

## **1. Catalog description of the program (program goals and objective)**

De Anza College's Paralegal Studies program prepares individuals for the growing range of opportunities for paralegals in corporate, civil, and criminal law practices and government agencies. De Anza's Paralegal Studies program is approved by the American Bar Association (ABA). It includes coursework in American and California law, litigation, legal research, and writing. In addition to core courses, De Anza Paralegal Studies students can select from a number of restricted electives that help them specialize in a particular area of legal practice: intellectual property, bankruptcy law, tort litigation, and trial preparation. Students also have the opportunity to learn about the latest trends in the profession through the Current Paralegal Topics course series.

De Anza's Paralegal Studies program is well-respected in the South Bay legal community. The program offers Associate in Arts (A.A.) degree and a Certificate of Achievement-Advanced options for those students who already possess an A.A./A.S. degree or higher. Although the minimum education requirements for graduates from an ABA-approved paralegal program is an associate's degree, many De Anza Paralegal Studies graduates have four-year degrees and bring with them education and professional experience in other fields. Paralegal Studies faculty include practicing attorneys, judges, and paralegals. Faculty members represent different areas of legal practice, teach a broad range of courses, offer students a solid understanding of multiple specialization areas, and expand their future career options. In accordance with the guidelines established by the ABA, all Paralegal Studies graduates must display a high-level of proficiency using office technology; researching with on-line legal databases; and completing legal applications, forms, briefings, correspondence, and reports in print, electronic, and Web-based formats. In order to gain relevant work experience, De Anza Paralegal Studies students are strongly encouraged to participate in internship and job shadowing opportunities.

## **2. Certificate and degree programs offered (title and units)**

Certificate of Achievement-Advanced – **Paralegal Studies** – 46 units  
A.A. Degree – **Paralegal Studies** – 46 units plus General Education

## **3. Program-level Student Learning Outcomes**

## **4. Data on certificate and degree awards for previous year (2009-10)**

Certificates of Achievement-Advanced      Paralegal Studies – 43  
*formerly Certificates of Proficiency*

Associate in Arts degrees      Paralegal Studies – 48

## **5. Regional and State Labor Market Data**

Employment opportunities for Paralegal Studies program graduates exist with civil and criminal law practices, government agencies, corporations, and non-profit legal service organizations. Under the supervision of attorneys, paralegals play an increasingly important role to the practices by completing legal research, preparing legal documents and correspondence, interviewing clients, and helping attorneys prepare for trials. In corporate and government settings, paralegals complete sophisticated legal research and prepare correspondence, documents, and reports that had previously been the purview of attorneys. In accordance with their growing scope of practice, the employment outlook for De Anza Paralegal Studies graduates is particularly strong. According to the California Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information data for the San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara MSA, there are projected to be 38 combined annual openings for the period 2006-2016 for paralegals and legal assistants with a strong growth rate of 14.9%. The demand for paralegals and legal assistants around California is projected to continue to grow with 870 total annual openings for the period 2008-2018 at a growth rate of 19.4%.

## **6. Areas for new course and/or program development**

## **7. Recommendations of Advisory Committee (retain or delete program)**