SITE VISIT MANUAL SUMMARY GUIDELINES FOR

SITE VISIT TEAM MEMBERS

A. Preserve the Confidentiality of Peer Review Process

1. NASPAA accreditation guidelines require disclosure upon request of site visit team members. However, site visit team members shall make no disclosure about individual program evaluations and recommendations resulting from the site visit team review process.

B. Understand and Preserve the Intended Character of the Site Visit Team

1. It is an inquiring arm of COPRA.
2. It is a cooperative, not an adversary or an advocacy group of professional colleagues.
3. It is responsible for presenting and interpreting the facts about the applicant program to NASPAA's Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation.

4. It has the responsibility for fact-finding and fact clarification.
5. It is responsible for writing a final report on the program reviewed.

C. Protect the Integrity of the Site Visit Team

1. The Site Visit Team is a team, and must work as a unit.
2. The chairperson is the official spokesperson of the team.
3. Those who comprise the Site Visit Team are entrusted with the highest form of professional confidence.
4. Interviews conducted by team members are not interrogations.
5. The team members are not inspectors, and should not view themselves that way.
6. Team members should avoid statements of "how it should be done" or "how we do it at our institution."

D. Know the Main Objectives of the Site Visit Team which are:

1. To confirm that the program has a clear mission and goals that it regularly assesses.
2. To review data and information, and to verify and clarify, as needed, the description of the program as presented in the Self-Study Report.
3. To provide an occasion for the exchange of information among colleagues, and for learning about innovative developments responsive to common problems and opportunities in a common field.
4. To assess the program under review against its own stated goals.
5. To assess the program against the NASPAA standards.
6. To use the site visit findings as the basis for writing an evaluative report to the NASPAA Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation.

E. Make Sure Pre-Visit Preparation has been met, including:

1. A thorough knowledge of the peer review and accreditation process.
2. A knowledge of the standards, their interpretation, and the problems frequently encountered in their application.

3. A cover-to-cover familiarity with the applicant program's Self-Study Report, Volumes I and II.
4. A careful reading of the following most recent documents:

   a. NASPAA Standards for Professional Masters Degree Programs in Public Affairs/Administration
   b. NASPAA Policies and Procedures for Peer Review and Accreditation
   c. Applicant Program's Self-Study Report
   d. Applicant Program's University Bulletins or Catalogs
   e. Applicant Program's Brochures, Pamphlets and/or Handbooks
   f. NASPAA Self-Study Report Form for Professional Masters Degree Programs
   g. NASPAA Site Visit Manual
   h. NASPAA Internship Guidelines
   i. NASPAA Diversity Guidelines

F. <u>Responsibilities of the Site Visit Team Chairperson</u>

1. To chair the Site visit Team.
2. To make contact with the liaison person of the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation immediately after appointment as chair.

3. To ask, if this approach is desired, each member of the team to be particularly familiar with certain portions of the Self-Study Report and to write specific sections of the draft Site Visit Team Report.
4. To request the program head of the applicant program to submit a proposed time-table or schedule for the site visit to the chair of the Site Visit Team at the earliest possible opportunity following the establishment of the Site Visit Team.
5. To confirm with the program head the actual dates for the visit, and to request any specific information and/or arrangements for interviews that are needed to clarify any concerns or issues in the Self-Study Report as raised by the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation
6. To request before the site visit any special arrangements needed to interview specific university, college or school-wide faculty or officials, alumni or students.
7. To make determinations of the length and modification of the schedule for the site visit.
8. To arrange to have minutes of faculty meetings, specific reports and documents, and university affirmative action records available in case the team wishes to review them.

Site Visit Checklist Special Interview Arrangements and

Additional Documents Needed

Arrange Interviews with:

______ Chief Academic Officer (Academic Vice President or Provost)

______ Dean of School

______ Assistant or Associate Dean of School

______ Chair/Head of Department

______ Program Faculty

______ Employers of Program Graduates

______ Current Students

______ Former Students (Alumni)

______ Representative of Cooperative Program Units in Other Schools, Colleges, or Programs

______ Director, Computer Center

______ Director, Placement Office

______ Director, Internship Program

______ Librarian or Acquisition/Liaison Librarian for Program

______ Affirmative Action Office

Additional Documents to be made available:

______ Current Faculty Roster

______ Current Course Schedule

______ Current Course Outlines

______ Individual Student Files

______ Updated Curriculum Changes

______ Updated Program Description

______ Report of Class Size

______ Committee Assignments of Faculty

______ Sample of Minutes of Program-wide or School-wide Faculty Meetings

______ Program's Annual Report

______ Affirmative Action Records

I. INTRODUCTION: GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

This site visit manual has been prepared by the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation to facilitate the site visit processes. It is addressed to both the site visit team members and host institutions. Some general observations are provided here about confidentiality, the site visit and its objectives, and the Site Visit Team.

A. Confidentiality

In accordance with peer review and accreditation policy and procedures, no disclosure about individual applications and the evaluations and recommendations made to individual programs resulting from the site visit team evaluation process will be made by any site visit team.

B. The Site Visit Team and its Objectives

1. The Site Visit

The site visit is a most critical and sensitive part of the review and accreditation process. The site visit is a cooperative, not an adversary, event. Fundamental to peer review is recognition that excellence in public service education can be achieved in diverse ways. Both the site visit team and everyone at the host institution must appreciate that the site visitors have two roles to play in helping to determine the quality of the applicant program:

a. The team is COPRA's inquiring arm.
b. The team will later present and interpret the applicant program to NASPAA's Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation.

It is very important that all participants embrace this understanding and approach the site visit with trust and goodwill. It is assumed that it is within the reach of reasonable people to translate these attitudes into appropriate site visit performance.

During the site visit, administrators, faculty and students at the host institution and members of the site visit team will be in almost constant and intensive contact with one another. The site visit will be an occasion when the host institution will want to create the best possible impression on its visitors, and the visiting team will want to gain the most thorough possible appreciation of the program under review.

