

Paralegal  
Strategic Plan 2008-2009  
Front Range Community College

**Program**

- Paralegal/Legal Assistant

**Mission**

- *“To provide training for employment as Legal assistants (Paralegals) in a variety of settings, and to provide opportunities for students who want to upgrade their existing job skills for the current legal market.”*

**Goals**

- To provide students with current active learning experiences.
- To increase critical thinking and analytical skills for all students in the program.
- To provide students with a better understanding of how the legal system of the United States works on both the Federal and State levels.
- To provide students with an opportunity to gain practical experience (through an internship) in applying their occupational skills and/or to develop specific skills in a practical work setting.
- To make course decisions based on the needs of the students.
- To enhance diversity in the student population of the paralegal program.
- To encourage all students to succeed in their professional development.

- To encourage students to associate with professional legal organizations.
- To obtain American Bar Association (ABA) approval.

## **Trends**

- United States Bureau of Labor Statistics for 2008-2009 has listed that the demand for paralegals is expected to grow, and private law firms will continue to be the largest employers of paralegals.
- There is an increase in the number of career changers in the FRCC paralegal program, and this has increased over the years.
- There has been an increase in the number of advanced degree holders in the paralegal program. Front Range Community College has seen more students with Masters and Doctorial Degrees.
- More Racial Minorities are enrolling in paralegal courses at FRCC.
- More out of state students are enrolling in paralegal courses.
- With the addition of the AAS degree, more younger students are enrolling in the program.
- Plans to offer courses in arbitration and mediation for the future.

## **Markets Served**

- Current employees in the legal profession (legal assistants, legal secretaries, and some attorneys wanting a refresher in legal research, and litigation support staff from law firms).
- High School Graduates
- Transfer students from other metro area paralegal programs.
- Currently employed legal support staff.
- Career changers
- Government workforce program students.

- Corporate legal counsel employees.
- Laid-off workers.
- Minorities (I have seen an increase of Latinos who are bilingual to assist attorneys who serve the Latino community).

### **Views from the Legal Community (law firms)**

- Students need more experience with E-filing.
- More research with an employer survey and (or) a legal community survey could help with this geared to the Northern Colorado geographic (Whatever our service area is).

### **Unique Attributes**

- FRCC offers course online providing students with an opportunity to receive a paralegal education when schedules would not otherwise allow (actual student comments).
- Providing students with the chance to work in an actual legal environment (Cooperative Education).
- Focus on exposure to real courtroom activities (required court observations in several classes).
- Tour and require research projects at the University of Colorado law library every semester (Legal Research & Legal Writing courses).

### **Strengths**

- Courses offered online and as hybrids.
- Partnership with law firms for internship placement on a needed basis.
- Program has been in existence since 1997.
- All adjuncts are currently practicing attorneys or paralegals.
- Paralegal program has placed students in following government locations: Colorado Attorney Generals Office, Denver District Attorneys Office, Boulder County Attorneys Office, Colorado Public Defenders Office

(Appellate Division), Boulder County Public Defenders Office, American Arbitration Association (Colorado), Denver Office of the Securities and Exchange Commission, and Colorado Department of Labor.

- Assisting students.
- FRCC students are invited to Colorado Bar Association Legal Assistants Division activities.

### **Weaknesses**

- Need better communication with faculty.
- No administrative help.
- More budget money is needed for private legal materials (practice materials, formbooks, legal specialty course materials) for educational purposes.
- Need to look into starting a paralegal student club. No organized activities for paralegal students.
- Need better course organization with faculty.

### **Objectives over the next year**

- Continue to prepare for ABA visit for approval.
- Hold more advisory committee & faculty meetings.
- Try to organize all paralegal students in some sort of a club (student help will be necessary) to invite speakers & maybe a reception every year.
- Continue to upgrade courses and the addition of the arbitration course.

### **Five things Cheryl can do to support paralegal program**

- Can assist Gerald Rogers to get a 3 credit release for being program director for a College Wide Program. This would help me to visit and meet students on the other campuses.
- Help with assisting (or give direction) in developing articulation agreements with public and private colleges

- if possible (for students who want to go on for 4 year degrees and law school).
- Help to make arrangements for reimbursements when the director travels for cooperative education purposes (When necessary with documentation. This is not often, but some lawyers will not accept an intern unless they meet with me in person).
  - Budget money for hybrid class development (legal practice materials for the classroom).

**This plan is in no way intended to be a final plan or exclusive to the items listed in it. As other issues come up, I will try to supplement the plan as needed.**

**Gerald**