



 **SUNY CANTON**

Legal Studies Program
School of Business and Liberal Arts
Fall 2015 Assessment Report



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What was assessed? Student learning outcomes list:

Legal Studies - Student Learning Outcomes

I. Liberal Arts and Sciences:

- Develop a broad knowledge base distributed among disciplines traditionally known as liberal arts and sciences.
- Demonstrate ability to effectively and professionally communicate both orally and in writing.
- Understand and explain the relationship of Legal Studies to the arts and sciences.

II. Foundational Legal Principles:

- Understand and explain the structure and functions of the American legal system, including the interplay of constitutions, statutes, common law and administrative law.
- Understand and explain the roles of judges, attorneys, mediators, legal assistants, and others who act within the legal system.
- Understand and explain the jurisdictional requirements of federal and state courts.
- Understand and articulate the role of common law in the American legal system, including the concepts of mandatory and persuasive authority.
- Identify the ethical implications inherent in a particular situation, and evaluate the particular course of action to be taken in the face of countervailing pressures.
- Understand the impact of existing and emerging technologies on the legal system.



What was assessed? Student learning outcomes list (continued):

Legal Studies - Student Learning Outcomes (continued)

III. Specialized Areas of Law:

- Demonstrate knowledge of Constitutional Law, Criminal Law and Procedure, Civil Litigation, and at least three of:
 - Negligence and Intentional Torts
 - Family Law
 - Real Property
 - Immigration Law and Border Control
 - Wills, Estates and Trusts
 - Environmental Law
 - American Indian Law and Fed. Policy
 - Trial Courts and Rules of Evidence

- Integrate substantive and procedural elements of laws, regulations, and rules relating to specialized areas of law such as (but not limited to) business activities, contracts, criminal law, family relationships, immigration, real estate, the environment and wills and estates.

IV. Application of Law to Real Life Scenarios

- Evaluate the credibility, reliability or relevance of legal authority to determine whether and how it applies to the legal issues.
- Create both objective and persuasive legal documents of varying complexity including client letters, memoranda of law, pleadings, and briefs while properly citing both print and electronic sources of law.



Where were outcomes assessed?

- Develop a broad knowledge base distributed among disciplines traditionally known as liberal arts and sciences.

The assessments for GER 1 – 10 are generated by Liberal Arts and Sciences faculty and are not available at this time to the Legal Studies Curriculum Coordinator. Those assessments will have to be accessed through the submissions of the coordinators for those programs and shared with Legal Studies faculty.

- Demonstrate ability to effectively and professionally communicate both orally and in writing.

ENGL 101 or 102 (Expository Writing or Oral and Written Expression), ENGL 301 (Professional Writing and Communication), LEST 310 (Legal Research), LEST 330 (Legal Writing), LEST 449 (Advanced Legal Writing), LEST 450 (Trial Courts and Rules of Evidence)

- Understand and explain the relationship of Legal Studies to the arts and sciences.

LEST 101 (American Legal System)

- Understand and explain the structure and functions of the American legal system, including the interplay of constitutions, statutes, common law and administrative law.

LEST 101 (American Legal System), BSAD 201 (Business Law I), LEST 340 (Constitutional Law)



Where were outcomes assessed?

- Understand and explain the roles of judges, attorneys, mediators, legal assistants, and others who act within the legal system.

LEST 101(American Legal System), BSAD 201(Business Law I)

- Understand and explain the jurisdictional requirements of federal and state courts.

BSAD 201(Business Law I), LEST 221(Criminal Practice), LEST 340 (Constitutional Law), LEST 350 (Civil Litigation)

- Understand and articulate the role of common law in the American legal system, including the concepts of mandatory and persuasive authority.

LEST 101 (American Legal System), BSAD 201 (Business Law I), BSAD 202 (Business Law II), LEST 221 (Criminal Practice), LEST 350 (Civil Litigation), LEST 310 (Legal Research)

- Identify the ethical implications inherent in a particular situation, and evaluate the particular course of action to be taken in the face of countervailing pressures.

BSAD 319 (Professional Ethics), HSMB/NURS 302 (Legal and Ethical Issues in Health Care), LEST 221 (Criminal Practice), LEST 350 (Civil Litigation), JUST 350 (Victimization)



Where were outcomes assessed?

- Understand the impact of existing and emerging technologies on the legal system.

CITA 101 (Library/Info Literacy), ACCT 101 (Foundations of Financial Accounting), LEST 310 (Legal Research)

- Demonstrate knowledge of Constitutional Law, Criminal Law and Procedure, Civil Litigation, and at least three of:
 - Negligence and Intentional Torts
 - Family Law
 - Real Property
 - Immigration Law and Border Control
 - Wills, Estates and Trusts
 - Environmental Law
 - American Indian Law and Fed. Policy
 - Trial Courts and Rules of Evidence

LEST 340 (Constitutional Law), BSAD 201 (Business Law I), BSAD 202 (Business Law II), LEST 221 (Criminal Practice), LEST 350 (Civil Litigation), LEST 320 (Negligence and Intentional Torts), LEST 360 (Family Law), LEST 370 (Real Property), LEST 375 (Immigration and Border Control), LEST 380 (Wills, Trusts and Estates), LEST 388 (Environmental Law), LEST 410 (American Indian Law and Federal Policy), LEST 450 (Trial Courts and Rules of Evidence)



Where were outcomes assessed?