2. Objectives of the Site Visit

The main objectives of the site visit are:

a. to confirm that the program has a clear mission and goals that it regularly assesses.

b. to verify and clarify the description of the program as presented in the Self-Study Report.
c. to assess the program against its own stated goals.
d. to assess the program against the NASPAA standards.
e. to establish a basis for an evaluative report by the Site Visit Team to the NASPAA Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation.
f. to provide an occasion for the exchange of information among colleagues and for learning about innovative developments responsive to common problems and opportunities in a common field.

The site visit is part of a larger peer review/accreditation process by which members of this field are endeavoring to discover and share a continuing development of quality and excellence in public service education.

C. Site Visit Team Members

Site visitors are professional colleagues who are interested in the applicant program's wellbeing and continued improvement. When this spirit prevails, sufficient information will be gathered during the visit to provide a sound basis for the team's evaluation. Great care should be taken by Site Visit Team members to avoid statements of "how it should be done" or "how we do it at our institution". Such expressions can easily be interpreted in a fashion that detracts from the "objective" reviewer posture each site visitor should assume. An attitude for receptiveness to the applicant institution's philosophy and approaches not only makes the visit more productive but often yields dividends in "food for thought" as one returns home.

To facilitate the spirit of the site visit process, site visitors are encouraged to remember that:

1. The Site Visit Team is a team. It must work as a unit. Accordingly, the chairperson is the official spokesperson for the team, is in full charge of the visit, and must insure that the evaluation is comprehensive and thorough. The complete cooperation of members in carrying out their respective assignments is essential.

2. The highest form of professional confidence is entrusted to those with the responsibility for making a site visit. The opinions of site visitors about the program being visited must be confined to the team and to members of the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation.

3. Should problems be encountered that are not addressed in this Site Visit Manual, the NASPAA Academic Director and members of the Commission are available to answer questions. The number to call in Washington, DC is: (202) 628-8965.

II. PRE-VISIT PREPARATION

The pre-visit preparation of every team member includes four major elements:

1. attendance at a site visit training workshop, service on the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation, or service on a previous site visit team.
2. a thorough knowledge of the peer review and accreditation process.
3. a knowledge of the standards and their interpretations, and the problems frequently encountered in their application.
4. a cover-to-cover familiarity with the applicant program's Self-Study Report.

In addition to the above, the chairperson of the Site Visit Team has the additional responsibility to consult with the applicant program's representative and the Site Visit Team members regarding scheduling details for the site visit.

A. COPRA Training for Site Visitors

At the NASPAA Annual Conference or at other sites as specified, NASPAA's Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation conducts training sessions for potential site visitors. These training sessions will focus on the issues encountered in the analysis of the Self-Study Report, procedures and policies to govern site visitors, and the guidelines for preparing the Site Visit Team Report to the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation. Every effort will be made to ensure that all site visitors have the same understanding of all elements of the review process. Deans and/or program directors will nominate faculty members and practitioners to the roster of potential site visitors. For any nominee's name to be added to the roster, he or she must attend a training workshop, except as noted under II(1) above.

B. Knowledge of Peer Review and Accreditation Process

The entire review process is described in the most recent Policies and Procedures for Peer Review and Accreditation developed by the Commission and approved by the NASPAA Executive Council.

C. Knowledge of Standards and Their Interpretation

These are contained in Standards for Professional Masters Degree Programs in Public Affairs/Policy/Administration.

D. Familiarity with Self-Study Report

Every member of the Site Visit Team is expected to have a total familiarity with the applicant program's Self-Study Report. These reports will have been prepared according to the format presented in the Self-Study Report Form for Professional Masters Degree Programs. The Self-Study Report is the result of much labor on the part of the host institution. When questions that are clearly answered in the report are asked during the site visit, confidence in the site visit process is greatly shaken. Each member of the Site Visit Team should become particularly familiar with the areas of the Self-Study Report whose first review prompted questions by the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation. Thorough preparation will enable the team to focus quickly on the items that must be resolved during the course of the visit. But the team should also explore any other possible items missed in the Self-Study Report. The Site Visit Team chairperson may ask each member to be particularly familiar with certain portions of the Self-Study Report and draft specific sections of the Site Visit Team Report.

E. Special Obligations of Chairperson

The chairperson of the Site Visit Team will be expected to communicate with the applicant program at the earliest possible opportunity:

1. to consult with the program head and members of the Site Visit Team to establish the dates for the visit.

2. to provide guidance to the applicant program's head about: (a) the site visit timetable and (b) any additional data that should be prepared and made available that would serve to clarify problems noted in the preliminary review of the Self-Study Report.

A general site visit principle is that the applicant program's routine should be interrupted as little as possible. Therefore, the chairperson of the Site Visit Team should provide the host with a good understanding of the basic evaluation format to be used during the visit. It is quite unfair to the applicant institution if it has only the vaguest understanding of what the site visit will entail. The schedule of the visit should be agreed to early enough to enable the host to make the necessary arrangements well in advance.

F. Responsibilities of the Host Institution

The host institution will have undertaken a great deal of preparatory work before the visit. The Self-Study Report is the major result of this effort. There are some very important additional things that should be done, however, to ensure that the site visit goes well. The following is a suggested list:

1. Every individual who will have some part in the site visit should read this manual carefully. Obviously, a clear appreciation of the Site Visit Team's procedures, goals and expectations will make the site visit a smoother or more related undertaking.

2. Everyone expected to participate in the site visit should be given enough advance notice so that he or she can be sure to be on hand as needed. In this regard, the program representative should submit to the chairperson of the Site Visit Team a tentative but detailed schedule of persons to be interviewed, their names and the places to be visited. Preferably, this schedule should be submitted two weeks in advance of the visit.

