

New Major Program Proposal

I. School: IUPUI School of Liberal Arts

Department: Political Science

II. Proposed Major: Legal Studies

III. Related Degree Program: B.A. in Legal Studies

IV. Projected Date of Implementation: Fall 2009

V. List the major objectives of the proposed major and describe its chief features briefly:

The proposed Legal Studies major is a 36-credit major which will train and prepare students for careers as paralegals in the legal profession. The major aims to provide practical legal skills as well as a background in legal concepts so that graduates will immediately be able to obtain jobs in this rapidly expanding profession. Paralegals are typically employed in law firms, and are also eligible for careers in government, business, and non-profit organizations.

The Legal Studies major prepares students for employment as a paralegal by utilizing a number of methods. First, all students must complete an introductory course in law, which exposes them to the basic theoretical and conceptual components of the law, as well as providing an introduction to the court system, legal actors, and legal procedures. Second, to develop practical, real-world legal skills, students are required to take courses which provide training in legal research, legal writing, and litigation skills. Third, to ensure that all students develop a strong understanding and awareness of legal ethics in the workplace, they will take a required course in professional responsibility for the legal professional. Fourth, the students will be able to tailor the curriculum according to their own interests by selecting a number of elective courses. These elective courses span the spectrum of legal specialties, including criminal law, family law, estate law, and a variety of business law courses. There is also a required perspectives course, which will expose the students to the study of law in the context of Philosophy, Psychology, History, Public Affairs, and Political Science. Also, students will have the option of working in a legal internship for one of their required elective courses. This internship will provide valuable practical experience as well as possibly leading to employment after graduation. Finally, all students will take a senior capstone course in advanced legal writing. This capstone course will include a major writing project as well as incorporating and extending the theoretical concepts and practical skills acquired through prior course work. A full listing of the major's requirements can be found in Appendix I.

VI. Why is the major needed? (Rationale):

The proposed Legal Studies major is needed for a number of reasons. First, the paralegal profession is one of the fastest growing in the United States. Indeed, the U.S. Department of Labor notes that the employment of paralegals is “projected to grow 22 percent between 2006 and 2016, much faster than the average for all professions.”¹ Furthermore, as a major city as well as the capital of Indiana, there are excellent employment opportunities for trained paralegals in the region. However, despite the rapid growth in the demand for paralegals, there are virtually no opportunities for students in the Indianapolis area to pursue a bachelor’s degree in this field. The closest baccalaureate program in Legal Studies exists at Ball State University in Muncie. (Appendix II lists all of the bachelor’s degree programs in legal studies in Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan and Ohio.) Currently, the Political Science department at IUPUI offers a certificate program in paralegal studies (as does Ivy Tech Community College); however, most legal employers require a bachelor’s degree as a condition of employment. Correspondingly, there has been an explosion of interest in baccalaureate programs in paralegal studies across the country. According to the American Association for Paralegal Education, there are currently 99 colleges and universities that offer a major in legal and paralegal studies, including comparable research universities such as Southern Illinois University, Syracuse University, the University of Akron, Suffolk University, Tulane University, and the University of Mississippi. The introduction of this new major at IUPUI will allow Central Indiana students as well as other students from across the region to pursue a bachelor’s degree in this growing field.

It should also be noted that the leaders of the paralegal program at Ivy Tech Community College in Indianapolis have requested and encouraged the development of a baccalaureate program in paralegal studies at IUPUI, so that their students can pursue a four-year degree after transferring. Indeed, there have been several meetings between the director of the Ivy Tech program and the director of the IUPUI paralegal program to discuss this proposal. The creation of the Legal Studies program at IUPUI would benefit from a substantial number of transfer students from Ivy Tech; furthermore, this would serve as an example of how IUPUI cooperates with other local educational institutions.

In terms of pedagogy, the proposed Legal Studies major will serve the students better than the existing certificate program because of the expanded rigor of the major, as well as the intellectual depth and critical thinking skills that are provided by the study of the liberal arts. The proposed major will require that students take six core courses, rather than the four core courses mandated in the certificate program. Furthermore, one of those new core courses is a senior capstone course in advanced legal writing, which will require a major writing project, thus furthering IUPUI’s Principle of Undergraduate Learning which encourages “express[ing] ideas and facts to others effectively in a variety of written formats” as well as “comprehend[ing], interpret[ing], and analyz[ing] texts.”² Also, the proposed major will require a “perspectives” elective course, which will expose

¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, Paralegals and Legal Assistants, <http://stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos114.htm>.

