

ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY



University Curriculum Committee

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September 23, 2011

TO: Daniel Holland, Chairperson, Academic Senate
FROM: Jean Standard, Chair, University Curriculum Committee
RE: Executive Summary of Proposal for New Major in Legal Studies

The University Curriculum Committee has approved and is forwarding for Academic Senate consideration the attached Department of Politics and Government proposal for a new Major in Legal Studies.

The Department of Politics and Government provided a very good rationale for adding the Major in Legal Studies.

- In August 2010, the American Bar Association (ABA) approved Illinois State University's Legal Studies minor program. In its final report, the ABA recommended the adoption of a major.
- This recommendation is in accord with current market demands. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that employment of paralegals and legal assistants will grow 28 percent between the years 2008 and 2018. They also state that competition for jobs is expected.
- According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook (2010-2011 Edition) the paralegal profession is expanding much faster than the average for all U.S. occupations.
- The National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA) reports that "a four-year degree is the hiring standard in many markets," and they recommend that "future practitioners should have a four-year degree to enter the profession."
- The adoption of the Legal Studies major carries out the ABA's directions and helps our students become competitive in the job market.
- In the past years, the students have expressed interest in pursuing a major in Legal Studies.
- Introduction of the major is consistent with the Strategic Focus of the College of Arts and Sciences' Strategic Plan 2010-2015 which calls for "Facilitating academic excellence" and has identified Develop[ing] and maintain[ing] rigorous academic curricula as the Goal 1.1. The major is in line with the Action 1.1.1 (Identify opportunities to pursue disciplinary and interdisciplinary curricular innovation in emerging areas where faculty strengths align with student and societal needs) of the Plan.
- There are no new courses needed for the new major and the elective courses are offered regularly by respective departments.

The University Curriculum Committee supports the proposal to add the new Major Legal Studies.

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