3. The individuals who will be in charge of the site visit at the host institution should brief all participating administrators, faculty and students on what to expect. It might be useful to discuss together some of the questions site visitors are likely to ask.

4. Materials that were gathered and used in the preparation of the Self-Study Report, for example, the files (or a sample) of an entering cohort, which were used to report on attrition, should be gathered at a central location and be readily available for review. A section-by-section review of the COPRA Self-Study Report Form would quickly suggest what these items might be. In this connection, the appropriate officials at the host institution should be thoroughly familiar with Section V of this manual.

5. In cases where States have promulgated complex disclosure regulations, representatives at the host institution should be prepared to explain these regulations and just how the self-study process has coped with this problem.

6. Finally, every effort should be made to ensure that the site visit is a cooperative, collegial experience and not an adversarial encounter, and that no one involved sees it as such. The officials in charge of the self-study preparation and the site visit should take every possible occasion to reinforce this understanding. The Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation is dedicated to the proposition that openness, candor, and trust at the host institution must, in turn, generate goodwill, sensitivity and dispassionate evaluation on the part of the site visitors.

The host program director and faculty, motivated by a normal sense of hospitality, may want to have some sort of social activity for the Site Visit Team. Extensive social activities are inappropriate, and the site visit schedule leaves little time available. At the same time, informal socializing when the occasion permits can make the site visit a more congenial and sometimes more insightful experience.

III. THE SITE VISIT SCHEDULE

It is impossible to define a site visit schedule that will fit every situation. Presented here is a model of how the site visit should proceed. The Commission believes that the day-by-day schedule presented below puts the items to be covered in a proper sequence. However, the Commission envisages that the actual site visits may modify this model, but such modifications should not create a radically different schedule of events.

A. Length of Visit

The site visit will normally require two full-working days spread over three calendar days. Team members should arrive in the late afternoon of Day I, the day preceding the start of the site visit.

Day II is totally devoted to site visit activities. In most cases, the site visit will be completed by mid-afternoon of Day III.

On Day III the team will meet to arrive at a consensus view and a draft of the site visit team report. A final courtesy visit will be paid to the appropriate official(s) who are directly responsible for the program to request any additional clarifying information or explanation. At that time, the Site visit Team should also review the next steps in completing the peer review and accreditation process, including the dates on which the Principal Representative should expect to receive the Site Visit Team Report. No attempt should be made on this occasion to summarize the contents of the report or the team's assessments and impressions. Team members should meet briefly after the final courtesy visit to determine if the additional clarifying information is to change the previously agreed to Site Visit Report. The team will normally depart in the late afternoon of Day III.

If the applicant program is small and the site visit moves along expeditiously, the team should make full use of the slack time in drafting the report before departing Day III. An extended visit may be required for multiple campus schools, or if the planned visit is thrown off schedule by some unforeseen event such as the illness of a Site Visit Team member, air travel problems, or the like.

Model Site Visit Schedule: Two-Day Visit

Prior to scheduling the site visit, the site visit chairperson should contact the other team members to discuss their interests and potential responsibilities for interviewing and report drafting. Based on this, the chair makes team and individual assignments for interviews that are then reflected in the final schedule. At times, the entire team will attend meetings; at other times, it will be necessary to split up the team for meetings; according to assigned responsibilities. The proposed day-by-day schedule and its relationship to NASPAA standards is as follows:

Day I: Team members arrive in late afternoon and confer, review site visit schedule and assignments, contact hosts, confirm site visit schedule, request any additional data or material needed during the site visit, and review the occasions on which they can separately carry out parts of the site visit. Dinner: (team members and program administrators and faculty for the purpose of getting acquainted.

Day II:

8:30 Meetings with the dean or department chair, program director, and full-time faculty to review:

Standard 1.0: Eligibility Standard 2.0: Mission, Assessment, Plans Standard 3.0: Program Jurisdiction Standard 5.0: Program Faculty (including faculty diversity)

10:30 Meetings with faculty teaching common core courses to review:

Standard 4.2 Common Curriculum Components Standard 5.41 Improving the Instructional Program

12:30 Lunch with faculty, staff, and students

2:00 Meetings with faculty teaching additional curriculum component courses to review: Standard 4.22 Additional Curriculum Components Standard 5.41 Improving the Instructional Program

4:00 Meetings with students and alumni to review:

Standard 4.0 Curriculum
Standard 6.0 Admission of Students (including student diversity)
Standard 7.0 Student Services

Dinner and Early Evening (team members only)

Team members take stock of how the site visit is going and set priorities for additional review on Day III of any items already covered.

Day III:

8:30 Meeting with the dean and/or program director to facilitate any additional arrangements which need to be made.

9:00 Visits as needed to the computer facilities, classrooms, affirmative action office, placement office, etc., to review:

Standard 5.5: Faculty Diversity
Standard 6.1: Student Diversity
Standard 7.0: Student services
Standard 8.0: Support services

Examination of transcripts from the NASPAA student sample to

review: Standard 4.0 Curriculum

11:00 Meetings with university or college administrators as appropriate.

Noon Lunch (team members only) to arrive at a consensus about the site visit evaluation and to outline the draft Site Visit Team Report to the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation.

1:30 Final exit interview with appropriate program officials.

2:30 Site Visit Team meets for three hours to draft the report of the site visit team before departing.

5:30 Site visit is completed; team members depart.

The chairperson of the site visit team must agree to any amended time-table. There may be cases, because of the small size of the program and excellent pre-visit planning, in which the evaluation is virtually completed at the end of Day II. In such case the team chairperson will determine whether an early departure for some or all members of the team is appropriate. Site visitors are encouraged, however, to use any remaining time to complete the draft Site Visit Team Report.

C. Three-day Site Visits

There may be instances when a three-day site visit will be needed. The Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation chairperson and the host program director will make this determination. The site visit team leader may amend the two-day schedule as needed.

