

2021 GRADUATE SURVEY RESULTS ON QUALTRICS

In 2021, surveys were sent to graduates from the years 2017-2020. 88 graduates were emailed the questionnaire twice. The survey was put on Qualtrics. Qualtrics is an online platform for collecting and analyzing data. Twenty-eight responses were received, for a return rate of 32%. 25 respondents completed the bachelor's degree, and one completed the Paralegal Certificate at the University of La Verne through the Legal Studies Department. One was from 2016, four from 2017, two from 2018, eight from 2019, four from 2020, and three from 2021.

In this report, percentages are of the total who answered that question unless it says otherwise. Data in this report is collected to assess a few things:

1. Employment information.
2. Paralegal Educational Experience at the University of La Verne; and
3. Professional Satisfaction, Experience, and Development.

LIMITATION OF DATA

Unfortunately, the amount of data received likely does not provide a strong enough sample for generalizability of the findings. As a result, systems are being implemented to improve data collection, including strategic alumni engagement and relationship management, incentives for participation, and shortening the survey. This is the first ABA reapproval application by the current program instructor, Carolyn Bekhor, and a recently hired full-time professor, Thomas Allison, making a new team, in the Legal Studies Department at the University of La Verne. The survey used consisted of a shortened, but combined, list of questions from the previous alumni survey and the sample questions provided by the ABA. In the future, our questions will acquire the needed data through survey for assessment of departmental key performance indicators. The data collected will tell a more comprehensive story of the experiences of our graduates ("alumni").

PARALEGAL EMPLOYMENT

Alumni were asked four questions regarding their current employment as a paralegal. The questions include:

1. The type of office in which the paralegal works
2. Their pay and benefits
3. The requirements their employers have for paralegals
4. The position they hold

Nine respondents work as paralegals or in a law-related environment while one had previously done so. One did not. The locations of employment were ascertained for several other respondents through their LinkedIn profiles. This is a list of the workplaces of the non-respondents whose data we acquired online.

Office Type

Through a multiple-choice question, alumni were asked: “What is your office set-up (i.e., private office, shared office, workstation, cubicle, open space, etc.)?” They were given seven options. 13 responses to this question were received. The multiple-choice options and results were as follows:

1. Private Office: 3 respondents (23%)
2. Shared Office: 2 respondents (15%)
3. Workstation: 0 respondents
4. Cubicle: 2 respondents (15%)
5. Open Space: 1 respondent (8%)
6. Work from Home: 3 respondents (23%)
7. Other: 2 respondents (15%-both respondents had hybrid arrangements where some time was spent in a cubicle in an office and the rest of the time was worked from home.

The data collected from this response is insufficient to generalize but is helpful in understanding the various workplace options available to our students upon entering the workforce. This information is important as it provides the professional contexts and environments in which we should be preparing our students to work. This information is used to shape the delivery of content and curriculum in courses emphasizing professional readiness, such as Litigation I and II, Paralegal Internship and Ethics, and Senior Seminar. For all other courses, this information is used to expose students to how to confront legal issues and representation in diverse environments.

Pay and Benefits

Using an open-ended question, alumni were asked: “What is your salary and benefit package, including insurance, paid vacations, retirement plan, continuing education, paid parking, etc.?” 12 responses were received to this question, they include:

1. N/A
2. \$54,000/year
3. \$36/hour, HAS, PTO, part of a union, 401K where they match contributions, paid MCLE programs, and paid parking
4. \$130,000/year
5. \$17/hour, 8-hour days
6. Salary starts around \$52,000 a \$78,000. \$600/year for education, vision and dental paid, \$200 towards medical per pay period. 2 floating holidays per year, sick time and vacation accrued depending on time of service.
7. 24 hr./ Paid vacation & sick days.
8. Yes
9. 21 dollars per hour. Paid vacation after one year of employment
10. \$72K per year. Full medical, dental, vision, 3 weeks' vacation, 401K with employer match up to 5% 100% vesting
11. \$55,000/annual
12. I am paid by the hour. I accrue 2 weeks of PTO throughout the year, and time not used rolls over. I have a SIMPLE IRA. The firm pays for a certain amount of health and dental insurance. The firm pays for parking.

