Standard 7 Matching Communications with the Mission

7.1   Communications: The program will provide appropriate and current information about its mission, policies, practices, and accomplishments—including student learning outcomes-- sufficient to inform decisions by its stakeholders such as prospective and current students; faculty; employers of current students and graduates; university administrators; alumni; and accrediting agencies.

Rationale:

When communicating with its stakeholders, the program should be transparent, accountable, and truthful. NASPAA expects accredited programs to meet the expectations of the profession in terms of accountability in public affairs, administration, and policy. The program should understand and provide the information required to inform its stakeholders about decisions they are making with respect to the program, for example:

- Students: decisions about whether to apply and enroll
- Staff and Faculty: decisions about whether to accept and continue employment
- Employers: decisions about whether to sponsor internships or hire a graduate
- Administrators: decisions about whether to approve faculty lines and provide funding for the program
- Alumni: decisions about whether and how to interact with the program following graduation

Information about the program's capacity and performance should not be kept confidential absent a compelling reason, such as student and faculty privacy laws and regulations.

Self-Study Instructions: Standard 7.1

Self-Study Instructions:

This standard governs the release of public affairs education data and information by programs and NASPAA for public accountability purposes. Virtually all of the data addressed in this standard has been requested in previous sections of the self-study; this standard addresses *how* and *where the* key elements of the data are made publicly accessible.

In preparing its SSR for Standards 1-6, the Program will provide information and data to COPRA. *Some* of that data will be made public *by NASPAA* to provide public accountability about public affairs education. NASPAA will make key information about mission, admissions policies, faculty, career services, and costs

available to stakeholder groups that include prospective students, alumni, employers, and policymakers. The data for these stakeholder groups is specifically indicated by an X in the NASPAA column.

Other data will have to be posted *by the program* on its website (or be made public in some other way). That data is indicated by an X in the PROGRAM column below. A program that does <u>not</u> provide a URL needs to explain in a text box how they make this information public (through a publication or brochure, for example).

Data and Information Requirements

The information listed in the below is expected to be publicly available through electronic or printed media. Exceptions to this rule should be explained and a clear rationale provided as to why such information is not publicly available and/or accessible. Programs are expected to ensure ongoing accuracy in all external media.

7.1.1   Please provide an URL to the following information, which is to be made public, and kept current, by the program:

General Information about the degree (Program Fact Sheet)

   a) Degree Title
   b) Organizational Relationship between program and university
   c) Modes of program delivery
   d) Number of Credit Hours
   e) Length of degree
   f) List of dual degrees (if applicable)
   g) List of specializations (if applicable)
   h) Fast-track Info (if applicable)
   i) Number of students (varies)

Mission of the Program (Standard 1)

   j) Mission Statement

Faculty (Standard 3)

   k) Number of Faculty teaching in program
   l) Program faculty identified including credentials

Cost of Degree (Standard 4)

   m) Tuition cost (in-state and out-of-state)
   n) Description of Financial Aid availability, including assistantships

Admissions (Standard 4.2)

o) Admission criteria

Career Services (Standard 4.3)

p) Distribution of placement of graduates (number)

Current Students (Standard 4.3)

q) Internship Placement List (use list in Standard 4)

Graduates (Standard 4.3)

r) Completion Rate (Percentage of class entering five years prior to self-study year that graduated within 100% of degree program length and within 200% degree program length)

If the program does not provide a URL to one or more of the required data elements above, in the space below, explain how the program meets the public accountability aim of this standard

Rationale:

When communicating with its stakeholders, the Program should be transparent, accountable, and truthful. In establishing transparency, programs must provide data that are publicly available and clearly linked to the mission of the program. NASPAA expects accredited programs to meet the expectations of the profession in terms of accountability in public affairs, administration, and policy. Transparency is a *public service value* exemplified in programmatic action and results. In order to demonstrate that the program results follow from the mission, the burden lies with the program to produce data acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the program mission.

Underlying assumption:

All accredited programs regardless of their mission are expected to supply certain data to demonstrate conformance to each standard. This "universal" data and information should be publicly available via appropriate communication medium (electronic or printed) and privately available to stakeholders (faculty, NASPAA etc). Such mandatory requirements are a minimum basis by which programs can claim a linkage between the mission and the outcome. Programs that provide additional data by participating in national surveys (optional) sponsored by NASPAA, ASPA or other organizations can demonstrate, by example, their leadership in public service education and defining the public service values with respect to their mission. This essentially divides the component of data requirements in two categories: (1)

conforming to the standard by reporting universal information to all stakeholders, and (2) conforming to the standard by providing mission-specific information beyond mandatory requirement to help understand and refine program mission to all stakeholders. Universal or mandatory information should include Programs decision-making processes by which it informs its stakeholders about outcomes as it relates to:

1. **Students**: decisions about whether to apply and enroll
2. **Staff and Faculty**: decisions about whether to accept and continue employment
3. **Employers**: decisions about whether to sponsor internships or hire a graduate
4. **Administrators**: decisions about whether to approve faculty lines and provide funding for the Program
5. **Alumni:** decisions about whether and how to interact with the Program following graduation

Information about the Program's capacity and performance should not be kept confidential absent a compelling reason, such as student and faculty privacy laws and regulations.