² IUPUI Principles of Undergraduate Learning, http://www.iupui.edu/academic/undergrad_principles.html.

the students to the study of law as viewed through the lens of Philosophy, Psychology, History, Public Affairs, or Political Science. This interdisciplinary elective naturally supports the Principle of Undergraduate Learning which encourages the “ability of students to use information and concepts from studies in multiple disciplines in their intellectual, professional, and community lives.”³ Overall, the proposed major in Legal Studies will reinforce practical legal knowledge and skills with intellectual depth and critical thinking.

Finally, it is important to note that Legal Studies is an increasingly popular option at colleges and universities across the United States. In fact, if the Legal Studies program were a major right now, the current number of enrolled (certificate) students would make it the third largest major in the School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. This clearly demonstrates the viability of the proposed major. Furthermore, there is every reason to believe that the number of students enrolled will increase as word of the new major spreads.

VII. Describe the student population to be served and market to be targeted.

The Legal Studies major will serve the existing student population at the School of Liberal Arts and will also attract new students to the School. Based upon the usual mix of students in a paralegal education program, it is likely that three distinct types of students will be attracted to the major. First, the major is likely to attract traditional undergraduate students who are interested in a career as a paralegal. Second, the major will serve those nontraditional and part-time students (including transfer students from community colleges) who are seeking a career change and desire to begin working as a paralegal. Finally, the proposed major is likely to attract those students who are already working in the legal profession, perhaps as a legal assistant, who are looking to gain an academic credential so that they may advance at their jobs. Because most paralegal courses are offered in the evening, this major and its flexibility should especially appeal to working students. Traditional undergraduate students in schools other than SLA may also find the prospect of a double major in Legal Studies appealing.

VIII. How does this major complement the departmental and campus missions?

First, the Legal Studies major supports many of the IUPUI Principles of Undergraduate Learning, including those relating to Core Communication Skills, Critical Thinking, Integration and Application of Knowledge, and also Intellectual Depth, Breadth, and Adaptiveness.⁴ Also, the Legal Studies major complements the School of Liberal Arts’ mission to create and exchange “knowledge that promotes understanding of the human experience,” and also those core values of Student Learning, Accessibility, Collaboration with the Community, and Stewardship, as well as the goal of creating Community

³ IUPUI Principles of Undergraduate Learning, http://www.iupui.edu/academic/undergrad_principles.html.
⁴ IUPUI Principles of Undergraduate Learning, http://www.iupui.edu/academic/undergrad_principles.html.

Partnerships.⁵ Finally, the Legal Studies major supports a number of goals within the IUPUI "Vision, Mission, and Values" statement. These include goals II E) "Encourage and support initiatives that promote curricular and co-curricular integration of the Principles of Undergraduate Learning, and community-based academic learning (service learning);" III G) "Enable more students to engage in internships;" and also goal III, "Intensify commitment and accountability to Indianapolis, Central Indiana, and the state."⁶

IX. List and indicate the sources (including reallocation) of any resources (personnel, financial, learning, etc.) required to implement the proposed program:

The Legal Studies major will make complete use of existing courses that are already offered on our campus in order to minimize the demand for new resources and to better utilize existing resources within the School of Liberal Arts. Specifically, the proposed major will require no new courses at all; every course that will be offered in the major already exists.

The Legal Studies program currently has three main resources: (1) a director (David Weiden) supported by an annual course release; (2) a full-time lecturer/assistant director (currently Bryan Reed) as well as fifteen adjunct instructors, most of whom are drawn from the legal community in Indianapolis; and (3) an advisory committee comprised of local attorneys and other professionals from the legal community. In addition, the program receives some minor financial support (typically around \$2,000 per academic year) from the IU Community Learning Network as payment for the courses offered by the Community Learning Network for their non-credit paralegal certificate program. More specifically, the Community Learning Network uses the courses and facilities of the paralegal program at IU for their non-credit certificate program; in return, they pay a fee of 20% of their tuition charges per enrolled student to the paralegal program.

These resources are sufficient for the start-up phase of the Legal Studies major. As students begin enrolling in the major in even greater numbers, the School of Liberal Arts will need to gradually increase its support for the program by adding a half-time or shared administrative assistant. As student enrollment continues to increase, such resources might ultimately need to be augmented to a full administrative assistant with office space and a lead advisor. These resources can be paid for in whole or in part by the increased tuition revenues generated by the program for the school. Thus, the program will begin by using existing resources and gradually build up as student enrollment justifies the new resources.

⁵ IU School of Liberal Arts, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, "Strategic Plan, 2006-2010." (Fall, 2005).

⁶ Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, "Vision, Mission and Values: Context for Planning at IUPUI," (revised July 10, 2002).

