

Program Overview

I. Program Definition – *describe the unique qualities that define the importance of your program. *Data available on the Data Dashboard.*

The College of Marin Court Reporting program prepares students for licensure as court reporters in the state of California. Court reporting is a high-demand, high-wage occupation. Base salaries for official court reporters in the San Francisco Bay Area are in the \$80- to \$90,000 range. This does not include transcription income, typically another \$40- to \$50,000 per year. Currently, only about 100-120 new court reporter licenses are issued in California annually. We are proud that each year some members of that elite and select group come from our very small program.

A recent study commissioned by the National Court Reporters Association predicts a shortage of 2500 court reporters in California by 2018. www.ncra.org/News/newsdetail.cfm?ItemNumber=15391. This demand/supply gap exists in part because the training necessary to become a court reporter is demanding and difficult. Success rates are low nationwide.

We are one of only four court reporting programs offered through the California Community College system. We feel it is essential that public education in this field continue to be provided, as private programs are expensive – approximately four times the cost of a public program -- and often result in students amassing unnecessary and sometimes unmanageable debt. Historically, court reporting programs have tolerated very slow progress. This has resulted in some students lingering in court reporting schools far too long. Our philosophy here at the College of Marin is to set clear achievement benchmarks in order to give our students a realistic perspective on their chances for success, so that they can make informed decisions about whether to continue to pursue licensure.

II. Program Purpose	
<input type="checkbox"/> Basic Skills <input type="checkbox"/> English as a Second Language <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Career/Technical Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Associates Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Lifelong Learning
<i>Briefly describe how your program fits into the pathways you have chosen.</i>	
<p>The focus of the court reporting program is, of course, to prepare students to sit for the state licensing examination as certified shorthand reporters. However, as mentioned above, success rates nationwide are low due to the demanding nature of the training. Students who do not achieve licensure have alternative employment paths to pursue. Former students who did not become licensed are working in related fields such as Communication Access Realtime Translation, transcription, and editing/proofreading.</p> <p>The program coursework, which is mandated by the California Court Reporters Board, exposes students to rigorous training in English grammar and punctuation, medical and legal terminology, document production and computer literacy. Even if students do not ultimately enter a court reporting related field, their employability is enhanced by the acquisition of those skills.</p>	

III. Students Served – <i>briefly describe what students are served in your program.</i> <i>*Data available on the Data Dashboard.</i>
<p>Our students are predominantly female. Many are re-entering the workforce after a change in their personal lives, such as a divorce, or are simply seeking a career change. Many have already completed a four-year college degree, and choose court reporter training over going to graduate school. Because a court reporting career offers excellent wages in this high cost-of-living area, the program gives students a chance to change their lives in a profound way. They can achieve economic independence and the ability to provide for a family. Students do not enroll in this program in order to go into 15- or 20-dollar an hour jobs; students who complete this program successfully have entry into a profession that can pay well into the six figures. Because there are so few court reporting programs in the state, we draw students from all the Bay Area counties.</p>

IV. Program History – *briefly describe the recent history of your program.*

Since fall of 2010, Sharon Vartanian (part-time faculty) and I have worked together to change the culture of the court reporting program. I made a decision when I became coordinator in 2010-2011 to move toward a streamlined and rigorous program – to eliminate unnecessary units and classes and encourage students to complete the program as quickly as possible. The academic coursework can be completed within two years. Acquiring the necessary shorthand skill may take much longer. The national average is three to six years. My experience has been – and analysis of our records supports it -- that the longer a student remains in a court reporting program, the less likely it becomes that he or she will ever qualify to sit for licensure.

As a result, and to comply with Title 5, we have rewritten the entire court reporting curriculum. The maximum amount of time a student can be enrolled in our program is now approximately seven years. This may sound extreme, but it is an unfortunate fact that some students linger in court reporting programs throughout California for ten years or more. I do not believe that this is at all acceptable. It should not be tolerated. We are still in the fine-tuning stages. We are now requiring English 120 or the equivalent as a prerequisite, as students entering the program in need of English remediation simply do not succeed. We have moved a number of courses online. We are planning to incorporate synchronous distance education into some of our skills classes.

I believe we need about two more years to start seeing the clear results of these changes. One outcome has been a drop in enrollment numbers as we have dialed up the rigor and the work expected from each student. This is a chance that I am willing to take, as I am not comfortable with the thought of unsuccessful students being “used,” in a way, to fill seats in classes. We are presently qualifying about four students per year to sit for the state exam -- approximately ten percent of our student population.