D. Off-Campus Site Visit

The model schedule presented above does not allow for any review of off-campus programs (Standard 9.0). The great variety of these programs precludes this. In some cases off-campus programs are overseas, in other cases only a relatively short distance away. Should an off-campus site visit be required, there is no implication here that it must be held at the same time as the parent-campus visit. What is implied is that the method for handling off-campus cases will have to be resolved case-by-case. It will be necessary for the chairperson or the Commission liaison to arrive at an understanding with the dean or program head of the applicant program concerning the nature and scope of off-campus site visits. Once these are determined, the site visit chairperson and the program head will work out the specific arrangements.

IV. INTERVIEWS WITH UNIVERSITY AND PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS, FACULTY AND STUDENTS

A. General Guidelines

Interviewing those who make the program function--faculty, students and administrators--is largely what the site visit is all about. Some time must be spent reviewing appropriate records and inspecting facilities. Some of the visit must also be devoted to team conferences to establish an early consensus about the report that must be prepared for the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation. However, interviewing will consume the most time and should yield the greatest dividends in terms of the site visit objectives, if the Self-Study Report has been well-prepared and thoroughly studied in advance.

B. InterviewTechniques

While expert interviewers may find this reminder somewhat presumptuous, it is worth cautioning site visitors against falling into the oldest "trap" of the interview process: allowing the person being interviewed to dominate the interview by asking questions of you, the person conducting the interview.

Also, comparisons with one's own experience should be avoided. The result may be a long meeting without the priority questions being answered--or answered as fully as otherwise possible. Above all else, site visitors should be thoroughly prepared for every interview. Such preparation generally requires a focus on two fundamental questions: (1) on which aspects of the Self-Study Report can the person being interviewed offer the best insights; and
(2) what are the important, priority issues that must be covered in the limited time available?

Thus, it is important that the Site Visit Team respect what is unique about the program being reviewed and the many ways in which a program can achieve excellence. During the interviews, the nuances, unique features, and special ways of doing things that characterize the program will have to be drawn out from the persons being interviewed. And what is being heard will have to be weighed against standards that are themselves not rigidly promulgated or defined. Accordingly, the interview process will be less directed, and a good deal of unstructured give and take will be quite appropriate. The goal will be to perceive and understand the program in relation to NASPAA standards. The formal matter-of-fact interview approach should give way to an informal conversation designed to create clear perception and understanding of the character and substantive elements of the program.
The sections below provide suggestions about the kinds of issues that site visitors ought to raise in these interviews. A few general observations about interviewing are in order. When conducting the interviews, the Site Visit Team should be continuously aware of the requirements of the report that must be prepared for Commission because different needs of the report may be met by using different interview

techniques as illustrated below.

1. General Assessment of Program vis-a-vis Its Mission and Goals Section II of the final Site Visit Team Report requires a review of the program's mission and goals, its self-assessment, and its plan. The interviewing will tend to be informal and loosely structured to allow the Site Visit Team members an opportunity to get a sense of the overall program philosophy and how that philosophy is translated into program policies and activities.

2. Standard-by-Standard Assessment

   Section III and IV of the final Site Visit Team Report calls for a standard-by-standard assessment of the program. Section III deals with specific concerns raised by the Commission in its interim report. Section IV assess the other standards one at a time. Much of this information will have been presented in the Self-Study Report. The Site Visit Team's first task will be to check, clarify and confirm the facts. During this phase, the interviews are apt to become somewhat structured, investigative and mechanical. (Site visitors are reminded to clarify specific points raised by the Commission.)

3. Program Suggestions: Wide-ranging Interviews

   In Section V of the report, the Site Visit Team will make suggestions for the further development of the program under review. Presumably, these suggestions will be cast in terms of NASPAA standards and not the personal public service education philosophy of Site Visit Team members. As the recommendations made in this section may (especially in the case of conforming programs) go well beyond minimum NASPAA standards, the tone and style of this section may be quite informal and open-ended. To the extent that this posture begins to form during interviews, these interviews could conceivably become wide-ranging with a give and take exchange. These interviews should permit a great deal of freedom and flexibility.

These suggestions do not imply that the Site Visit Team is restricted to formal or informal techniques in conjunction with the requirements of the Site Visit Team Report. Rather, the whole site visit experience will be most rewarding for everyone if procedures and styles are interwoven and interfaced. By the time the two site visit days are over, the team should have heard and gathered enough material in enough different forms to be able to draft Sections I, II, III, IV, and V with the different certainties and sensitivities required by each part.

C. The University Community Outside the Program

Faculty administrators not directly associated with the program can provide useful insights into a variety of issues of interest to the Site Visit Team. There are, however, obvious problems with interviewing such persons. First, there is the issue of who they might be.

Faculty and administrators in related schools, programs and departments are likely candidates. A partial list includes: schools and programs in management, business and law, and departments of politics or political science, economics, sociology, computer science, and statistics. Members of the central administration should also be on the list of possible persons to be interviewed.

Another problem associated with this group is that of actually contacting them and arranging to meet them. The site visit chairperson should consult with the program head, who will suggest on the day-to-day schedule when these people may be interviewed. The Commission's suggestion is late in the site visit, perhaps on Day III, so as to permit the Site Visit Team to check the program members' image of their program against the image enjoyed by those outside the program.

A partial list of issues and questions to raise in interviews with university people outside the program is as follows:

- What is the mission of the program?
- Do program faculty and administration regularly assess the program and plan its future development?
- What is the prestige of the program?
- What is the quality of students, faculty and program leadership?
- Is this program seen as a lively one?
- Does the program contribute to the university at large?
- Does the program appear to be well-supported academically and financially by the department or school in which it is located, and by the university?
- Does the program avail itself of the university's support services?
- What is the program's interface with other departments, schools, programs and other components of the university?
- Is this program perceived to be responsive to affirmative action issues?
- Is the program perceived as making a contribution to public service beyond placing its graduates, e.g., does it produce worthwhile research, consulting and similar services?
- Does the program carry out worthwhile projects funded by grants?
- How is the future of this program perceived?