X. Describe any innovative features of the program (e.g., involvement with local or regional agencies, offices, etc., cooperative efforts with other institutions, etc.):

There are a number of innovative features in the Legal Studies program. First of all, the major integrates professional training and real-world pedagogy with interdisciplinary theoretical exposure. More specifically, the bulk of the courses in the proposed major impart practical skills and legal techniques (as is appropriate for a program tailored to budding professionals), but the students are also exposed to the study of law within the context of the disciplines of Philosophy, Psychology, History, Public Affairs, and Political Science. This blend of professional training with theoretical analysis and critical thought is fairly unique, compared to other paralegal training programs. This integration of professional and theoretical training is mirrored by the mix of instructors—practicing attorneys as well as scholars—teaching in the program.

Another innovative feature of the program is the multiple opportunities for students who wish to take part in an internship in the legal field and gain valuable real-world experience. The paralegal program has established an opportunity with a major Indianapolis law firm for several top-notch students to serve as interns each year. In addition, students may also set up an internship with any legal organization that they may be interested in, including public interest legal organizations. The internship opportunities in the Legal Studies major provide the chance for students to put their newly learned skills to practical use, as well as serve the community.

Additionally, the Legal Studies major is one of just 97 programs nationally to have a chapter of the paralegal honors society, Lambda Epsilon Chi (known as LEX). This chapter of the honors society, just established in 2007, allows superior students to be recognized for their achievements. There is also a scholarship competition administered by LEX which provides for \$500 in tuition support.

Finally, the Legal Studies major will be seeking approval of the program by the American Bar Association (ABA) beginning in spring semester, 2009. The ABA approval process is somewhat similar to accreditation, except that it is voluntary, not mandatory. Approval by the ABA ensures that the training provided by an approved paralegal program is of the highest quality and that such a program and its facilities meet the rigorous standards established by the ABA Standing Committee on Paralegals.⁷ The initial approval process requires the submission of a lengthy self-study report, including extensive quantitative data on alumni satisfaction with the program as well as data from the local legal community. After the initial approval report is submitted, a two-day site visit by members of the ABA Standing Committee is conducted. After completion of the site visit, the Standing Committee makes its recommendation as to approval, as well as any suggestions for improvement. If a paralegal program is approved, an interim report must be also submitted three years from the date of approval, followed by a full reapproval process after seven years to ensure that each approved program is adhering to

⁷ American Bar Association, Standing Committee on Paralegals, "General Approval Process Information." <http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/paralegals/process.html>.

the ABA guidelines. In other words, the program will be fully evaluated by the American Bar Association every seven years to ensure that quality standards of teaching and training are being upheld. It is clear from this rigorous and continuing process that the pedagogical quality of the Legal Studies major will be monitored and maintained. Furthermore, the fact that the Legal Studies major is approved by the ABA (if indeed such approval is granted) can be used as a marketing and promotional tool.

XI. List the major student outcomes (or set of performance-based standards) for the proposed major. That is, what learning will the program produce in a comprehensive sense? What will graduates know and be able to do as a result of their experiences, and where will they learn these things?

Through their courses in Legal Studies, students completing the major will possess the ability to:

- Master essential legal doctrines and concepts, as well as possess an understanding of law and society in context.
- Effectively conduct legal research by using both traditional methods as well as computerized legal research techniques.
- Analyze complex issues and make informed decisions, as well as engage in legal analysis and textual synthesis.
- Write and draft a variety of professional legal documents.
- Communicate orally in both one-on-one and group settings, and also in a legal advocacy context.
- Cultivate their intellectual capacity for critical, reflective and integrative thinking.
- Meet professional standards and competencies, as well as develop awareness of professional norms and ethical standards.

XII. Explain how each of the student learning outcomes identified in XI above will be assessed using, for example, course-embedded assessments, graduate follow-up, employer surveys, standardized tests, etc? Will assessment take place in courses? In practice settings? In a culminating project or seminar? (Please use the matrix in the Attachment to indicate how the outcomes will be assessed and in what setting(s).) On what basis will you demonstrate that this program has been successful after its fifth year of implementation? What performance indicators will you use?

Student learning outcomes will be assessed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Specific learning outcomes will be evaluated in core and elective courses through in-class discussions, quizzes, exams, written assignments and reflective projects (see Appendix III). In addition to the assessment of specific learning outcomes in individual courses, the Legal Studies program will also maintain quantitative data on student satisfaction via course evaluations each semester. The Legal Studies program will also maintain quantitative data on student enrollment, graduation rates and retention. Graduating seniors will also complete mandatory exit interviews upon their completion of the major. The program will also maintain data on the post-graduate employment placement of the students. From its inception, the Legal Studies program will also employ IUPUI's forthcoming e-portfolio system to assess outcomes and facilitate student reflection.