Faculty and Staff

1. Full Time Faculty Members *(Please add rows as needed)*

Name	Courses Taught
ACREDOLO, KRISTIN	COUR 110, 112, 120, 140, 160, 166, 180, 200, 220, 225 ■ PLUS RELEVANT CONCURRENT SECTIONS (A, B, C)

2. Part Time Faculty Members *(Please add rows as needed)*

Name	Courses Taught
BARR, CLAUDIA	COUR 120, 180, 200, 220, 225 (Plus concurrent sections)
VAN DORN, ERIC	COUR 120, 140, 160 (Plus concurrent sections)
VARTANIAN, SHARON	COUR 110, 112, 166, 167, 168A, B & C, 169A, B & C, 283

2015/2016 Full Program Review
Discipline: COURT REPORTING

3. Non-Instructional Support Staff *(Please add rows as needed)*

Name	% FTE	Areas of Responsibility
ROSS, MARYANN	37.5	Instructional specialist
BROWN, DIANA	25	Reader, data entry
JOHNSON, LINDA	10	Reader

Facilities

What are the existing facilities issues that impact student access and success in your program? Focus on how existing facilities meet your program needs (or not).

(Note: Please use school dude work orders to solve routine maintenance issues, such as, temperature control, lighting repair, etc. as well as health and safety concerns).

Our classrooms are well equipped. We are very satisfied with the facilities. Our students do need a dedicated transcription area, and this has been an issue for us. Rm 125 in the Main Building is the ideal space, but it is often being used by other programs during the times we need it.

Student Access and Success

I. Access – Based on the enrollment numbers and demographic breakdown for your courses (available through the Data Dashboard), what significant factors or barriers are influencing student **access** to your courses or program? Factors could relate to issues at COM, outside of COM, or to the students’ lives.

The most significant barrier to access to our program is a simple lack of awareness that our program exists. There is often a misperception in the public as well that court reporting is an obsolete profession – nothing could be further from the truth! While the national and local court reporting associations are working to educate people about the coming shortage and demand for qualified court reporters, we need to market our program and make it more visible. Students paying high costs at private programs have said to me, “If only I had known you were there!” I believe that a Web presence, which we do not currently have, is essential to future growth and viability.

II. Student Success – based on course completion rates and grades in your courses (available on the Data Dashboard), and more importantly, based on you and your colleagues experiences in class, what do faculty in your discipline feel are significant factors or barriers influencing student **success** in your courses or programs?

You could begin with: “Students who don’t succeed often struggle with _____,” and then analyze what you think are the reasons behind their difficulties which could range from socio-economic factors to issues more directly related to course work or presentation.

Time: Court reporter training takes time and dedication. The Court Reporters Board suggests that in order for students to make satisfactory progress, they must spend 25 hours per week practicing machine shorthand. It is difficult for students with jobs and families to find sufficient time to practice. Court reporting school is a full-time job!

Long commutes: Many of our students must commute from other counties. The drive time impacts their ability to study and practice.

English skills: Students who need English remediation rarely, if ever, succeed in a court reporting program.

Computer literacy and comfort with technology: Court reporting is a high-tech industry. Students must be comfortable with the hardware and software necessary to perform the job, as well as adept at performing Internet searches to find technical terms and legal citations. While we have an excellent court reporting tech instructor (Sharon Vartanian), some students are resistant to adapting to technological changes.

Improving Student Success and Retention – please check off which of the following student support services your students have used:

- Bookstore
- Computer Labs for Student Use
- Counseling
- Student Accessibility Services
- Financial Aid
- Job Placement Center
- Library
- Transfer Center
- Tutoring
- Other

Comments:

IV. How do you make sure your students are able to get through your program in a timely fashion?

We offer daily skills testing to allow students multiple opportunities per week to pass needed skills tests. Students have access to 15 hours of live dictation per week, five above the minimum required by the CSR board. We are working to schedule all required English classes in every semester. We have recently begun to require a Web-based practice tool, My Realtime Coach, that offers students strategies and resources for effective practice.

