

Group	Topic	Facilitators
1	Public Service Values-Uniqueness of Sector	Jeff Raffel Ethel Hill Williams
2	Student Competencies	Marv Mandell Bill Simonsen
3	Outcomes Assessment	Sallyanne Harper Kathy Newcomer
4	Transparency, Data & Public Information	BJ Reed Marilyn Rubin
5	International Accreditation	Dan Mazmanian Shama Ghamkar
6	Learning Environment	Michelle Piskulich Bruce Clary

(1) Public Service Values – The Uniqueness of the Sector

Overview of the issue:

- What makes our programs unique?
- What furthers the public service in some way?
- What is the program's unique focus, and how do you go about assessing it?

Group responses

- The demonstrability of assessment is going to be easier for more specific kinds of programs than generalist programs in terms of measurement.
- Is there unequal impact when assessing outcomes – especially regarding students beyond graduation?
- The push towards outcomes-based assessment may make assessment more difficult. At what point do you stop counting?
- There is a potential implication due to values-based versus mission-based and having a certain template. If we have a template of information, then will we allow for individual, program-unique responses?
- What is demonstrable to perspective students, peers, organizations, etc.?
 - CHEA is pushing for all programs to have competencies that are achievable and measurable. We are stopping short of defining what those are.
 - It is hard to discuss mission-based without linking it to outcomes. The notion of demonstrability is important to the public sector. How do we actually assess whether we're adding value to the public interest?
 - Assessing expectations of employers—how do we understand them then measure whether programs/students are meeting them?
 - Can NASPAA have a series of questions that every program can use to measure outcomes? Can NASPAA send more e-mails to ascertain and track outcomes information beyond graduation?

- To what extent do we measure communications, leadership, organizational skills, etc? Employers don't tell us exactly what they want/need so programs can better teach/train students.
- How do you teach and measure enthusiasm, non-verbal skills, etc.?
- Questions exist regarding not only measures but validity of measures.
- The learning environment principle is also important.

(2) Student Outcomes

(1) NASPAA Programs are Different

- Role of the public sector
- Democratic values, governance
- Applied focus (different from MA, Political Sciences)
- Context of our courses (public service)
- We should recognize that students will move from sector to sector, competencies should also be applicable across sectors

(2) What Competences are (should be) Common Across Programs of Different Types

- Leadership
- Communication skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Critical thinking
- Ability to deal with complex environments
- Relationship & negotiation skills
- Ethics
- Working in teams

(3) Issues with Competencies

- Balance, need to distinguish ourselves. Degrees desire to accommodate a wide variety of programs
- These competences (interpersonal, communications, etc.) are cross-cutting and are likely covered in several classes.
- They are also hard competences to measure
- Different competencies might be important to an entry-level employees might not be the same as for mid-level manager.
- Also, competencies are different by profession what's important to a policy analyst is different to a city manager.
- Market needs are important one person said he fears from his alumni that budgeting skills very important
- We should be careful these are measurable

(4) How Can We Distinguish Ourselves (yet maintain our variety of focus and programs)

- One key – at least three different types of degrees
 - Standard MPA
 - MPP
 - Executive MPA
- Venn diagram approach was suggested (see attached notes)
- Main set of skills for the competencies, for all programs might include what makes us distinct, e.g. competencies around the public service & democratic process – as well as competencies all should have, e.g. communication skills, leadership, critical thinking, etc.
- Competencies could be developed for different programs, e.g. public policy programs, more focus in economic analysis. This could also be mission based on a program by program basis.

(3) Outcomes Assessment

- Clearly related to program, goals & objectives & mission
 - (Multi-variate analysis) – multiple measures quantitative/qualitative
 - Measures competencies
 - Describe how faculty are involved in measuring outcomes, feedback loop to courses
 - Capstone Measures
 - Demonstrate how students are learning what they are supposed to have been learning
 - Looking at regional accreditation & Process to avoid having to do additional beyond regional; - i.e. cannot have anything in the standard that would preclude use of Regional measures; University review measures;
 - Are we looking for the “Best” Kind of measures or the “maximally acceptable” in terms of standards?
 - “Value-added” or relative standard or descriptive standard
- Occupation
- Faculty
 - Students
 - Employees
 - Administrators
 - & how perceived and taught over time

