Program Purpose
The Office Administration—Paralegal Option Program prepares students for entry level employment as paralegals in a law office setting. This program consists of 69-70 semester total hours, depending on the exact courses chosen. There are 48 hours of pre-professional, major and electives courses (Area V), with the remaining course hours consisting of selected general education courses (Areas I-IV).

Program Learning Outcomes
Graduates of the Office Administration—Paralegal Option Program are able to
- Communicate effectively both orally and in writing (BUS 215; SPH 107)
- Apply communication principles to the production of faxes, memos, emails, letters, resumes, and reports. (OAD 125; OAD 103)
- Demonstrate the ability to transcribe legal documents in the appropriate format (OAD 202)
- Explain the role of the paralegal and identify the skills, knowledge, and ethics required of legal assistants (PRL 101)
- Demonstrate the ability to perform legal research and writing (PRL 102; PRL 103)
- Demonstrate the ability to apply the elements of a contract, prepare various business documents, and understand the role of commercial paper (PRL 150)
- Explain the elements of specific crimes (PRL 160)
- Demonstrate the ability to assist an attorney in preparing a criminal case (PRL 160)
- Demonstrate the ability to identify estates, forms of deeds, requirements for recording, and procedures to enforce rights to real property (PRL 210)
- Demonstrate the ability to interview clients, gather information, and draft documents related to family law (PRL 230)
- Draft simple wills and prepare estate forms (PRL 240)
- Exhibit an understanding of the administration of estates, including taxation, and the terms regarding trusts (PRL 240)
- Demonstrate the ability to prepare a trial notebook for litigation purposes (PRL 262)
- Demonstrate and apply appropriate law office management techniques and procedures (PRL 282)
- Exhibit a positive work ethic (WKO 106)

Assessed Needs and Assumptions
The Occupational Outlook Handbook website (www.bls.gov/oci/ocos) provides the following information regarding employment in the paralegal area. Despite projected faster-than-average employment growth, competition for jobs is expected. Formally
trained, experienced paralegals should have the best employment opportunities. Most
entrants have an associate degree in paralegal studies or a bachelor’s degree in
another field, with a certificate in paralegal studies.

**Nature of Work.** Although lawyers assume ultimate responsibility for legal work, they
often delegate many of their tasks to paralegals. In fact, paralegals are continuing to
assume new responsibilities in legal offices and perform many of the same tasks as
lawyers. One of a paralegal’s most important tasks is helping lawyers prepare for
closings, hearings, trials, and corporate meetings.

**Work Environment.** Paralegals handle many routine assignments, particularly when
they are inexperienced. As they gain experience, paralegals usually assume more
varied tasks with additional responsibility. Paralegals do most of their work in offices
and law libraries. Much research is done on the internet.

In Alabama, the employment growth rate also looks promising. According to information
from [www.actnet.org](http://www.actnet.org), employment in the paralegal field is expected to grow by 12%
from 2008-2018. The median salary for a paralegal is $19.75 per hour, or $41,100
annually. In Alabama the projected salary is $17.09 hourly, or $35,500 annually.

Word processing, writing, and communication skills are essential for paralegals.
Employers require extensive knowledge of computer software applications. Paralegals
are expected to be proficient in using the internet for research. Good keyboarding skills
are essential as well as spelling, punctuation, grammar, and oral and written
communication.

Testing and certification for proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and
Outlook is administered on the NACC campus by the Technology Learning Center
under the direction of Ms. Judith Lea. Also, the certification for IC3-Certiport is
administered on campus by Ms. Lea.

**Structure**
The Office Administration—Paralegal option offers an associate degree in paralegal
studies including core subjects such as accounting, business communication,
keyboarding, word processing, and records and information management. Paralegal
core classes include PRL 101, 102, 103, 230, 240, 262, 291, BUS 263, OAD 202. A
total of 48 hours are required in Area V.

**Accreditation**
The Office Administration—Paralegal option is within the institutional accreditation by
the SACS Commission on Colleges, reaffirmed in 2005.

**Instructors**
*Current Status:*
The Office Administration program currently has one pro rata instructor, teaching a full
course load. Three additional part time instructors are employed to teach afternoon and
evening classes. All instructors have master’s degrees. All instructors’ qualifications are appropriately documented.

The Office Administration Program currently has one special contract instructor, teaching a full course load. Four additional adjunct instructors are employed to teach afternoon and evening classes. All instructors have master’s degrees. All instructors’ qualifications are appropriately documented.

Ernestine Pace is the full time special contract instructor. She holds a master’s degree in business and office administration. She has had additional training in technology and Microsoft Word 2010. She has participated in recent training sessions offered by the Technology Learning Center on campus. She continues to stay abreast of the latest trends in the business office by reading and attending workshops. She will attend a professional seminar on June 2, 2011, titled “Professional Communication: What Message Are You Sending?” She has been both adjunct and full-time instructor at NACC for a total of 26 years.

Rita Barkley is an adjunct instructor. She holds a master’s and AA degrees in Business and Office Administration. She has continued her training by attending technology training sessions offered by NACC. She also participates in professional development activities provided by the Jackson County Board of Education. Ms. Barkley has been an adjunct instructor at NACC for 18 years.

Tina Hancock is an adjunct instructor. She has an MS degree in Office Management Systems. During the spring of 2010, she completed six additional semester hours in the Office Management Systems program. Ms. Hancock has been an adjunct instructor for one year.