Curriculum

1. What is the focus of your program? Check all that apply.

- Basic Skills
- ESL
- Career Technical Education
- COM Degree/Transfer
- Lifelong Learning

2. Have there been any changes in the field that might impact your course offerings or degrees? Please explain.

One change that we are addressing is the increased difficulty of the English portion of the three-part state exam. In addition, the dictation portion of the state exam is now being graded very stringently on punctuation. We have modified our curriculum to help students meet these new, higher standards. Another change in the industry is the growing opportunity in the field of CART/captioning. We are looking at ways to better prepare students for entry into these “sister” professions.

3. Are you planning on changing, updating, or revising degree or certificate requirements? Please explain.

Not at the present time. We recently completely rewrote our entire curriculum.

4. If available, have you created a “degree for transfer” in your discipline according to SB 1440? If so, please list.

We have not.

5. Have you prioritized your courses according to department goals? **(Please attach blueprint)**

Yes.

2015/2016 Full Program Review
Discipline: COURT REPORTING

6. Have all courses been updated in the last 5 years? If not, please list all outdated courses and your plans for revising or deleting them.

Yes.

7. Do you plan to develop any new courses or degrees? If so, please describe briefly and explain. **NOTE:** If you will need additional units in order to offer these courses, please fill out the additional units section of this Program Review.

Not at this time. Again, we have only very recently redesigned our classes/curriculum.

8. Are you collaborating (or thinking about collaborating) with other departments to develop joint curriculum or make other programmatic changes? If so, please describe briefly and explain.

Not at this time.

9. Do you plan to develop any new Distance Ed courses or develop Distance Ed versions of existing courses? If so, please describe briefly and explain.

We hope to incorporate synchronous online access to our skills classes through Zoom.

10. Please list materials fees currently in place. Do you plan to add or increase your material fees for any of your classes? If so, please list the classes and the proposed new or revised material fees for the respective classes.

Our skills classes require a materials fee of \$112.00 for My Realtime Coach and \$2 for paper and printer toner for each four-unit section.

11. Have you reviewed your pre-requisites and co-requisites in the last 5 years?

Yes.

Student Learning Outcomes

I. General Education / College Wide Outcomes

1. Did you use the shared assessment rubrics and if so which one(s)?

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Combined
- Scientific Reasoning--Physical Sciences and Math
- Scientific Reasoning--Life/Earth/Social Sciences
- Revised Written Communication
- Visual Communication (Fine Arts - 2014)
- Information Literacy
- Modern Language Oral Presentation
- Modern Language Written Composition
- Modern Language Critical Thinking
- Speech/Communication Performance Assessment Student Feedback Sheet (2013)

2. If you used your own assessments or rubrics, please describe.

Students are tested in class on a daily basis. They are required to read back and/or transcribe dictation that is graded on accuracy, format and punctuation. Students take weekly quizzes on vocabulary, grammar and professional practice.

3. Which courses were assessed?

All of our skills courses are assessed every class session through skills testing and readback.

2015/2016 Full Program Review
Discipline: COURT REPORTING

4. What did you learn from the analysis of your results?

The information indicates that students need more opportunity to work on their read-back skills, an essential function of the court reporter's job. Our new class format, with longer sessions, allows us to address this. Also, it is clear that students need constant reinforcement and feedback on the format, word usage and punctuation demonstrated in their transcription exercises. Some students still do not proofread for context (critical thinking) and thus make word usage and other errors. Since we have begun giving the students more focused feedback, we have seen strong improvement in many individual cases.

5. What do you plan to change in the curriculum, pedagogy, course outline, etc. as a result of what you have learned? Or what have you already changed?

A major change occurred recently when we lengthened our skills class sessions from 80 minutes to 100 minutes. The extra twenty minutes has allowed us to do more read-back with students during class. We have also begun to require that students "sit down" – in a session where dictation is given at a speed below their highest tested level – at least 4 times per semester to reinforce skills. Students are also given detailed feedback on at least one transcription exercise per week.

6. Will these changes require new resources or a reallocation of resources?

No.

7. How have previously made changes affected student learning? Use qualitative and /or quantitative data to support your response.

Scores on the Fall 2015 final exam for skills classes were substantially higher than in previous semesters, with an average score of 91.32.

II. Course Level Student Learning Outcomes:

1. What Student Learning Outcomes have you assessed from your course outlines over the last year? Describe the assessment(s) and summarize the results.

As stated above, we address and assess our major course SLOs on a weekly, if not daily, basis. Students must pass skills tests at a prescribed speed with a prescribed level of verbatim accuracy (90 to 97.5 percent). A total of 160 skills tests were passed, spanning all speed levels.

