines.

Even though the local paralegal organizations are not geographically close to the school, the Legal Studies Department should maintain stronger liaison with the legal and paralegal communities in the metropolitan area. Even if members of the faculty cannot attend all functions, a presence could be established through various forms of communication.

The program employs several qualified part-time teachers each semester. Meetings with the faculty are conducted at least twice a year, usually at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. Minutes are recorded and maintained. Professional development sessions are often incorporated in these meetings. The University of La Verne should continue its commitment to the faculty members' professional development in the school setting and also through the faculty's attendance at national state and local legal and paralegal meetings.

Faculty teaching assignments are well matched with individual qualifications. Students are very satisfied with the quality of the instruction and believe one of the many strengths of the program is the outstanding faculty. The students report that their instructors are demanding and caring about student success.

The credentials of the instructors are excellent. They are knowledgeable about the program and the profession. They are dedicated to the students and the University. There is low turn-over of faculty. The program matches adjunct faculty credentials to the courses that they teach and the size of the faculty is adequate to the program's current enrollment. Adequate faculty support services are provided.

## **SECTION V: AMISSIONS AND STUDENT SERVICES**

### **G-501 to G-503**

Students come to University of La Verne Legal Studies Program via three routes: traditional undergraduates; non-traditional Campus Accelerated Program for Adults (CAPA) students; and certificate students.

The Admission Office is responsible for evaluating traditional students entering the Baccalaureate degree program for admission to the University of La Verne. For freshman applicants, the admission decision emphasizes the academic course of study, the cumulative high school GPA during grades 10 and 11 and first semester of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, Scholastic Aptitude Test I (SAT) or American College Test (ACT) scores, the applicant's essay, and letters of recommendation. Transfer students must have a college GPA of 2.2 or higher. Those with less than 30 semester hours of transferable academic credit will be evaluated on college work, high school transcripts, and SAT or ACT scores, while those with more hours need not submit high school transcripts.

The Campus Accelerated Program for Adults evaluates students over the age of 25 for admission to the University. They must have at least 40 semester hours of college work with a 2.0 GPA or better to be eligible for admission. The evaluation takes into consideration the GPA and the number of hours completed, as well as other personal factors. CAPA students occupy nearly 75% of the program's enrollment.

Applicants for the Paralegal Studies Certificate program option are evaluated by Department Chair Patricia Adongo. Applicants must submit an application, a personal statement, and official transcripts showing completion of a Baccalaureate degree or 60 semester hours from an accredited college, including 18 semester hours of general education. These requirements ensure students in the Department of Legal Studies have achieved college-level skills.

The Department of Legal Studies prints its own individual brochure in which the program is described along with admission requirements (with a caveat that applicants must meet university admission requirements). The University and the Legal Studies Department webpages set forth the general admissions information. Information about admissions to the Department of Legal Studies is provided on its webpage and in its brochures. All program literature and promotional materials in both print and electronic forms includes a clear and comprehensive Unauthorized Practice of Law statement.

Professors Adongo and Beckhor participate in general information sessions on campus that are open to the public. They visit local community colleges. The Department's Administrative Assistant, Laura Cantrell, who the site team notes is clearly an integral part of the Department "team," often accompanies faculty to information sessions and provides information to potential students who call by phone.

The University of La Verne values academic advising and the Office of Academic Advising facilitates individual advising. The site team would recommend that the paralegal students

receive comprehensive counseling concerning education and employment opportunities upon graduation. In particular paralegal students should be informed that they may pursue employment as paralegals in law firms, government, corporations and other legal entities as well as pursue further studies in graduate schools, including law school.

The Legal Studies Program does not place students. They can obtain assistance with job searches from their advisors in the Legal Studies Department. The Department maintains its own online job board through which local law firms, solo practitioners, corporations, and governmental entities announce available paralegal positions. The job board is accessible through the Legal Studies webpage.

The University of La Verne Department of Career Services, headed by Director of Career Services Paula Verdugo, is also available to students for career counseling, career testing, and online career advisement. It also provides online employment listings, assistance with resumes and interview preparation. The career services and Legal Studies Program staff should interact, communicate and coordinate their efforts to provide better placement assistance.

The Legal Studies Department has an effective data collection and reporting process regarding placement. It collects employment information from graduates within six months post graduation; their employers within four months of receiving the graduates' responses; and surveying graduates and the legal community on a triennial basis.