Melanie Bradford, adjunct instructor and practicing attorney in Jackson County, currently teaches paralegal classes and serves as academic advisor to students enrolled in the paralegal program. Ms. Bradford holds a juris doctor degree. She has implemented an internship program whereby students are placed in a law office setting for a few hours each week in order to gain hands-on legal office experience. The internship program is a new endeavor and seems to be very successful.

Dara Lamunyon, also a practicing attorney, is an adjunct instructor teaching paralegal classes. Ms. Lamunyon holds a juris doctor degree.

All instructors participate in professional development activities yearly. In addition to educational degrees, all instructors have qualifying experience in the classroom, appropriately documented.

**Needs:**  
The program has adequate instructors at this time.
Professional development activities are provided by the college, and instructors have opportunities to attend conferences and workshops. The continuing education in the technology program has been very helpful in instruction for the “smart” technology in all the classrooms in the Business Education building on campus.

On-going Costs for the Program

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Source: Dean of Administrative Services.

Instructional Quality and Enhancements/Curriculum Design
The Office Administration Program—Paralegal Option includes a total of 21-22 semester hours of general education courses. These courses include English 101 (3 hours); Fundamentals of Public Speaking (3 hours); humanities and fine arts elective (3 hours); natural science and mathematics (9-10 hours); history, social, and behavioral sciences elective (3 hours).
All syllabi in the program are approved by the Student Learning Outcomes Committee per the five-year course plan. All approved class syllabi are posted on the NACC Website. These syllabi are used by the instructors to develop course handouts that are given to all students at the beginning of each course. Course reviews to measure the attainment of general and/or program learning outcomes are accomplished on a five-year rotating schedule, with approximately 20% of the classes receiving a review each year.

The class offerings appear adequate for the enrollment, with 4-5 classes currently offered per term. At least 3-4 electives are offered each term. The rotation of class offerings allows a student to finish within four semesters if the student takes advantage of all available offerings. Course offerings for the general education core are available each term.

The computer lab in the Business Education Building was upgraded in the spring of 2009. Microsoft Word 2010 will be installed for summer 2011. The three classrooms are equipped with Smart technology. These updates were completed in the spring of 2011. The labs are adequate for classroom instruction.

The library resources are adequate and available for student use. Basic and advanced legal research and writing is part of the paralegal curriculum. Students receive instruction in the use of electronic research methods. The head librarian updates instructors and students on a monthly basis about new additions to the library.

Advisory Committee
The purpose of the Business/Office Administration Advisory Committee is to assist in attaining the goals and objectives of the programs. The membership of the Advisory Committee consists of citizens from the service area of Jackson and DeKalb counties who have made their competencies and resources available to facilitate the efforts of the business and OAD programs in meeting the needs of the community.

The responsibilities of the council include the following:

- Assess the needs of the programs as identified by the committee
- Identify the goals of the business and OAD programs within the community
- Promote and support the associate degree business and OAD programs through the community and across the state
- Evaluate recommendations and innovative ideas for program improvement, changes and/or redirection to meet community needs.

Current members of the Business/OAD Advisory Committee:

Dr. David Campbell President
Dr. Mike Kennamer Director of Workforce Development
Dr. Joe Burke Vice President/Dean of Instruction
Employment and Completions

Office Administration Program
Enrollments
2008-2009 through Fall 2010

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<td>Office Administration-Paralegal Option</td>
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Source: Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment.

Office Administration Program
Completers
2008-2009 through Fall 2010

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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>22</td>
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Source: Office of Institutional Planning and Assessment.

Job Placement Rates and Employer Satisfaction
According to the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations, job placement rates for the 2008-2009 completers of NACC office administration programs range from 50% to 67%.

Program-related Surveys/Reports
Surveys collected and compiled during the 2008-2010 terms consistently indicate that a majority of the students enrolled in the AAS Office Administration program at NACC are pleased with the education they received. The students gave the instruction, facilities, and programs of study high marks.
Alumni Surveys
Over 90% of the alumni felt their NACC experiences contributed to their growth in communication, cognition, information literacy, interpersonal skills, aesthetic sensitivity, and personal responsibility (general education outcomes). Of those alumni currently employed, approximately 72% are employed in either Jackson or DeKalb Counties, with 6.9% having left the state for employment (compared to 10.5% of the 2009 respondents and 11.8% of the 2008 respondents). Almost all who have been employed in a job related to their NACC training indicated satisfaction with AAS and/or certificate program preparation. AAS and certificate alumni reported employing a wide range of computer, writing, and quantitative tasks on the job.

Findings of Review
Course content is updated regularly and is current with respect to the state of the industry. The OAD labs are current with the latest equipment. All classrooms have been equipped with Smart Board technology. The software is also current. Microsoft 2010 will be installed on all computers in the lab and ready for use for the summer 2010 semester. With the current adjunct faculty employed in the program, students are able to have flexibility in scheduling and to complete the associate degree within the two year period. Revised degree plans have been implemented and a full range of courses are offered. The range of courses in the general curriculum and the Area V course offerings prepare the graduates for the market as paralegals and legal secretaries.

The College and Career Planning Center has enhanced all the programs on campus and provides valuable service for the students from the time they enter the program until they graduate.

Report Affirmed by:

___________________________________________________  March 25, 2011
Ernestine Pace, Office Administration Instructor  Date

___________________________________________________  March 25, 2011
Sam Dobbs, Director Business and Computer Science Division  Date

Date Reviewed by Curriculum Committee: August 3, 2011

Curriculum Committee Chair:

Bradley Fricks, Spanish Instructor