Four students passed the “qualifier” and sat for the state exam. Once qualified, candidates have three years to complete all three legs of the exam. Of the four who qualified this year, one candidate passed all three parts of the state exam and received her CSR license. Another has passed one part (dictation) and is awaiting results on the other two portions (English and Professional Practice). The other two most recent candidates are awaiting results on the November dictation exam. Two candidates carrying their testing over from previous years passed the English exam; two others passed Professional Practice. These numbers are not as low as they may seem. For instance, only 19 candidates out of 103 qualifying through schools in California passed the July dictation exam.

2. What specific strategies have you implemented or do you plan to implement in the future based on the results of your SLO assessment?

One difficulty experienced by all court reporting programs is the tendency for students, once they have qualified for the state exam, to “disappear” – stop attending school and taking weekly practice exams in the period of time leading up to the state exam. They greatly diminish their chances of passing when they do this. We are looking at ways to encourage students to stay in school even after they have qualified. Also, the Board has begun to grade the dictation exam very strictly on format and punctuation. In response, we are giving our students more detailed feedback on their transcription exercises and grading their skills tests accordingly. We have also updated the curriculum in our test prep classes to reflect changes in the written knowledge legs of the exam.

Overall Program Assessment

I. Program Excellence (Best Practices):

Please address any of the following areas:

Overall Program structure, contextualized learning/learning communities, reputation of faculty, faculty collaboration, staff, retention and success, how you maintain a supportive environment, how you address issues of diversity, any specific student learning outcomes.

The past year, especially, has ushered in a major change in how we work toward our goal of training new California court reporters. We have taken a hard look at the difficulty of the training, the low success rates state- and nationwide, the coming increased demand for qualified reporters -- which some of the professional associations describe as a crisis -- and have made a collaborative decision among the faculty to ask for maximum focus and effort, not only from our students but from ourselves. We have discovered that as we raise the bar, students who are capable of success and want to succeed, respond enthusiastically. Students who are here because it has been historically easy to linger in court reporting programs for years, leave.

The often-unspoken philosophy of court reporting programs everywhere has been that in order to maintain enrollment levels acceptable to the institution, poor effort, poor attendance and lack of commitment are tolerated. We are taking a chance -- because our enrollment may drop significantly -- on a new philosophy: This is professional-level training for a career that is highly compensated. It requires a major commitment of time and study. If prospective students are not currently at a place in their lives where they can make that commitment, they should wait until they can resolve whatever issues are in their way and come back when they can commit. At the same time, we need to work to remove whatever barriers to success can be addressed from our side. Many of our students have small children. Many have long commutes. In response, we are transitioning a number of our academic courses to 100 percent distance learning, and we are exploring adding a synchronous distance learning element to our skills classes.

The College of Marin court reporting program is unique in many respects. Because we are small, we are able to give students individualized support and encouragement. We are fortunate to have Sharon Vartanian, who is expert in court reporting software and technology, on our staff. Because of Sharon, I am confident that we currently offer the best court reporting software training of any program in California. In response to new requirements at the state level, we have sharpened our focus on grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. We have established a method for holding students accountable for a minimum of six hours per week of practice outside of class. Our greatest need at this point in time is to publicize what we have to offer. We need to market our program and establish a web presence that is attractive and informative. That will be our major goal in the coming year.

II. Program Improvement

Beyond specific SLOs, what (qualitative and/or quantitative) data-driven coordinated planning has your department done to improve enrollment, student learning, access and success over the last two years? **Data available on the Data Dashboard.*

See above – addressed in prior question.

III. Assessment of previous Program Reviews:

1. What resources have you been granted from your previous program reviews?

We have received laptops and computer-compatible shorthand machines.

We now have a full-time faculty position – there were no full-time faculty for approximately 3 three years between 2010 and 2013.

2. Please assess how these resources have been used to improve access, learning outcomes and student success in your program? **Overall data available on the Data Dashboard.*

We have been able to assist low-income students by giving them access to the equipment on campus.

3. What changes have you implemented based on previous program reviews?

We have increased our focus on introducing students to current court reporting technology.

4. What results have you found? **Overall data available on the Data Dashboard.*

Our students are better equipped to begin their careers due to their familiarity with current court reporting technology.