It is abundantly clear from the comments of both current students and alumni that there is a significant and meaningful rapport between the program director and professors. All students belong to the Paralegal Student Association, which is another avenue for interaction. There were enthusiastic affirmations of Professors Adongo and Bekhor and the program in general. Past and current students mentioned small class sizes, interaction with instructors, and accessible and responsive professors as strong assets of the program.

The Department of Legal Studies does not provide continuing education.

A number of non-Legal Studies students have taken the legal specialty course, American Legal Studies. From examination of the syllabi and courses assignments by the site team, there will be no impact on the integrity of these legal specialty courses.

## **SECTION VI: LIBRARY**

### **G-601**

The Legal Studies program utilizes the University of La Verne Law School Library, which is a short drive (seven miles or 15 minutes by car, with ample parking) from the main college campus. The site team met separately with Kenneth Rudolf, Director of the Law Library and Professor of Law and Law Librarian Teresa Conaway. Professor Conaway also is an Adjunct Professor in the Legal Studies Department.

Although all materials required the ABA Guidelines are included in the collection, some materials about the paralegal profession are dated. Also, older paralegal periodicals are bound and shelved but current paralegal periodicals must be requested. To improve the library paralegal collection, the library should consider ordering additional national paralegal organizations' magazines.

The University of La Verne Law School Library is open at suitable hours for the students. The undergraduate campus library, Wilson Library, is open at suitable times for the students. A current set of texts for the paralegal courses is on reserve at both libraries.

The Law Library is spacious, with ample seating. The students have adequate space for study as well as for research. There is a large computer room of over 30 computers in the Law Library. LS 304 Legal Research and Writing course is taught in this room. Reference librarians and other staff are available at the Law Library to assist the paralegal students.

Once students enroll in the Legal Research and Writing course, they have online research access. The students are assigned a Westlaw password, which they are able to use during the remainder of their participation in the Legal Studies program. They are offered this opportunity after paying a \$10.00 computer research fee for each legal specialty course. Students also have Lexis-Nexis access through the University's main library.

## **SECTION VII-PHYSICAL PLANT**

### **G-701 to 703**

The University of La Verne enjoys a scenic campus, with well maintained, low-set buildings and green spaces, bordering a small downtown area in La Verne. There are a variety of classrooms at the undergraduate campus available for use by the Department of Legal Studies. The rooms have adequate seating, instruction boards, and technology capabilities.

The Legal Research and Writing course is always taught at the Law School. In addition, this year the Contracts course is being taught at the Law School because the adjunct professor is a law librarian. On two prior occasions, courses were taught in the Law Library (Immigration Law-Fall, 2006 and Family Law-Spring, 2008).

The Law School classrooms meet all ABA requirements concerning seating, equipment and technology capabilities. The collegial cooperation between the Legal Studies Department and Law School is commendable.

The University of La Verne main campus has three computer labs, with a total of 70 to 80 computers. All classrooms have a computer with internet access and projectors for on-screen presentations. It would be helpful, however, if there was greater availability of computer labs for paralegal teachers during their classes.

Professors Adongo and Bekhor and their administrative assistant have private offices on the first floor of the building, which houses other faculty and has a lounge for students to read, study or

socialize. This building is near the undergraduate library and the new Student Center, which serves as the central location for student activities and services. It includes dining, gathering spaces, Admissions, Career Services, and student organization offices.

Adjunct faculty do not have offices on campus but use their classrooms before and after class in order to meet their students. The offices of the full time professors are also available for their use, if needed.

## PREVIOUS SITE TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

### From Initial Visit Report – Compliance Issues:

1. *Determine whether the University will continue the Paralegal Studies Program on the San Fernando Valley Campus and if the Program continues there, show that both programs are meeting all of the Guidelines listed in G-105.F.*

The San Fernando Valley Campus was closed in December 2000.

2. *Review the qualifications and attendance history of advisory Board members, make any necessary changes and show that the Board is satisfying all aspects of Guideline G-203.*

The current membership of the Advisory Board meets the qualifications and the Board is satisfying all aspects of Guideline G-203. However, in order to encourage better attendance at meetings, the site team has suggested that the composition the composition of the Advisory Committee should continue to be reviewed and the members' attendance should be monitored.