- Outcomes only useful if we can compare them
 - o Trend
 - o w/ other NASPAA Programs
 - o How compare w/other accredited programs
 - E.g., MBA;
- Outcome of educational activities
- Outcome of student's education in adding value in Public Service
- "Minimal" vs. "Best" – Want "in-Between"
 - o some flexibility in NASPAA's transition to "outcomes" would be good
e.g.:
 - o Some focus on student outcomes
- Will we accredit this program or not based on the outcome?
 - o i.e. Did the program use it formatively?
 - o Outcomes should also be used in a substantively, formative way
 - o But not rigid to allow for some creativity
- Strategic Decision on the part of NASPAA
 - o Outcomes clearly related to that School's stated Mission & do the outcome measure that school's accomplishment of Mission, Goals & Objectives?
- Suggestion of two-tiered set of measures
 - o Specific to each program based on Mission, Goals, Objectives
 - o Outcome measures common to all programs
- Words used to describe the frequency will be very important – e.g. "periodically" versus "annually"
- Careful wording will allow "us" (NASPAA) to shape how we view our work;
- "Does your program have positive impact on public Service?"
 - o Significant leadership role for NASPAA beyond accreditation
- *sidenote*: Clarity around temporal nature of the measure;
- Demonstrate how we use these outcome measures, overtime, in formative work over the period between accreditation
- Relationship of regional relation
 - skip responsibility w/NASPAA accreditation – it is Learning Outcomes
- Concern w/ how can measure competencies around learning because it is related (?)

Crystal: Accountability to the Public

- Reporting on accountability to our community-? Perception?
- B.J.'s report on Thursday seems to be a very good start;

- Only adopt revised standards that are **enforceable**
 - Train site-evaluators
 - Issue very specific guidance
- Many "Publics" – not a monolithic community-
 - Schools funded by state very different than those w/ Private endowments
- Most publics want to know
 - Graduate rates
 - Employed public/private sector
 - Employed in something they feel is beneficial & like
 - Can they change the world in that position
- Outcome-based standards would need to be "learnable"
 - Learn as a community what has been learned by others & how they were measured
- Focus on Meaningful & useful measures
- Achieving accreditation & main-tuning at an outcome [circular reasoning]
- Determine what level NASPAA wants the date on outcomes from the accreditation for other valuable uses;
- What conformity does NASPAA seek through accreditation

- Accountability – need to face how transparent & public we want to be; Feds will push don't want to be last ones to do it
- Need to be adaptable enough to deal w/ differences in reg't between those responsible to Legislatures & others
- Need to remember need for scalability in terms of size of programs and focus of missions-

(4) Transparency, Data & Public Information

1. Outcomes should be clearly related to programs goals & mission
2. Multiple measures are needed, both qualitative and quantitative

3. Measure competencies
4. Assess faculty involvement in quality assessment
5. Issue: do we want class based assessment?
6. Nothing in standard should state we must use measures that we are not using for regional accreditation or university level reviews
7. Level of specificity? (at competency level?? Linked to learning outcomes?)
8. Evergreen University model is that students assess their learning community.
9. Are we asking for impact (best evaluation) assessment? Or are we setting minimal methodology expected?
10. WE need to look at value-added – rather than outcomes
11. Perceptions of different stakeholders matter
12. In addition to perceptions, we need to have some “objective” data
13. Comparability?- to other professional assn degrees (like MBA)
14. We need to measure outcomes at different levels – on students and on community
15. We want mid-level – evaluation – so some focus on student level outcomes but some on higher level
16. We need to give incentive to have programs show how their program uses the data to improve their program
17. Do the outcomes they use appropriately reflect their program mission & goals
18. We need to think strategically here - what does NASPAA want all programs to achieve, e.g. act ethically
19. Be careful on the word we use, like “frequently” when we say how often they must, conduct assessments
20. This is an opportunity for us to shape how programs view the role of outcomes in improving what they do
21. How do you measure your positive impact on public service – and how do you use the evaluative information
22. We need to be careful re: costs/ burden of data collection

