

Course Outcomes Guide

Directions: Please complete this form to document your progress toward improving student learning. For each item, indicate your progress and your anticipated next steps. Thank you!

Course/Program Title: PLS 102 Legal Research

Date: Fall 2009

Course/Program Team: Loretta Thornhill and William P. Young, Jr.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of terms and facts of this subject
(These include knowledge of the Constitution, codes, case law, administrative regulations, digests, encyclopedias, and other law finders; how to use both legal books and the computer to find the law; how to analyze and interpret the law; how to brief cases; how to correctly cite legal sources.)
2. Apply basic knowledge to new situations
3. Solve problems
4. Communicate solutions
5. Demonstrate professional and ethical behavior

Assessment (How do or will students demonstrate achievement of each outcome?)

Students demonstrate achievement of the outcomes through quizzes and exams. In addition, the outcomes are assessed through legal research projects throughout the semester which utilize both the computer (Lexis-Nexis and the Internet) and law books. Outcomes are also assessed through the production of multiple case briefs designed to show mastery of both research and analytical skills.

Validation (What methods have you used or will you use to validate your assessment?)

To be determined

Results (What do your assessment data show? If you have not yet assessed student achievement of your learning outcomes, when is assessment planned?)

Learning outcomes assessments indicate that students are weak in writing skills.

Also, assessments indicate that students are not prepared for the workplace through a lack of professional attitudes and behaviors.

Assessments indicate that students have a difficult time with research because they are unaware of what words to look up.

Assessments indicate that students have a difficult time reading and understanding the law.

Follow-up (How have you used or how will you use the data to improve student learning?)

It has been recommended by the Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee that we re-instate ENG 101 as a pre-requisite or concurrent registration. In addition, more practice assignments

will be given—both in researching legal problems and in analyzing the results. More emphasis should be placed on research strategies such as TARP, TAPP, The Wheel, etc. (methods taken from Legal Research text). More writing assignments should be given for additional practice. Also, all instructors in all Paralegal courses should incorporate discussions and exercises to focus on the need to dress professionally, demonstrate good manners, and demonstrate self-motivation and initiative. Finally, the speaker series should be continued to expose our students to working professionals to focus on expectations and realities in the legal field.

Budget Justification (What resources are necessary to improve student learning?)