

Academic Program Assessment Report

Assessment is a term commonly used to encompass the process of gathering and using evidence to guide improvements.

SACSCOC requires that an institution "identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of seeking improvement based on analysis of the results".

Be sure to SAVE your progress as you work!

Academic Program
Paralegal Studies, B.S.

Submission Due Date
Fall 2025: October 1, 2025

Assessment Coordinator Name
Ashley Woodiwiss

Enter Assessment Coordinator Email
awoodiwiss@lander.edu

Program Goal

Goal

Goal 1

Program Goals are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

Program Goal

Knowledgeable students who understand different practice areas of the law.

Pillar of Success Supported

Graduates Who Are Gainfully Employed or Admitted to Graduate School

Outcomes

Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome

demonstrate knowledge and understanding

Timeframe for this Outcome

Academic Year 2024-25

Performance Target for "Met"

At least 80% of students will rate "very much" or "quite a bit" on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) administered during LEG 499.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

At least 70% of students will "very much" or "quite a bit" or higher on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) administered during LEG 499.

Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 70% of students rating "very much" or "quite a bit" on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) administered during LEG 499.

Assessment Measure Used

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Frequency of Assessment

Every three years in LEG 499 at a minimum.

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

No NSSE data were collected from LEG 499 during 2024-2025 from the Program Director. Data collection will begin in the 2025-2026 year.

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

Comments/Narrative

With a new Program Director for the Paralegal Program who was in his first year of full-time higher education and program administration, a number of items "slipped through the cracks," in the extended period of orientation, mentoring, and adjustment. With solid progress made in 2024-2025, there is every reason to expect that this assessment item will be fully met.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Only resource needed is the Program Director to be fully equipped and prepared for program administration responsibilities. I have no concern that this will be realized moving forward.

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Program Director will employ NSSE assessment criteria in LEG 499.

Goal Summary

Goal Summary/Comments

With a new Program Director for the Paralegal Program who was in his first year of full-time higher education and program administration, a number of items "slipped through the cracks," in the extended period of orientation, mentoring, and adjustment. With solid progress made in 2024-2025, there is every reason to expect that this assessment item will be fully met.

Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal

Program Director is aware that NSSE standards and data must be employed and gleaned from each section of LEG 499.

Upload Rubrics/Other Files

Goal 2

Program Goals are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

Program Goal

Students with research and critical thinking skills to succeed in a workplace setting.

Pillar of Success Supported

Graduates Who Are Gainfully Employed or Admitted to Graduate School

Outcomes

Outcome 1

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Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention, employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome

Demonstrate research skills and the ability to think critically

Timeframe for this Outcome

Academic year 2024-25

Performance Target for "Met"

80% of students will rate "very much" or "quite a bit" on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) administered during LEG 499.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

70% of students will "very much" or "quite a bit" or higher on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) administered during LEG 499.

Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 70% of students rating "very much" or "quite a bit" on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) administered during LEG 499.

Assessment Measure Used

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Frequency of Assessment

Every year in LEG 499.

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

No NSSE data were collected from LEG 499 during 2024-2025 from the Program Director. Data

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

collection will begin in the 2025-2026 year.

Comments/Narrative

With a new Program Director for the Paralegal Program who was in his first year of full-time higher education and program administration, a number of items "slipped through the cracks," in the extended period of orientation, mentoring, and adjustment. With solid progress made in 2024-2025, there is every reason to expect that this assessment item will be fully met.

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Goal Summary/Comments

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Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal

Program Director is aware that NSSE standards and data must be employed and gleaned from each section of LEG 499.

Upload Rubrics/Other Files

Goal 3

Program Goals are broad and overarching statements about the skills, knowledge, and dispositions students are expected to gain by the end of their course of study (big picture). They support the Institution's Mission/Goals.

Program Goal

Students with communication skills to succeed in a workplace setting

Pillar of Success Supported

Graduates Who Are Gainfully Employed or Admitted to Graduate School

Outcomes

Outcome 1

Outcomes are specific, **measurable** statements that reflect the broader goals.

Academic Programs are required to develop **Student Learning Outcomes**, which describe knowledge, skills, and values that students are expected to gain as a result of their educational experiences.