23. What should we make public? (re: outcomes)
24. Timeframe? Will we give guidance on how long to track students
25. Our principles: Do no harm, Plus Enforceable (we need to know what is enough)
26. Remember the “public” means different things to different programs!
27. Public info should be things like: 1) % employed in jobs they want; 2) in public service or sector 3) graduation rate
28. Learnable – we need to learn as a community about what we learn about outcome assessment
29. Measure must be meaningful + useful and scalable
30. There is circular reasoning here -> achieving accreditation *is* itself an outcome
31. At what level does NASPAA want to mine the data to show its outcome from accreditation! - > so we need to carefully craft message.
32. We want Transparency! Our Legislatures demand it! Lets not be last one to be transparent.

(5) International Accreditation by NASPAA

- (1) There is a real interest in international institutions to learn about US accreditation process and among US institutions a growing interest in international collaborations, campuses, etc.
- (2) Flexibility principle --- lends itself to NASPAA being able to extend its services to include international accreditation.
- (3) A number of programs , for example, Harvard and Carnegie Mellon have international collaborations where their students can take core courses in the collaborating international institution. These would constitute the domestic programs with significant international collaboration in teaching and research.
- (4) A few international programs have independently approached NASPAA for accreditation – Netherlands –Erasmus University Rotherdam and more recently Chinese universities.
- (5) What types of programs will NASPAA accredit? Domestically, it accredits only degree programs. What about distance learning type programs or electronically conducted programs?

- (6) NASPAA needs to take into account the contextual—political, cultural, etc. differences in which international accreditation is done. A suggested method of implementing international accreditation is:
- (i) Go in with basic principles
 - (ii) Discuss standards criteria with program being accredited
 - (iii) Assess the institution by the mutually agreed criteria
 - (iv) Make this a two year process to allow for some development of and understanding about criteria and standards and implementation
- (7) UN has a public administration schools accreditation task force and division. Draft report is currently being prepared and involves some NASPAA members as consultants/experts.
- (8) The international accreditation process should be a two way street: Need joint accreditation teams with international partners rather than just NASPAA run accreditation process. Need to think of models of association with international partners.
- (i) Should the international accreditation move through an association to association link internationally versus NASPAA linking directly with the institution?
 - (ii) Should NASPAA seek out international institutions or wait to be approached?
 - (iii) Will NASPAA send out an evaluation team if asked to do this?

(6) Learning Environment Breakout Session

This session covered a wide range of themes but most of the time was spent discussing outcomes measurement, the five faculty rule, and distance education. Underlying all discussion was a concern that NASPAA was about to make life more, rather than less, difficult for those undergoing accreditation.

Discussion points:

Standards need to reflect variable environments for programs and should be phrased with the diversity of the institution and mission of program in mind. Standards should be “sufficiently flexible.”

- Why should we maintain this as a standard when we are mission driven?

Five Faculty Rule:

There was much discussion but nothing really new here. Some people want to jettison the five faculty rule and some want to keep it. Here are some of the statements.

- If a program is achieving outcomes, why does NASPAA care if they are doing it with fewer than five faculty?
- The five faculty rule saves many programs.
- It is critical for long term viability that we retain the five faculty rule.
- The five faculty rule is not transparent.

Some think the accreditation process is too burdensome and there seemed to be some fear that the new standards would make things worse rather than better. They would like us to be concerned about the cumulative impact of various requirements.

The idea of using mission and outcomes rather than inputs also was discussed quite extensively.

- If we have things we want to achieve but we don't have a good way to measure the outcome, standards with inputs and processes could substitute but there needs to be a linkage between the input and the expected outcome.
- There was some concern that outcomes can be manipulated and some skepticism about outcomes measurement generally.

Distance education including multiple campuses and online delivery were a concern of several people present.

- Distance education needs to acknowledge changes in technology.
- Is there a limit to distance?
- How can you compare online delivery with in-class delivery.
- Should there be multiple accreditations for multiple campuses?
- Concern that the principles are too prescriptive – belief that we are headed to more, not less, regulation.

We should be focusing on students. What do students need?

- Adequate advising
- Adequate scheduling

NASPAA needs to care as much about substantially determining influence as it does about the five faculty rule. Programs need to have control of their destiny.