ANNUAL SALARY	20,000-29,999	30,000-34,999	35,000-39,999	40,000-44,999	45,000-49,999	50,000-54,999	55,000-59,999	60,000-64,999	65,000-69,999	70,000-74,999	75,000+
Current/Starting			1 (11%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	1 (11%)			2 (22%)	1 (11%)

Employment Requirements

Through a multiple-choice question, alumni were asked: “What are the requirements for employment as a paralegal at your firm or company (i.e., associate degree, baccalaureate degree, paralegal certificate, experience, etc.)? (Select all that apply)” 17 alumni responded to this question. The choices provided and the results to each choice were as follows:

1. No requirements: 0 respondents
2. Associate degree: 1 respondent (6%)
3. Bachelor’s degree: 5 respondents (29%)
4. Paralegal certificate: 6 respondents (35%)
5. Work experience: 5 respondents (29%)
6. Other: 0 respondents

The data collected to this response is insufficient for generalizability; however, this information helps gain insight into some of the professional requirements of various legal entities. Since the University of La Verne provides bachelor’s degrees and paralegal certificates, it is helpful to understand what is required to ascertain the competitiveness of our program in relation to other options for education, including community college and other colleges and universities.

PARALEGAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE

The quality and caliber of education paralegal students receive through the University of La Verne Legal Studies Department is paramount in maintaining a reputable program and creating legal professionals who will chart the path of the legal industry in the 21st Century and beyond. Students were asked seven questions regarding their experience at the University of La Verne. These questions include:

1. Their ratings of the courses they took
2. Courses they desired to have added to the Legal Studies curriculum
3. The responsiveness of university administration
4. The effectiveness of the services provided by the Legal Students department
5. Level of satisfaction with Legal Studies curriculum, director, faculty, and support services
6. Their educational experience at University of La Verne
7. The value of the education they received at University of La Verne

The results of each of these questions are summarized immediately below. The changes made to the program as a result of the feedback provided are contained in the final reflection section of this report.

Their Ratings of The Courses They Took

Through a Likert scale, students were asked: “How would you rate the paralegal courses you completed in the ULV Legal Studies program?” There were between 11 and 13 responses provided for each course. Alumni results are summarized in the table below.

Course	Bad	Not Good	Neutral	Good	Very Good
American Legal Studies	0	0	2 (15%)	1 (8%)	10 (77%)
Legal Research & Writing	0	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	10 (77%)
Advanced Legal Research	0	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	2 (15%)	9 (69%)
Torts	0	0	1 (8%)	2 (15%)	10 (77%)
Contracts	0	1 (8%)	2 (15%)	1 (8%)	9 (69%)
Litigation I	0	0	1 (8%)	1 (7%)	11 (85%)
Litigation II	0	0	1 (8%)	1 (7%)	11 (85%)
Internship and Ethics	0	1 (8%)	2 (15%)	3 (23%)	7 (54%)
Family Law	0	1 (8%)	5 (38%)	2 (16%)	5 (38%)
Criminal Law	0	0	5 (46%)	3 (27%)	3 (27%)
Bankruptcy	0	0	4 (36%)	2 (18%)	5 (46%)
Constitutional Law	0	0	5 (45%)	4 (36%)	2 (18%)
Wills and Trust	0	0	1 (9%)	5 (45%)	5 (45%)
Law Firm Computer App	0	1	1	4	6
E-Discovery	0	0	3	5	5
Immigration	0	0	5	1	4
Intellectual Property	0	0	4	4	2
Mediation	0	0	4	2	4

Courses They Desired to Have Added to the Legal Studies Curriculum at ULV

Through an open-ended question, alumni were asked: “What courses would you like to see added to the ULV Legal Studies program?” There were six responses to this question. The answers provided were:

1. Media law, intercultural and international studies, entertainment law
2. Worker’s Compensation
3. More real-life applications like SEC searches, UCC searches, different writing styles (unions, CBA’s, etc.)
4. Landlord-Tenant and Appellate Law
5. None
6. Evidence

Responsiveness of University Administration

Through a Likert Scale, alumni were asked: “What was the responsiveness of the ULV administration to the needs of the students? (Please explain your answers if you desire).” Ten alumni responded to this question. Their responses are summarized in the table below.

Harmful Response	Not Responsive	Neutral	Responsive	Very Responsive
2 (20%)	0	0	0	8 (80%)

Six respondents provided a written response which included the following:

1. The administration was more than willing to go above and beyond for every student.
2. The faculty and staff were very helpful.
3. Could have been a better job or handling racial tension on campus
4. Neutral. When I attended the professor in charge of the department was not responsive to how law office procedures have changed.
5. Not Responsive
6. Harmful in their response

Effectiveness of the Services Provided by the Legal Students Department

Through a Likert Scale, alumni were asked: “What was the effectiveness of services offered by the Legal Studies program, such as counseling and placement services? (Please explain your answers if you desire)” Eleven responses were received regarding this question. Their responses are summarized in the table below.