Finally, it should be noted again that the American Bar Association approval and reapproval process, discussed above, requires a rigorous self-study report containing quantitative data collected from students and employers, as well as a site visit by members of the Standing Committee on Paralegals. This rigorous assessment process must be conducted every seven years, and interim reports must be submitted every three years after a full review. Thus, it is clear that student learning outcomes, pedagogical quality, and program success will be subject to an additional level of (continuing) review by the American Bar Association, further assuring that the quality of the program will be maintained.

Appendix I

Requirements for the Legal Studies Major

- 36 Credit major which utilizes existing courses from the Political Science department as well as courses from History, Philosophy, Psychology, and SPEA.
- Total of 15 credits in five **core** courses: a required introductory course, Y211 Introduction to Law; Y221 Legal Research and Writing for Paralegal Studies; Y222 Litigation for Paralegal Studies; Y223 Litigation for Paralegal Studies II; Y232 Professional Responsibility for Paralegals.
- 15 elective credits selected from the following Political Science department courses: Y224 Property Law for Paralegal Studies; Y225 Contract Law for Paralegal Studies; Y226 Tort Law for Paralegal Studies; Y227 Criminal Law for Paralegal Studies; Y228 Family Law for Paralegal Studies; Y229 Estate Law for Paralegal Studies; Y230 Bankruptcy Law for Paralegal Studies; Y233 Business Associations for Paralegal Studies; Y485 Field Experience in Paralegal Studies.
- 3 elective credits (the “perspective elective”) selected from the following SLA and SPEA department courses: Y320 Judicial Politics; Y305 Constitutional Rights and Liberties; HIST A421 American Legal History; PHIL P383 Philosophy of Law; PSY B375 Psychology and the Law; SPEA V408 Community and the Constitution.
- 3 credit Y231 Advanced Legal Writing for Paralegal Studies senior capstone requirement.

Appendix II

Universities and Colleges Offering a Major in Legal/Paralegal Studies

According to the American Association for Paralegal Education, there are 99 programs in the nation that offer a baccalaureate degree in legal or paralegal studies. This list includes those institutions in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Kentucky, and Michigan.

Indiana:

Institution:

Ball State University
Calumet College of St. Joseph
St. Mary-of-the-Woods College
University of Evansville

Location:

Muncie, IN
Whiting, IN
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN
Evansville, IN

Illinois:

Institution:

Illinois State University
Roosevelt University
Southern Illinois University

Location:

Normal, IL
Chicago, IL
Carbondale, IL

Ohio:

Institution:

College of Mount St. Joseph
Kent State University
Lake Erie College
Myers University
University of Akron
University of Cincinnati
University of Toledo
Ursuline College

Location:

Cincinnati, OH
Kent, OH
Painesville, OH
Cleveland, OH
Akron, OH
Cincinnati, OH
Toledo, OH
Pepper Pike, OH

Kentucky:

Institution:

Beckfield College
Eastern Kentucky University
Morehead State University
Sullivan University

Location:

Florence, KY
Richmond, KY
Morehead, KY
Louisville, KY

Michigan:

Institution:

Davenport University
Eastern Michigan University
Grand Valley State University
Lake Superior State University
Madonna University

Location:

Grand Rapids, MI
Ypsilanti, MI
Grand Rapids, MI
Sault Sainte Marie, MI
Livonia, MI

Appendix III

Student Learning Outcome Assessment for Legal Studies Major

Student Outcome	Where will students learn this skill?	Assessment of student achievement	Setting of assessment	Relevant PULs
Conduct legal research	-Courses Y211, Y221 -Optional internship	-Examinations, quizzes, papers, legal projects, sample briefs	-Y221	-Intellectual Depth, Breadth and Adaptiveness
Draft legal documents	-Courses Y221, Y222, Y223, Y231, electives -Optional internship	-Exams, papers, draft legal briefs and motions -Culminating appellate brief project in Y231	-Y221, Y222, Y223, Y231	-Integration and Application of Knowledge
Master core legal doctrines	-Courses Y211, Y222, Y223, elective courses	-Exams, quizzes, papers, projects	-Courses	-Intellectual Depth, Breadth and Adaptiveness
Communicate orally, in group and advocacy contexts	-Courses Y222, Y223, Y231, elective courses	-In-class presentations, mock appellate argument	-Y222, Y223, Y231	-Core Communication Skills
Develop awareness of ethical standards	-Course Y232, elective courses	-Exams, quizzes, papers	-Y232	-Values and Ethics
Cultivate critical, integrative, and reflective thinking	-All courses, but especially the perspective elective	-Papers, projects, class discussions	-Courses	-Critical Thinking; Understanding Society and Culture