

Course Outcomes Guide (COG)

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 Title: PLS 102 – Legal Research (FA/16)

Date: 5/16/17

Instructor: Andrew B. Kramer

Expected Learning Outcomes

- 1) Demonstrate knowledge of terms and facts of this subject
- 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?)

- Outcome No. 1: evidenced by multiple choice questions Nos. 4 & 11 on quiz 1; and short answer question No. 8 on quiz 2.
- Outcome No. 2: evidenced by short answer question No. 5 on quiz 2; and first case brief application
- Outcome No. 3: evidenced by Customized Research Task
- Outcome No. 4: evidenced by Greenwood Case Oral Exam
- Outcome No. 5: Not formally assessed as an adequate rubric was not identified at time syllabus was created

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

- All Outcomes: students must achieve no less than 80% of the total points available in these questions.

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

- Outcome No. 1: 76% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO
- Outcome No. 2: 100% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO
- Outcome No. 3: 100% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO
- Outcome No. 4: 100% of students achieved satisfactory mastery of this SLO
- Outcome No. 5: see above

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

Outcome No. 1: The 76% results show a deficiency in presentation and assessment of objective terminology, etc. I intend to address this in subsequent semesters with more targeted learning activities

Having just completed my first academic year at HCC, and replacing a long-standing, high-ranking professor of Paralegal Studies, it is only now that I am able to have some perspective on the SLOs in the PLS program.

My concerns are as follows:

- 1) The SLOs for all introductory PLS courses (PLS 101, PLS 102 and PLS 103) seem to be similar and not course/material specific.
- 2) The SLOs for all introductory PLS courses, as above, are overly generalized formulations and, therefore, difficult to measure and assess, e.g., “solve problems” and “demonstrate professional and ethical behavior”. For example, student mastery of SLO No. 1 (Demonstrate knowledge of terms and facts of this subject) cannot adequately be measured in a course in which there are no traditional subject matter “terms and facts”, as is the case with PLS 101 (Intro to Paralegal Studies).

My recommendations are:

- 1) Revise the PLS SLOs to a smaller number of more relevant and applicable goals for student performance in material/skills-specific areas
- 2) Revise the PLS SLOs to allow for greater instructor options for measurement and, therefore, for the creation of more meaningful assessments of student learning
- 3) Upon the completion of the HCC Courtroom, incorporate a new SLO that assesses practical courtroom processes in the context of remaining goals for legal research.

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

HCC Courtroom: As discussed in Unit Planning and explored thereafter, a mock courtroom will:

- a) Allow students to experience the setting in which much of their professional work will take place
- b) Allow students to apply and combine all anticipated SLOs in a hands-on setting in which students communicate, demonstrate knowledge, act professionally and apply knowledge gained through research to diverse factual scenarios