Did not exist	Not effective	Neutral	Effective	Very effective
2 (18%)	0	2 (18%)	1 (9%)	6 (55%)

Four respondents provided a written response which included the following:

1. I was using my GI Bill and I had private counseling sessions to help place me in courses I needed to accomplish in an expedited matter. Counseling was always available, I felt stressed, and I was struggling for a period of time. Professor Bekhor set up weekly meeting with me to make sure I was on track and processing in my classes and the program efficiently.
2. I really appreciated the help from my professors and counselor.
3. I felt I was guided into the direction that was needed to get my degree in the time frame I wanted.
4. I haven't tried to use their services due to the pandemic. I feel that the placement opportunities don't really prepare you for larger sized firms. They expect you to hit the ground running but some courses don't go in depth

Satisfaction with Legal Studies Curriculum, Director, Faculty, And Support Services

Through a Likert Scale, alumni were asked: “Were you satisfied with the ULV Legal Studies program curriculum, director, faculty, and support services? (Please explain your answers if you

desire)” Ten responses were received regarding this question. Their responses are summarized in the table below.

Disappointed	Not satisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied
0	0	1 (10%)	0	9 (90%)

Six respondents provided a written response which included the following:

1. Yes, very accommodating. Willing to try new ideas for improvement. Easy to speak with
2. Very satisfied, staff made every student feel as if they were capable and important.
3. Yes.
4. I had already been a paralegal for a few years prior to transferring to ULV and I thought the program was very comprehensive for new paralegals looking to get into the field.
5. Yes. The program helped sharpen my writing skills and taught me the basics skills to succeed in Law school
6. Not really

Their Educational Experience at University of La Verne

Through a Likert Scale, alumni were asked: “Evaluate your educational experience in the ULV Legal Studies Department. (Please explain your answers if you desire)” Ten responses were received regarding this question. Their responses are summarized in the table below.

Terrible	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
0	0	1 (10%)	0	9 (90%)

Two respondents provided a written response which included the following:

1. I felt I learned a lot and made valuable connections with others.
2. Average

The Value of The Education They Received at University of La Verne

Through a Likert Scale, alumni were asked: “Evaluate the value of knowledge gained from the courses you completed. (Please explain your answers if you desire)” Ten responses were received regarding this question. Their responses are summarized in the table below.

Not valuable	Somewhat valuable	Neutral	Valuable	Very valuable
0	0	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	7 (70%)

One respondent provided a written response which included the following:

1. Expectations were set in the paralegal program and have helped me to excel in every position I’ve held.

Ultimately, the data received regarding the paralegal education received at University of La Verne was positive regarding the department. However, the amount of data collected is insufficient to be generalizable. There were a couple of concerning responses regarding the responsiveness of administration and the services provided by the Legal Studies Department. From the data received,

the Legal Studies Department can do more to ensure students are aware of available services and make sure students are getting the support they need from administration.

PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION, EXPERIENCE, AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Important issues facing the paralegal profession
2. Intent to continue working as a paralegal
3. Continuing education
4. Satisfaction with job and career
5. What they like most about their career
6. What they like least about their career
7. If they are not working as a paralegal, why not?
8. Their membership in local paralegal association
9. Certifications in national paralegal association
10. The industry in which they work

Important issues facing the paralegal profession

Through an open-ended question, alumni were asked: “What do you believe is the most important issue facing the paralegal profession?” Four responses to this question were received, they are as follows:

1. People having lacking faith in the legal system, and it puts pressure on the paralegals to play watchdog.
2. Most firms are looking for specialized experience.
3. The duties of a paralegal have expanded beyond its original description.
4. Training.

Intent to continue working as a paralegal

Through a Likert Scale, alumni were asked: “Do you intend to continue to work as a paralegal?” Eleven responses were received regarding this question. Their responses are summarized in the table below.

Definitely not	Probably not	Might or might not	Probably yes	Definitely yes
1 (9%)	2 (18%)	0	2 (18%)	6 (55%)

One respondent provided a written response which included the following:

1. Expectations were set in the paralegal program and have helped me to excel in every position I've held.

Continuing Education Attendance

Through a multiple-choice question, alumni were asked: “Have you enrolled in any programs to earn advanced degrees or certificates? If so, please specify the subject.” Eleven responses were received regarding this question. Their responses are summarized in the table below.

No	Master's Degree	Doctorate Degree	Professional License/certification
5 (45%)	4 (36%)	1 (9%)	1 (9%)

Four respondents provided a written response which included the following:

1. Pepperdine MLS
2. Currently applying.
3. I have a Master's in Public Administration
4. Currently in law school

Frequency of Continued Learning

Through a Likert Scale, alumni were asked: “Do you attend continuing education programs?” Eleven responses were received regarding this question. Their responses are summarized in the table below.

Never	Sometimes	About half the time	Most times	Always
2 (18%)	3 (28%)	0	2 (18%)	4 (36%)

Satisfaction with job and career

Through a Likert Scale, alumni were asked: “How satisfied are you with your job and with your career as a paralegal?” Eleven responses were received regarding this question. One response was excluded because they were not a paralegal. The remaining responses are summarized in the table below.