Academic Programs may also develop **Operational Outcomes**, which describe the level of performance of an operational aspect of a program or office (ex. graduation rates, retention,

employment data).

Most goals have at least two outcomes measured.

What type of Outcome would you like to add?

Student Learning Outcome

Enter Outcome

Demonstrate effective writing and research skills

Timeframe for this Outcome

Academic Year 2024-25

Performance Target for "Met"

At least 80% of LEG students will score 28 points or higher on those portions of an essay paper in LEG 311, LEG 312, and LEG 308, that deal with writing, organization, and research.

Performance Target for "Partially Met"

At least 70% of LEG students will score 28 points or higher on those portions of an essay paper in LEG 311, LEG 312, and LEG 308, that deal with writing, organization, and research.

Performance Target for "Not Met"

Less than 70% of LEG students scored 28 points or higher on those portions of an essay paper in LEG 311, LEG 312, and LEG 308, that deal with writing, organization, and research.

Assessment Measure Used

Written essay in LEG 311, LEG 312, and LEG 308 in 2024-2025 academic year.

Frequency of Assessment

Every semester

Data Collected for this Timeframe (Results)

Of the 24 students who completed this measure, 75% (18 out of 24) achieved a score of 28 or higher.

Score (Met=3, Partially Met=2, Not Met=1)

3

Comments/Narrative

As this is the only outcome that could be measured within this 2024-2025 reporting period, it is encouraging to see the LEG students meeting the program's expectation.

Resources Needed to Meet/Sustain Results

Explanation of How Resources Will Be Used

Goal Summary

Goal Summary/Comments

The success rate validates the emphasis on research and writing across several courses. The program should examine the possibility of adopting an argumentative style of paper across each class to develop skills that are measured on the writing component of the LSAT for those students seeking admission to law school following program completion.

Changes Made/Proposed Related to Goal

No specific change is proposed, but each course should explore the use of an argumentative style approach to the paper assignment(s).

Upload Rubrics/Other Files

Dean's Email Address

mjameson@lander.edu

Approved by Dean?

Yes

Signature of Dean

Misty L. Jameson

Comments from Dean's Review

While I understand that this year's report is, more or less, incomplete because of a transition to a new program director, I am a bit puzzled as to the difference between what is being measured in Goal One and Goal Two—both seem to be using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and measuring the same thing. So, my question is, how is the first goal to “demonstrate knowledge and understanding” and the second goal to “demonstrate research skills and the ability to think critically” if the instrument for both is the same survey? (Do you look at certain questions or subsets of questions for each Goal?)

Additionally, most goals have at least two outcomes measured, so to have two different goals—each with only one outcome—that are not clearly delineated from one another is not particularly helpful in determining program/student success. I would recommend that the department reconsider their wording of goals one and two (what skills do they think are important for their students?) and the ways to measure these skills effectively. This could mean expanding each of these a bit (two goals with at least two outcomes each) or combining them into one goal with two different outcomes.

While I am glad to see that Goal Three has been measured and met, there still is no Goal Four/final goal listed. This goal needs to address student enrollment and graduation rates (Operational Outcomes). This data is available to each assessment coordinator every fall, so this report needs to include it as a final goal. I know that Paralegal Studies has yet to reach its sixth year of review, but it would be a good idea to go ahead and put in this data as part of the yearly assessment report. For example, this year, Paralegal Studies has a rolling average of 13 majors, which is a decent number, and 4.3 graduates. A narrative explaining what recruitment and retention initiatives have been undertaken would be useful here.

As the program moves forward, faculty should consider how NACE competencies might be utilized in the recruitment/retention process. I am thinking particularly of communication, professionalism, career- and self-development, and teamwork.) While Goal Two and Goal Three have to do with success in a workplace setting, you might also want to consider different ways to track career/workforce readiness--if possible. This could include experiential learning, resume building, mock interviews, and alumni engagement with undergrads and could be listed either as a new goal or as an outcome for an existing goal. It is something to think about.

Thank you for reviewing and approving this report. The approval and a copy of the report will be emailed to you and the Assessment Coordinator.