Plans for Improvement

1. Pick one or two things that you will do to improve your program over the next 2-3 years. Outline your strategies for improvement. (*Note: You will be asked to comment on this plan for improvement in your next review in two to three years. Please save your responses so that you will have comparative evidence and data to submit at that time.*)

We would like to add synchronous distance access, using Zoom, to our skills classes. This would allow students who are not able to attend class in person on a given day the opportunity to participate and not fall behind. We will begin by equipping one of our classrooms with the necessary cameras in the next year; then evaluate the effectiveness of the approach before following through and equipping all three of the classrooms we use.

We need to identify effective marketing methods that will reach appropriate prospective students. To this end, I'm requesting \$1,000 per year over the next three years for marketing and advertising. We absolutely must have a clear, up-to-date and informative Web presence in order to attract new students.

2. Detail any resources you will need to achieve this improvement and explain what SLOs or student access issues you hope to address.

We will need to equip the classrooms with the appropriate cameras. Students and faculty will need training to become comfortable with the technology.

We will need assistance developing a marketing strategy and creating a Web site.

Long Term Budget/Unit requests

I. Additional Teaching Units (add rows if necessary)

Class	Campus	Fall Units	Spring Units	Summer Units	Total Units

For each request above, please explain how these additional units will address scheduling needs, student access or success, and/or new graduation requirements. **Please show how these units work on your attached discipline blueprint.**

None requested at this time.

Department Chairs and Division Managers:

2015/2016 Full Program Review
Discipline: COURT REPORTING

Please work together to evaluate your various department or discipline non-personnel accounts and create a current + three year forecast for each account (restricted and unrestricted as applicable). This should cover any relevant operating account including instructional supplies (43000), other supplies (45000), etc.

Managers can pull this information for your department out of the “budget builder” tool in the intranet and copy it into an excel spreadsheet. **Please attach or turn in this completed spreadsheet with this program review. For any increases (or decreases) please justify below.**

Understanding account numbers:

<http://www.marin.edu/fiscal/accounting.html#chartofaccounts>

http://www.marin.edu/WORD-PPT/Accounts_05-15-13.pdf

Justification for any increases requested for these accounts.

- 1. All restricted monies presently in the non-personnel accounts (\$2321) to be consolidated in 12920-23201-24200-051430 (PT Nonstudent instructional). Our greatest need is help with reading and other classroom activities.**
- 2. Add new category, Advertising and Marketing, and budget \$1,000 per year for these purposes. We need to get more information about court reporting and our program out there to grow enrollment.**
- 3. Budget \$1,000 per year to purchase cameras and other equipment that will make synchronous distance learning possible. We need to add this component to attract and retain students.**

Rather than request more funding, we are simply moving the focus of the funds we have.

Department Chair Comments

1. Please make any comments on Student Access and Success, Facilities, Curriculum and SLO sections.

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2. Please comment on the Plans for Improvement section.

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3. For Instructional/ Student Services PR: What are your priorities if asked to make reductions? (Please be specific and address staffing, units/classes, supplies, service contracts, etc.) What reductions have already been implemented in recent years?

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4. Other comments

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Area Directors and Deans Comments

2015/2016 Full Program Review
Discipline: COURT REPORTING

1. Please make any comments on Student Access and Success, Facilities, Curriculum and SLO sections.

Kristin Acredelo and team have done an incredible job updating the curriculum.

2. Please comment on the Plans for Improvement section.

Resources directed to marketing/Outreach are need to build awareness of Court Reporting. I recommend that we increase the marketing budget as requested to \$1,000. Utilizing Zoom as distance training program would also encourage more students to access the Court Reporting program (there is only one other in Northern California). We have secured Zoom licenses, but are in need of computer cameras to operate. Totally request is \$1,000,

I do not recommend a Lab Tech for individual CTE programs at IVC in Building 27. I do recommend we increase the services and availability of tech services to CTE programs including MMST and Court Reporting. I recommend a designated technician who could serve all labs at IVC.

3. For Instructional/ Student Services PR: What are your priorities if asked to make reductions? (Please be specific and address staffing, units/classes, supplies, service contracts, etc.) What reductions have already been implemented in recent years?

Many of the classes are already blended. If we needed to reduce staffing, we have the opportunity to blend (or teach multi-classes) at the same time.

4. Other comments

Funding should be requested for hourly Court Reporting readers.