Discipline Outcome

Critical Thinking: Ability to analyze and apply law to fact situations

Assessment Author(s)
J. Slonka

Measure 1 Type:
Direct

Rubric-graded report

Measure 1 Description:
Students are assessed on their ability to analyze statutes and case law correctly and apply the law to hypothetical situations to reach a legal conclusion.

Measure 1 Sample Size:
30

1) Describe the benchmark for this measure.
Students are assigned to research a legal issue and provide proper legal authority, thru cases and statutes, then provide proper legal analysis of the statutory requirements and apply the requirements to the hypothetical situation and provide an answer to the legal question.

2) What is the rationale for choosing this benchmark?
It enables the program to see in a single glance the proficiency of students while performing many of the legal skills needed for an entry level paralegal position in the local employment market.

This discipline outcome was

Met benchmark

**Measure 1 Results:**

Students performed well in this area, with most students scoring in the excellent or very good range. Those two ranges, when combined, reflect that 63% of our students demonstrate the skills required to perform these tasks at a high level. This is up from approx. 41% in the last assessment for the same measurement.

1) How did unit/department performance compare to the benchmark?

The department performed as expected by instilling good research habits and productive use of time to the students to achieve results that lead to a legal answer and recommendation that is expected in a law firm or legal setting.

2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?

The results in 2017 were higher than the results in 2016, 63% overall to 41% overall, demonstrating that the revisions to the writing and research aspects of the paralegal program are having the intended affect and imparting the necessary skills.
1) Based on the findings, how does the unit/department rate performance in regards to this outcome (strong exceeds benchmark, neutral meets benchmark, or weak misses benchmark)?

Met benchmark

2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of strategic planning, budget planning, administrative and educational support unit planning, and assessment planning?

We will continue to monitor this measurement of Critical Thinking to insure that students, and the program, are meeting the necessary benchmark of learning the skills demanded by the local marketplace.

3) How will your assessment results enable you to improve institutional processes or academic instruction in order to support, facilitate and/or stimulate student learning?

These results can allow the department to expand the writing and research lessons to other PAR classes to further fortify those skills and provide the students with more opportunity to practice and refine their skills.

Further Action:

Further Action Planned

Describe the action plan:

Continue expansion and utilization of critical thinking skills across our program.

Person/ Group responsible for action

PAR faculty

Priority

Medium

Discipline Outcome

Entry-level employment preparedness
Assessment Author(s)
J. Slonka

Measure 1 Type:
Direct

Survey or questionnaire

Measure 1 Description:
Overall opinion of preparedness of students as derived from a survey from each graduating student and a questionnaire from their internship mentor(s).

Measure 1 Sample Size:
40

1) Describe the benchmark for this measure.

Mentoring / Supervising attorneys are asked to evaluate the students progress during the mandatory internship for the PAR program, and evaluate whether they feel the student has the skills necessary for an entry-level paralegal job. They are also asked if they feel there are other areas / training that the student would benefit from.

2) What is the rationale for choosing this benchmark?

Immediate feedback from an external source that can independently judge the preparedness of our students by a supervisor who gets to see the students at the end of the program when they are expected to be able to exhibit the skills necessary for the workplace.

Measure 2 Type:
Direct

Capstone project

Measure 2 Description:
Statistics will be derived from a capstone portion of each student's internship experience.

Measure 2 Sample Size:
40

1) Describe the benchmark for this measure.
Students complete a simulation series that consists of typical paralegal tasks as assigned in a virtual law firm on differing areas of law.

2) What is the rationale for choosing this benchmark?

Real world assignments, tasks, and deadlines that cannot be completely duplicated in a classroom setting.

This discipline outcome was

Met benchmark

Measure 1 Results:

Of the 40 internship student evaluations received, 27 responded to the question of whether the student was entry-level prepared. Of the 27 responses, 21 stated the intern was prepared in the opinion of the supervising attorney. The remaining 6 stated that more training was required of the intern, mainly in the areas of law office technology.

Measure 2 Results:

Measure 2 is inconclusive at this time as the initial run of the Capstone law simulation is not completed for this semester, the first semester it has been used. The data at the end of this semester will be used in next years assessment.