Program administrators and faculty members should also have an opportunity to react to as many of the issues and questions raised above as possible so that perceptions can be compared. Certainly those in the program should have an opportunity to respond when negative impressions were received from those outside the program. Helping the program see itself as others in the university see it may constitute an important dimension of the team's consultative role.

D. <u>Program Administrators</u>

The dean and/or program head should be asked to respond to issues and questions of the following kind:

-What is the effectiveness of the internal administrative machinery established to carry out the program?

-Long range planning, does it exist? How is it done?

-Which program concentrations and specializations are currently experiencing the largest enrollments?

-Does the program attract grant money?

-Describe the program's budgeting processes. What are the standards and processes relating to faculty selection, development, promotion, tenure, salary determination, etc.?

-Is there an affirmative action program or plan? Are actions being planned or taken to ensure diversity in faculty including use of adjuncts and guest speakers?

-What comment can be offered on the faculty interface with the public service community?

-What has been the record of your advisory council, if any?

-Describe what you would regard to be the desirable mix of total responsibilities to be borne by the faculty members. Specifically, what do you regard to be a desirable teaching load-why?

-What were the reasons, as you understand them, for any faculty resignation that occurred last year - especially for a faculty member you would have liked to see stay on?

-What have been the most significant developments in the program in the past five -If the program were to have a 20 percent increment in the resources, how would you like to see increases spent?

-How do program specializations come to be created, expanded, contracted or terminated in your program?

-How is the internship program (if offered) managed including obtaining jobs in line with student interests, evaluation of students and assignment of credit?

-What efforts are underway to recruit students, particularly women and minorities? How successful have these efforts been? Is financial aid available for minority students?

-What changes in the program's mission and character do you see in the next 5 to 10 years?

Again, many of the above questions should also be addressed to the faculty members in the program under review to understand comparative perceptions.

E. <u>Faculty Members</u>

Faculty should be asked to address issues and respond to questions of the following kind:

-What are the dean's or program head's expectations for the program, of faculty and graduates?

-What is the faculty role in the planning for program development? Is the faculty generally satisfied with its role?

-How and when did you learn of this peer review process?

-Were you or other faculty colleagues involved in the preparation of the Self-Study Report?

-On matters germane to the program, is the dean's or program head's decision subject to substantial modification by any other dean or university official outside of the program?

-Are school-wide or program-wide faculty committees typically controlled by one segment of the faculty?

-What are the prevailing standards and procedures regarding faculty selection, development, promotion, tenure, salary determination, etc.? How are these standards applied to female and minority faculty?

-What are the current teaching, research, and service interests of faculty members?

-Is assistance given to faculty members by the dean or program head in matters relating to professional goals and interests?

-Would you say that teaching loads are generally established with a view to the total responsibilities of the faculty member?

-How many new course preparations have you experienced in the last two academic years?

-Have you or other faculty colleagues with special research interests received reduced teaching loads to pursue these interests?

-Do you think the basic salary and fringe benefit structure are up to standard? -What is the program's record on affirmative action issues?

-What factors were important in your decision to affiliate with this institution? -What do you find exciting about serving on this faculty? Are there discouraging aspects?

-Do you regard your long term professional growth to be well served by remaining on this faculty?

-How would you characterize the "typical" student you encounter in relation to the goals of your program?

-Do you find secretarial and support personnel resources to be generally adequate?

-Are computer and library resources readily available and adequate?

-What single message, if any, would you like the team to convey to the dean, program head, or president of your university?

F. Student and Alumni Representatives

Students and alumni are an important source of information and issues. Questions of the following kind should be raised with representatives of the student body and alumni:

-What were your reasons for electing this program?

-Are you generally satisfied with your experience in the program? Has it met expectations? Can you be specific about satisfying and disappointing aspects?

-How do you perceive the objectives of the program? Is the curriculum consistent with these goals?

-Given your participation in the program to date, do you think the program will succeed in your case?

-What are the structural components, strengths, weaknesses, and degree requirements of the curriculum?

-Which single educational experience in this program have you most enjoyed?

-On balance, how would you characterize your "typical" professor?

-If faculty or course evaluation forms are available to students, have the results of these questionnaires made any difference? If they don't exist, should they?

-Do students participate in the governance and development of the program? formally? informally?

-Who in your judgment are makers for change and development in the program; the dean, the program head, the faculty?

-What is your evaluation of the academic support services - the library, computer facilities, etc.?

-What is your evaluation of student services - career counseling and placement, and the like?

-Do you believe the program is making a substantial effort to meet affirmative action requirements? (This question should be raised with students in general as well as with those students affirmative action programs serve.)

-What has been the participation of students in the self-study?

-Do you think your education will effectively prepare you for entry into and/or advancement in the public service?

-(For alumni) In what ways are you as alumni involved with the program? Are you contacted with any degree of regularity?

-What would you say to someone requesting your advice about entry into this program?

-What is your message, to the president of your university, to the dean, the faculty, student leaders, potential new students and the site visit team?

The issues raised in the sections above have been put in the form of questions, but these should not be used as a checklist to be covered. Information relating to these issues should be elicited in a conversational way. The skillful site visitor will create the opportunity for the person being interviewed to tell the Site Visit Team about the issues germane to the site visit, and will not behave as an interrogator or inspector.

Do not interrupt the classroom process to reach those you wish to meet. A single classroom visit may produce a more distorted than reliable picture of what generally goes on.

One last word: the team will fulfill its consultative role by also conveying to school administrators how the school or program is viewed from "within" as generally perceived by faculty and students. This consultative dimension is generally only possible, however, if the team has had an adequate opportunity to meet alone with faculty and student representatives.