Extremely	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Extremely satisfied
0	0	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	6 (60%)

What they like most about their career

Through an open-ended question, alumni were asked: “What do you like most about your job?” Eight responses to this question were received, they are as follows:

1. At this time, it is satisfying a need, but I hope it will evolve to allow me to move on to become a paralegal.
2. Something new every day
3. Flexibility
4. Helping the public
5. My bosses
6. As a government estate administrator, I have substantial discretionary authority, governmental resources, and statutory authority to properly manage my estate administration cases. I also have every other Friday off and significant amount of vacation time -this allows me to have a very work-life balance.
7. Winning.
8. The knowledge I have gained about the legal process

What they like least about their career

Through an open-ended question, alumni were asked: “What do you like least about your job?” Nine responses to this question were received, they are as follows:

1. No being able to use the knowledge I gained in school.
2. There’s always one person who goes out of their way to belittle you
3. Workload
4. Management
5. long hours
6. The creditor claim process.
7. I really wish that I could pay for a decedent's funeral expenses as a cost of administration instead of requiring mortuaries to go through the creditor claims process.
8. The pressure of the constant deadlines.
9. The billable requirements

If they are not working as a paralegal, why not?

Through a multiple-choice question, alumni were asked: “If you are not working as a paralegal indicate why you are not employed as a paralegal, whether you plan to work as a paralegal, and whether you utilize your paralegal education in your current job.” Eleven responses were received regarding this question. Nine responses were excluded because they were working as paralegals.

The reasons the two are not working as paralegals are:

1. I am currently a caregiver for my mom but plan to find work as a paralegal when she is medically stable.
2. All of them because my job as a government estate administrator requires me to interface with almost all areas of the law.

Their membership in local paralegal association

Through a multiple-choice question, alumni were asked: “Are you a member of your local paralegal association or other professional groups? If so, what group and what is the extent of your participation?” Ten responses were received regarding this question. Their responses are summarized below.

Member Status Responses	Answers
Not a member	5 (50%)
Member, but not really involved (less than 20% attendance)	4 (40%)
Kind of involved (20-40% attendance)	0 (0%)
Moderately involved (about 40-60% attendance)	1 (10%)
Involved (60-80% attendance)	0 (0%)
Very involved (more than 80% attendance)	0 (0%)

Certifications in national paralegal association

Through a multiple-choice question, alumni were asked: “Are you certified by one of the national paralegal associations?” Eight responses were received regarding this question. All responses indicated “no.”

The industry in which they work

Through a multiple-choice question, alumni were asked: “What industry do you work in?” Ten responses were received regarding this question. Their responses are summarized below.

Member Status Responses	Answers
Nonprofit	1 (10%)
Public sector	2 (20%)
Private Law Firm	5 (50%)
Contractor	1 (10%)
Business Owner	0 (0%)
Other: Health Care	1 (10%)

The responses to this series of questions were insufficient to generalize the findings. However, we are able to gain insight from using the responses qualitatively. Some matters of concerns from the responses received are the lack of continued education, continual learning, and participation in professional associations. This is particularly concerning because one of the four values at the University of La Verne is “lifelong learning.” These are habits that could be facilitated through the Legal Studies Department. Additionally, more emphasis could be given to preparing our students for the rigors of the legal profession. There must be a balance. Too much rigor in legal education could deter future legal professionals from diverse backgrounds with varying burdens outside of school or lead to early burnout for a general range of students.

FINAL SUMMARY AND REFLECTION

Despite the limitations on the data, the data collection process and analysis process has provided a learning experience in itself. The lack of data is the reflection of little alumni engagement. If we are to extrapolate a story from the data received it is that our graduates go on to work mostly in private offices earning between \$35,000 and \$75,000 per year. They are mostly satisfied with the services and education received from the University of La Verne. Also, most are satisfied with their professional experience as paralegals. The diversity of assignments, flexibility, mission, and supervision are among the qualities most liked about the paralegal profession. The long hours, billable requirements, workload, and management are aspects of the paralegal profession liked least.

Areas to Improve:

1. Quality of data
2. Data collection methods
3. Participation in professional associations
4. Knowledge and access to Legal Studies services

5. Administrative responsiveness
6. Professional development and opportunities

Strategies for Improvement:

1. Revisit strategic plan with advisory committee and establish key performance indicators
2. Construct survey questions from key performance indicators
3. Establish email list, newsletter, and updates for our alumni
4. Host department-wide convocation program to inform students of department and university resources and services
5. Host department-wide commencement program to kick-off alumni engagement
6. Embed professional development and participation in professional associations in the department curriculum, including introduction to certification processes offered by the national paralegal associations.
7. Provide MCLE programs free/discounted to alumni
8. Provide LSAT preparation course free/discounted to alumni
9. Provide access to diverse work environments and cultures