1) How did unit/department performance compare to the benchmark?

The results from the external opinions of internship supervisors support the idea that the program is indeed imparting to the student the necessary skills for entry-level employment.

2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?

There is no previous data to compare to.

3) If multiple measures were used, how do they compare to each other?

Measure 2 data is unavailable at this time.

1) Based on the findings, how does the unit/department rate performance in regards to this outcome (strong exceeds benchmark, neutral meets benchmark, or weak misses benchmark)?
2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of strategic planning, budget planning, administrative and educational support unit planning, and assessment planning?

This result is inconclusive until the results of the Capstone portion are available for analysis. The department will continue to monitor and evaluate this measure and prepare for future measurements.

Further Action:
Further Action Unnecessary

Learning Outcome

Accountability and Responsibility - Student will display a knowledge of the ethical requirements for legal professionals.

Assessment Author(s)
J. Slonka

Measure 1 Type:
Direct

Dedicated assessment test

Measure 1 Description:
Students will be able to determine ethical rules and apply them correctly to hypothetical situations to determine the appropriate ethical course of conduct.

Measure 1 Sample Size:
45
1) Describe the benchmark for this measure.
Students are given an ethics assignment that requires a written response to various ethical dilemmas in the law firm.

2) What is the rationale for choosing this benchmark?
ABA required knowledge of ethical rules and conduct

This learning outcome was
Met benchmark

Measure 1 Results:
Given the complexities of ethical rules for law firms, our students performed as expected with the majority of students falling into the acceptable or higher range. The highest measurements, accomplished and exemplary, held the majority of students tested.

1) How did unit/department performance compare to the benchmark?
The results of this measurement was in line with the expected performance with student results supporting a typical bell curve - the majority of students fell into the middle measurements (acceptable and accomplished), with small samples in the outer extreme measurements (beginning and exemplary).

2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?
The results here are in line with previous measurements showing that the program does impart a working knowledge of ethical rules in various situations and proper responses to these situations.
1) Based on the findings, how does the unit/department rate performance in regards to this outcome (strong exceeds benchmark, neutral meets benchmark, or weak misses benchmark)?

Met benchmark

2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of strategic planning, budget planning, administrative and educational support unit planning, and assessment planning?

We will continue to address ethical concerns and teaching in all of our classes in this program as we have done for years.

Further Action:

Further Action Unnecessary

Learning Outcome

Communication - Student will display written communication that is clear and effective in a legal setting.

Assessment Author(s)

J. Slonka

Measure 1 Type:

Direct

Rubric-graded report

Measure 1 Description:
Students will demonstrate a clear and effective ability to communicate legal research and predictive outcomes successfully through written documents.

**Measure 1 Sample Size:**

30

1) Describe the benchmark for this measure.

Students should be able to research and find relevant case law and statutes that pertain to the legal hypothetical situation they have been given.

2) What is the rationale for choosing this benchmark?

ABA required ability to communicate through legal documents.

This learning outcome was Met benchmark

**Measure 1 Results:**

The outcomes here show students are exhibiting very capable skills in researching and writing on legal issues. They are finding and analyzing the proper, relevant legal authority and communicating that clearly in their written communications.

![Basic Legal Knowledge](image-url)
1) How did unit/department performance compare to the benchmark?

The PAR department does a good job of imparting the knowledge and skills necessary for effective and focused research and writing of legal issues. Students are able to use electronic sources to find law and cases to answer the legal questions before them, then are capable of explaining their research in a clear manner.

2) How does the data compare to the previous year, if applicable?

These scores are at the same level of success as previous years.

1) Based on the findings, how does the unit/department rate performance in regards to this outcome (strong exceeds benchmark, neutral meets benchmark, or weak misses benchmark)?

Met benchmark

2) How does this assessment affect plans for this coming year in terms of strategic planning, budget planning, administrative and educational support unit planning, and assessment planning?
The department will continue to teach the skills required using the latest technology and resources to keep students updated on the world of legal research and writing.

**Further Action:**

Further Action Unnecessary