If the site visit has gone well, the last meeting with the program need be merely a courtesy call. On the other hand, if there are items that need more attention, arrangements should be made between the chair of the Site Visit Team and the program head to resolve any remaining site visit requirements.

V. THE REVIEW OF PROGRAM RECORDS

When the question of conformity depends on specific data, it is important that an adequate auditing process be undertaken of those records supporting the factual presentation in the Self-Study Report. Care should be exercised to assure that the most relevant records are reviewed, and that an appropriate sampling technique is employed. The following discussion focuses upon those areas of the Self-Study Report where a "hands on" familiarity with the records of the program is likely to be important. Site visitors may wish to examine the kinds of records and materials discussed below that are relevant to the respective standard(s) when and if they are available.

A. Records Relevant to Introduction and Standards 1 and 3: Purpose, Eligibility, Program Mission and Program Jurisdiction

The team may wish to examine a sample of minutes of school-wide and/or program-wide faculty meetings. Where appropriate, the program's, but not individual faculty member's, annual report(s) may be reviewed. The Site Visit Team Chairperson should arrange before arrival to have such minutes and reports available in case the team wishes to review them. Such materials should be read with a view to better understanding of the program's policy-making process and its past and future directions.

B. Records Relevant to Standard 2: Program Mission

The team will need to examine any mission goals, or objective statements that the program has as well as planning and internal assessment documents. Such an examination is fundamental to other steps in the review in order to provide perspective on the distinctive aspects of the program.

C. Records Relevant to Standard 4: Curriculum

The team, with the aid of appropriate faculty or administrators, may request a review of student transcripts and/or degree requirement control sheets to determine the basis on which course and other degree requirements are waived or met, and to determine if completion of course prerequisites is enforced. If an internship program exists, the team should review a sample of the documents relating to students in the internship program. Also, the team should note the adequacy of managing the internship program, e.g., the job availability, description, letters of appointment, and supervisory activities. Final transcripts should also be a part of this review to determine if standards for graduation are enforced. And if a final comprehensive examination or master's thesis is required, samples should be reviewed to determine standards and quality.

D. Records Relevant to Standard 5.5: Faculty Diversity

The team will ask to see records verifying the affirmative action information contained in the self-study report.

E. Records Relevant to Standard 6: Admissions

The team may request to see admissions data on all or a random sample of enrollees who entered during the self-study year so that a judgment can be reached on the application of admissions standards. The team may also wish to review a sample of the records that support the presentation of these data. In addition to focusing on the above admissions data, the team might also examine computer printouts of the class registrations of several typical classes to determine whether the profile of those in the classroom parallels the picture of graduate student characteristics suggested by the admissions data. It is, for example, meaningful to know whether a significant portion of the class registration is accounted for by degree or non-degree students from other divisions or schools within the university and whether such students have different backgrounds and credentials.

Also, team members may wish to review the distribution of grades earned by students enrolled in several typical classes and to compare the results of this distribution with a cross-sectional profile of the admissions credentials of these students. This process may prompt or answer questions concerning (1) the admissions process in general and/or (2) the implied rigor of the graduate programs.

F. Records Relevant to Standards 7 and 8: Student and other Support Services

The team may wish to visit the placement office and the library. It may be helpful to see the documents that relate to the placement activities, e.g., career counseling, student vitae, and to interview appropriate library officials and look at the library's record of yearly book acquisitions in subject fields offered by the program. The list of regularly maintained periodicals and journals may be obtained and reviewed, if necessary.

In order to check intended library usage, required reading lists of courses, which should also be included in the Self-Study Report, may be compared to reserve lists in the library.

Obviously, an on-site review of library resources and services is important. The team's tour of the school's library and those ancillary services, such as the university computer center, etc., is important to an effective visit.

VI. THE SITE VISIT TEAM REPORT

The final and crucial product of the site visit is the team's report to the NASPAA Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation.

A. TeamConsensus

The team will begin to assemble its impressions as early as the evening of Day II of the visit. As suggested previously in the proposed site visit schedule, the team should arrange to meet alone before departing from the campus to develop a consensus and a draft of the team's report. It may wish to meet a second time after having met with the program faculty and dean.

All members of the team should be involved in the development of the report, even though ways of allocating drafting responsibilities will vary. The final wording of the report should be reviewed by all team members before it is forwarded.

If it should happen that a consensus cannot be arrived at, then all members of the team should have the same perception of the inhibiting causes, and an agreement should be arrived at on how the failure to achieve consensus will be overcome. In the event that consensus cannot be achieved on an assessment of an individual standard, then a statement on the diversity of judgment should be included in the discussion of that item in the team's report along with as much factual data as possible.

Neither the team's consensus nor lack of it should ever be conveyed to anyone at the host institution. This admonition is consistent with Part I.A. of this Manual.

B. Draft Site Visit Team Report to Program Head

Within 30 days of the site visit the program head will receive from the chairperson of the Site Visit Team a copy of the draft Site Visit Team Report. It may be transmitted electronically.

C. Final Site Visit Team Report

The final report of the Site Visit Team should contain five sections: I.--Introduction; II.--Background and Mission III.--Item-by-Item Analysis of Concerns Raised by the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation; IV.--Standard-by-Standard Assessment; and V.--Recommendations to Strengthen the Program.

It is extremely important to call attention to the fact that the Site Visit Team is asked to make presentations of the facts and assessments. It will NOT recommend either for or against inclusion on the NASPAA roster of conforming programs. Final assessment and recommendations on overall program conformity, inclusion or exclusion on the NASPAA Annual Roster of Accredited Programs, is the responsibility of the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation alone. This procedure has been adopted to ensure that NASPAA Standards are applied in precisely the same way to every program which applies for peer review.

D. Site Visit Team Report Outline

The following is an outline of the final site visit report. This section may be used as a template, filled in, and transmitted electronically.

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

A. Summary of site visit activities
   1. Members of site visit team
   2. Dates of the site visit
   3. The site visit schedule (Should include the titles of all university, school and program officers interviewed.)