- Integrate substantive and procedural elements of laws, regulations, and rules relating to specialized areas of law such as (but not limited to) business activities, contracts, criminal law, family relationships, immigration, real estate, the environment and wills and estates.

LEST 310 (Legal Research), LEST 330 (Legal Writing), LEST 449 (Advanced Legal Writing), BSAD 301 (Principles of Management), BSAD 305 (Public Budgeting and Fiscal Management), BSAD 310 (Human Resource Management), JUST 345 (Comparative Justice Systems)

- Evaluate the credibility, reliability or relevance of legal authority to determine whether and how it applies to the legal issues.

LEST 340 (Constitutional Law), LEST 450 (Trial Courts and Rules of Evidence), LEST 480 (Internship), LEST 485 (Senior Project), EADM 307 (Legal Issues in Emergency and Disaster Management)

- Create both objective and persuasive legal documents of varying complexity including client letters, memoranda of law, pleadings, and briefs while properly citing both print and electronic sources of law.

LEST 310 (Legal Research), LEST 330 (Legal Writing), LEST 449 (Advanced Legal Writing), LEST 450 (Trial Courts and Rules of Evidence), LEST 480 (Internship)



How was the assessment accomplished?

- Student work assessed:
 - Pre-test / Post-test
 - Oral presentations
 - Research papers
- Measurement strategy:
 - Pre-test / Post-test compares knowledge of student entering class with knowledge after completion of course
 - Oral presentations and research papers will be used in the future where pre-test / post-test is not an appropriate measure of oral and written communications skills.
- Sample size:
 - All students in major.



Link to Fall 2015 Legal Studies Assessment Data

- Please use the following link to access the Legal Studies Assessment Data for fall 2015:

[..\Legal Studies Program Finding Report - Fall 2015.xlsx](#)



Assessment results: What have the data told us, and what will we do differently?

Teaching methods:

In assessing oral communication, particularly in LEST 429, the methodology used was the number and success of external job interviews. Due to a poor labor market in this area, some students could not secure an external interview and therefore their oral communications could not be evaluated. The course will now require internal mock interviews with faculty that will be conducted face-to-face or using Skype for online students.

Change in Curriculum:

The Legal Studies program had already made the decision to change the program in fall 2016 so that students will begin receiving Bachelor of Science rather than Bachelor of Technology degrees. This will result in a far greater emphasis on the Liberal Arts and Sciences which will, in turn address the first program SLO: "Develop a broad knowledge base distributed among disciplines traditionally known as liberal arts and sciences."

We will also work to develop a joint degree with the Liberal Arts program so that students enrolled in the four-year Legal Studies Bachelor of Science program will also be able to earn a two year Associate in Science degree in Liberal Arts.



Assessment results: What have the data told us, and what will we do differently? (continued)

Increase Instructional Support

A common theme in all of the SBLA program assessments was a student deficiency in mathematical and writing skills. To address this problem, the LEST program will

- increase referrals to the writing center
- replace “Business Communications” (BSD 200) with “Professional Writing and Communication” (ENGL 301) as a part of the LEST curriculum
- endeavor to have a top 10% LEST student work for the Tutoring Center to assist other LEST students who may need assistance.



Assessment results: What have the data told us, and what will we do differently? (continued)

Change Assessment Methods

The pre-test/post-test methodology is not adequate to measure learning for courses such as Legal Writing, Advanced Legal Writing, Legal Research and Trial Courts and Rules of Evidence.

These courses focus heavily on SLO 1 (written communications) and SLO II (oral communications). Therefore a more subjective but reliable methodology needs to be developed to measure (and document) student growth in writing ability, research ability, and oral communication skills.

Legal Studies faculty will consult with faculty who teach courses in the “Writing and Communication” minor to gain a better understanding of the assessment process in courses which focus on written and oral communication skills. It is likely that these issues have already been addressed by other faculty. LEST faculty anticipates that we will be able to apply those existing methods to the relevant LEST courses.



Assessment results: What have the data told us, and what will we do differently? (continued)

Change SLOs

An SLO in LEST 370 - Real Property – will need to be changed

Students are required to understand New York Real Estate Law. Although the Course Description does not refer to drafting closing documents, students have historically been required to draft appropriate documents to complete a simple closing. The Course Description should be amended to expressly identify that requirement so that written communication skills can be appropriately documented and measured.



What resources were used or have been requested to close the loop?

- None of the proposed changes require funding for the LEST program. However, we recommend restoration of funding for the Writing Center.



What changes would you make to the Assessment Process?

- Control of Course Assessments – More intra and inter departmental communication is necessary regarding courses that are not controlled by Legal Studies. LEST needs access to the assessment of courses “belonging” to other programs or departments in order to properly assess the LEST program.
- The assessment process used for this PowerPoint measures the number of measures whose goals are met, not met, or exceeded. Most faculty approach measurement of academic growth from a student-oriented approach. The statistical significance of “measuring the measures” should be explained to faculty so that we can gain a better understanding of the significance of that procedure and how it impacts the goals of the assessment process.