3. *Show that any courses taught by alternative means (directed studies) are comparable to traditional courses.*

A directed study course is rarely offered in situations where a student is graduating and must have a course that is not being offered. Students are advised of future schedules and instructed on planning ahead. The course, if allowed in those limited circumstances, includes weekly face-to-face contact with the instructor and the completion of all work required for a regularly offered course. Additional work may be required because of decreased classroom time.

4. *Provide accurate placement statistics of all graduates of the program for the past two years, including information on the date of graduation, degree type or certificate, title, and place of employment. G-502.D.*

Placement statistics are gathered of all graduates by requesting that seniors in the Department of Legal Studies complete the Paralegal Graduate Employment Record at graduation and six months thereafter. The Program Director contacts graduates who do not respond by first-class mail.

## **Additional Recommendations from October 2000 Site Team Report**

1. *The program must be more proactive in recruiting minority faculty by contacting minority bar associations or advertising in minority newspapers. (G-204)*

The program has increased its efforts to recruit minority faculty by advertising with minority websites. The University hired a minority full-time faculty member. Of the total four adjunct instructors, one is a Hispanic minority.

2. *Review the current curriculum and make changes based on the needs of the local legal community and duplication of coverage of material in some courses. (G-301)*

The program continues to review its curriculum, particularly with the Advisory Committee. When the curriculum was last revised, duplication of materials in different courses was eliminated.

3. *Survey the legal community and graduates on a regular basis to ascertain the effectiveness of the Program and to elicit suggestions for improvement of the Program. G-301.E.*

Every year since the initial site visit, the program has sent Graduate Surveys for the graduating class five years prior and the class one year prior. Beginning in 2008, the schedule for the Graduate Surveys changed to sending them every three years rather than yearly. The Program also sends out Legal Community Employer Surveys every three years.

4. *The Program should reconsider its policy of not admitting students who are exceptions to G-301 and G-303*

The program admits a limited number of student applicants with substantial experience.

5. *Maintain a strong liaison with the legal and paralegal community (G-402)*

The program is a member of local and national paralegal associations and two local bar associations. The faculty attends meetings when their teaching schedule allows. The Advisory Committee is part of the program's connection to the legal community.



## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION SITE TEAM**

The University of La Verne Legal Studies Program is an excellent program. It receives strong administrative support from President Stephen C. Morgan, Provost Greg Dewey, and Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Jonathan Reed. The impressive faculty, led by Patricia Adongo, Chair, Department of Legal Studies, and staff also contribute to the success of the program. Both graduates and students are proud to be associated with this well-respected program.

The American Bar Association site team recommends **reapproval** of the University of La Verne Legal Studies Program.

To make the program stronger, the site team makes the following **suggestions**:

1. The Legal Studies Department should continue to review the composition of the Advisory Committee and monitor the members' attendance. The replacement of non-participating members should be pursued. (G-203)
2. The Legal Studies Department should continue to evaluate legal specialty elective offerings in order to meet the needs of the legal community that the program serves. (G-301-D)
3. The Legal Studies Department should continue its outcome assessment plan of determining specific goals for individual courses, measuring of goals, and use of information for improvement of the program. (G-301-D)
4. The Legal Studies Department should be responsive to the changing needs of the students and examine new ways to deliver courses, including online, accelerated and day-time courses. (G-301-D)
5. The Legal Studies Department should continue to closely review course rotation options to assure the students' needs are met. (G-301-I)
6. The Legal Studies Department should encourage students to take advantage of internship opportunities available in the metropolitan area. The Department should obtain assistance from the alumni and University of La Verne Law School in identifying internships. (G-301-I)
7. The University of Law Verne should continue its commitment to the faculty members' professional development through attendance at national, state, and local legal and paralegal meetings. (G-401)
8. The Legal Studies Department should maintain stronger liaison with the legal and paralegal communities in the metropolitan area. (G-402-A-7)

9. The Legal Studies Department should assist students in developing resumes, interviewing and employment search skills through closer partnership with Career Services. (G-502)
10. The University of Law Verne should review the information given by all academic advisors concerning employment and educational opportunities to graduates of the Legal Studies Program. (G-502)
11. The Legal Studies Program should provide up-to-date materials on paralegal careers by expanding the University of La Verne Law School Library collection. (G-601-G)
12. The Legal Studies Program should provide additional national periodicals devoted to paralegals through the University of La Verne Law School Library. (G-601-G)
13. The University of La Verne should continue to give adequate technology support to the Legal Studies Program as well as provide accessibility to computer labs during classroom periods. (G-702-B)