B. Summary of basic facts about the institution
   1. The type of institution and school (public/private; exclusively graduate school, etc.)
   2. Date the program was established.
   3. A list of the undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered by the program.

SECTION II. BACKGROUND AND MISSION

In Section II, The Site Visit Team should indicate whether the program's mission and related activities are appropriate for providing professional education for leadership in public service. The SVT should provide COPRA with information about the particular mission of the program, the general approach to carrying out that mission, the procedures for periodic self-evaluation and planning. The SVT should also indicate if planned program changes have been implemented and what their effect is on the program.

SECTION III. ITEM-BY-ITEM ANALYSIS OF CONCERNS RAISED BY COMMISSION ON PEER REVIEW AND ACCREDITATION

Each item raised by the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation in its interim report to the program should be addressed in detail. The Site Visit Team should report the facts relevant to the questions raised by the Commission and provide an analysis of the program's relative performance with respect to the standard cited in each item. This assessment should assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program's performance with respect to the standard in question. However, the Site Visit Team should not reach final conclusions concerning conformity versus non-conformity with respect to the item and standard in question. Final decisions on conformity versus non-conformity should be made by the Commission based on clear assessments from the Site Visit Team.

SECTION IV. STANDARD-BY-STANDARD ASSESSMENT (Standards not covered in Section III above)

In addition to addressing the concerns raised in the interim report, the Site Visit Team should here present its evaluation of the program's performance on each of the standards not specifically mentioned by the Commission. As in Section III above, this assessment should discuss the relative performance of the program with respect to each NASPAA standard, citing relative strengths and weaknesses. While evaluation and interpretation of "the facts" will be necessary and important in this section (as in the previous sections above), the Site Visit Team should not reach final conclusions concerning conformity versus non-conformity with respect to the standard in question. Final decisions on conformity versus non-conformity should be made by the Commission based on clear assessment from the Site Visit Team.

SECTION V. COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the site visit team may commend the program on outstanding efforts and accomplishments and may recommend actions to strengthen the program. First, within the framework of peer review and accreditation (and without compromising the judgment to be made by COPRA), it is appropriate for the SVT to identify items that are well done or that are innovative in the field. This recognition of attainments and successes can add to the items covered in the review of standards. Second, the site visit team may develop recommendations or suggestions which it believes will strengthen the program. These recommendations should flow from the mission of the program (and should avoid personal views of how things should be done).

E. Guidelines for Writing the Final Report

In writing the final report, the authors must bear in mind that the applicant program administrators will be given the entire draft of the Site Visit Team's report at the same time that it is made available to the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation. The authors must clarify any factual questions raised by the Commission and go on to provide their own assessment of these facts. However, the Site Visit Team's report must stop short of making a final assessment of conformity versus nonconformity. That decision should be reserved for the Commission.

Section III of the final report should address the specific questions raised by the Commission in its interim report. Section IV should continue this item-by-item assessment by covering standards not specifically cited by the Commission in its interim report. A fine line may exist from time to time between reporting the facts, "assessing the facts" yet not making a final determination of conformity versus non-conformity. The following examples are designed to illustrate some of these distinctions.

Section III and IV Coverage: An Example. Standard 6.3 lists five factors to be taken into account in making an admissions decision. It states: "admission shall be limited to applicants showing good potential for success in professional graduate study and as practitioners..." This section should report on the distribution of undergraduate grade point averages observed in a sample of admissions files. This section would also report whether or not information relating to other criteria--e.g., professional goals and experience--was assembled and taken into account in the admission decision. For example, site visit notes relating to the admissions decision might read "average undergraduate GPA is slightly low (2.8), but records of applicants show good professional growth and an average of three years of experience." Thus, the general entry in this part of the report would be of the facts related to admissions procedures.

Continuing in their interpretation of these facts, the Site Visit Team might report that the persons making admissions decisions weighed all of the information carefully and admitted only persons with good potential for success. Conversely, the Site Visit Team might conclude that the admissions committee appeared to be too generous in its interpretation of non-academic supporting evidence, so that for all practical purposes the program operated on an open admissions basis. However, the site visit team should stop short at declaring the program either in or out of conformity--that final judgment is reserved to the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation.

To illustrate further, the Site Visit Team would report in a matter-of-fact style on the evidence relating to academic and professional experience of adjunct teachers. Whether or not these teachers as a group presented an image of excellence would be stated in the item-by-item analysis. However, if it were to be reported that 60 percent of all courses were taught by adjuncts, then the clear implication should be obvious to the Commission and the host institution, i.e., that the "no more than 50 percent" requirement of the standard was being violated. Again, the site visit team should stop short of making a final decision concerning conformity.

In addition, the Site Visit Team is reminded that when drafting the report, care should be taken to select a style of writing and an approach that emphasizes an impartial reporting of the evidence. Finally, it is worth repeating that the Site Visit Team will not recommend for or against listing the applicant program on NASPAA's roster of accredited programs in conformity with the standards.

Section V of the report should be one or two pages in length, and is devoted to developing a set of recommendations that the Site Visit Team believes will strengthen the program. These recommendations must be couched in terms of the NASPAA Standards and not the public service philosophy of individual Site Visit Team members. Section V should capture the consultative dimension of the site visit process. It should reflect the genuine concern each visitor should have for the welfare and development of the host institution and its program(s). It is, however, clearly impossible for site visitors to become, in a couple of very busy days, as knowledgeable as are their host about special local influences which must be taken into account when policy and innovation are at issue.

In the event that the Site Visit Team is unable to reach consensus on a set of recommendations to strengthen the program, it is appropriate to report divergent recommendations, taking care that the recommendation is couched in terms of the NASPAA Standards and not the public service philosophy of the individual team members.

Accordingly, the Site Visit Team Report must be sensitive and tactful when specific solutions are advocated in those areas where improvement is deemed to be important.

F. <u>Deadlines</u>

The deadline and distribution of the site visit team report are as follows:

1. DRAFT REPORT: A draft of the entire report should be completed by the chairperson within 30 days of the end of the site visit. Two copies of the full report should be sent to the program director. All site visit team members should also receive a copy from the chairperson.

2. PROGRAM RESPONSE TO DRAFT REPORT: The appropriate representative of the applicant program must file a response to the draft report with the chairperson of the Site Visit Team and the Commission within two weeks of receipt of the draft report.

3. FINAL REPORT: Assuming no major revisions are necessary, the final version of the Site Visit Team Report should be completed and sent to the chairperson of the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (along with a copy of the program response) within two weeks of receipt of the applicant program's response. In the event of substantial revisions, the Site Visit Team chairperson must advise the Commission of the amount of extra time that will be needed.

4. DISTRIBUTION OF REPORT: The Site Visit Team chairperson should distribute the report as follows:
   a. The full revised report is to be emailed to the applicant program representative.
   b. One complete copy of the report is to be sent to each Site Visit Team member.

   c. Two complete copies of the report and the program's response must be sent to the COPRA office for records and distribution to the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation. COPRA staff will send one complete copy of the report to the university's Chief Academic Officer.

VII. THE PEER REVIEW/ACCREDITATION LIAISON

The liaison is a member of the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation and plays an important role in the peer review and accreditation and site visit process. The liaison is assigned to a program or group of programs by the chair of the Commission. The role and responsibilities of the liaison are to:

1. Analyze Self-Study Reports and draft preliminary response to program.

2. Present program's self-study to Commission's subcommittee and the full committee for discussion and decision.

3. Advise on names for site visit teams.

4. Assist Commission's Chair and COPRA staff in negotiating with principal representative of school on final membership of Site Visit Team.

5. Insure that the Site Visit Team chair is fully cognizant, well in advance of the site visit, of each of the concerns and reservations expressed by the Commission to the program under review.

6. Make sure school's principal representative and Site Visit Team chair quickly agree on a date for site visit and have a common understanding of the Commission concerns to be

examined.

7. Serve as an intermediary between the Site Visit Team, the Commission, and the program under review.

8. Monitor the progress being made by the Site Visit Team in writing the Site Visit Report and work to assure that the timetable in the Policy and Procedures for Accreditation is adhered to by the Site Visit Team in completing its report.

9. Answer any questions about the site visit process that may be raised by the program under review but not satisfactorily answered by the Site Visit Team.

10. Review carefully the Site Visit Team's Report for each program assigned and clarify any questions with the chair of the Site Visit Team about the meaning of any unclear parts of the report.

11. Check with the chair of the Site Visit Team and with the school's principal representative as to their potential availability to receive telephone calls for information during the Commission's meeting; get appropriate phone numbers.

12. Report to the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation and clarify facts or statements in the Site Visit Report as required, if necessary on the basis of discussion with the chair of the Site Visit Team.

TRAVEL REGULATIONS

NASPAA SITE VISIT TEAM MEMBERS

SITE VISIT TEAM MEMBER'S RESPONSIBILITY

You, as a member of the Site Visit Team, have a number of responsibilities in connection with travel. These responsibilities are no less important than your responsibilities for carrying out your Site Visit Team assignment. In all cases, you are expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses during the site visit that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business.

AUTHORIZATION

Your authorization to travel as a member of a Site Visit Team to evaluate a degree program will be a letter from the Chairperson of COPRA. The program to be visited will be identified along with the dates for the visit as well as the other members of the team. A Team Chairperson will be appointed by the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation.

TRAVEL BY COMMON CARRIER

Tickets**.** The responsibility for purchasing the air travel ticket rests with each individual member of the Site Visit Team.

Class of Travel:

Air Accommodations. All team members will use coach air travel accommodations. If first class air accommodation is used, the individual Site Visit Team member will be personally responsible for the difference between coach fare and first class fare.

Rail Accommodations. You are authorized a first class seat for day-time travel.

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM THE CARRIER TERMINAL

Reimbursement will be allowed for taxicabs and for limousine fares (plus tip of 15%) to, from, and between common carrier terminals. Please provide receipts.

TRAVEL BY PRIVATELY OWNED AUTOMOBILE

If you drive a privately owned automobile, reimbursement will be allowed at the rate of 0.55 (IRS 2009) cents per mile based on either standard highway map distances or your odometer reading. If you base your mileage on your odometer reading, you must show the reading at point of origin and destination. You will be reimbursed for highway, bridge, and tunnel tolls, ferry fares and parking fees if they are itemized and receipts are submitted with your travel voucher.

Travel by privately owned automobile is not to exceed cost by common carrier.

LODGING/MEALS

In the interest of keeping the Site Visit Team costs reasonable, NASPAA has adopted the following guidelines for lodging and meals:

1. The program head arranges hotel accommodations for each Site Visit Team member and so notifies them. (Since many universities have arrangements with local hotels, the program head may be able to take advantage of available discounts and will know the hotel costs in advance.)

2. Receipts will be required for reimbursement of meal expenses. Copies of all receipts will be sent to the program institution for billing purposes. You are expected to exercise the same care in incurring meal expenses during the site visit that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business.

3. Incidental expenses up to $10 in total, including lights meals or snacks, do not require receipts--but you still need to report and itemize them on the expense form.

Please complete the attached travel expense voucher and forward, with all receipts (copies are acceptable), to the NASPAA office within one week of the end of the site visit:

NASPAA
Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation
1029 Vermont Ave, NW, Suite #1100
Washington, DC 20005
Attn: Site visit receipts

When all expense vouchers are received from the team, your reimbursement checks will be mailed, and the school will be billed for the total cost of the site visit-- so your team members are depending on you submitting your receipts in a timely manner! Any reimbursement requests received more than 60 days after the visit will **not** be honored.