7.1 Self Study Guide:

General Information: NASPAA will publicly release data supplied on the following information: Degree Title, organizational relationship of the program to the school, modes of delivery, # Credit Hrs, Length of degree, List of dual degrees, List of specializations, Fast-track Info, # of Students.

Mission Statement: Your program will make available to the public your Mission statement. The program will must provide to COPRA the URL of where on your website the information is available or a PDF of the Document or report in which it is available. If you program has not made this information available to the public you must state why you have not done so, and your rationale for how you are still in conformance with this standard.

Mission Elements: For certain programs your mission will trigger additional requirements for data that needs to be available to the public. The program may collect this information through the use of NASPAA provided data modules, or through their own survey instruments, but the results need to be publicly available. If the Program does not use NASPAA instruments and its data is not made publicly available by NASPAA, the program will provide to COPRA the URL of where on your website the information is available or a PDF of the Document or report in which it is available. If you program has not made this information available to the public you must state why you have not done so, and your rationale for how you are still in conformance with this standard.

Admission: Programs will make publicly available the admissions criteria for entry into their program. This includes any exceptions or alternate routes to admission that a student may use. The program will provide to COPRA the URL of where on your website the information is available or a PDF of the Document or report in which it is available. If your program has not made this information available to the public you must state why you have not done so, and your rationale for how you are still in conformance with this standard.

Enrollment: NASPAA will make publicly available program's enrollment and its gender/ethnic composition where available. If your program has not made this information available to the public via NASPAA you must state why you have not done so, and your rationale for how you are still in conformance with this standard. NASPAA is aware that in some states providing information on the ethnic make-up of enrolled students may not be legally permissible; or that in some instances a program's size would make the information individually identifiable. Programs facing these legal issues should note as such in their rationale to COPRA as to why they are still in conformance with the standard.

Faculty: Your program will make available to the public the following information: # of Faculty teaching the program, Faculty identified within the unit, and Faculty diversity. NASPAA will publicly make this information available. If your program has not made this information available to the public via NASPAA you must state why you have not done so, and your rationale for how you are still in conformance with this standard.

Cost of Degree: Your program will make available to the public the following information: Tuition cost (in-state/out-of-state), Financial Aid Information, and Assistantships available. The program will provide to COPRA the URL of where on your website the information is available or a PDF of the Document or report in which it is available. If your program has not made this information available to the public you must state why you have not done so, and your rationale for how you are still in conformance with this standard. *(Note this is the one of the few aspects of Standard 7 where the information we are asking you to provide has not been collected elsewhere in the SSR)*

Career Service: NASPAA will make available to the public the program's distribution of placement of graduates (using the prescribed categories). If your program has not made this information available to the public via NASPAA and on the program's website or other public materials, you must state why you have not done so, and your rationale for how you are still in conformance with this standard.

Internship Placement: The program will make publicly available the number of internships (distributed by sector) for the self study year including explanation of waivers granted. If your program has not made this information available to the public you must state why you have not done so, and your rationale for how you are still in conformance with this standard

Faculty Contribution: NASPAA will make available to the public the URL for faculty publications and faculty contributions to public policy and administration. If your program has not made this information available to the public you must state why you have not done so, and your rationale for how you are still in conformance with this standard

Graduates:

Completions: Your program will make available to the public your program's completion rate (as defined in Standard 4, to be the % of the SSY-5 cohort that complete the program within 100%, 150% and 200% of program design length.)

Evidence of Student Learning Outcomes. NASPAA will make publicly available information on evidence of student learning outcomes. If your program has not made this information available to the public via NASPAA you must state why you have not done so, and your rationale for how you are still in conformance with this standard.

7.1 Clarifying Examples:

> Program A's electronic/print materials reflect information prior to the recent appointment of new faculty and revision of the curriculum; faculty meeting minutes are not taken; records of administrative decisions are incomplete; no record or record older than five years of student internships, graduate placements or alumni career progress. Program A is not in conformance with Standard 7.

> Program B maintains accessible electronic/print materials with current information; faculty meeting minutes are taken; administrative files are complete; records of student internships, graduate placements, and student and alumni career progress not older than two years are summarized in electronic/ print distribution. Program B is in conformance with Standard 7.

> Program C's prospective student admission decisions are maintained and recorded via ApplyYourSelf Online. Student records are managed through the Banner System and are accessible to core faculty. Alumni records are maintained in a searchable electronic database. Faculty communication is maintained in SharePoint or archived in Blogs. Students and employers have access to Career Service Portal for matching placements for interns and graduates. The Program explains how each electronic database is accessible to stakeholders and can be used by them to understand program operations and to inform their decisions. The Program also explains how it tracks the data to improve its internal governance and pursue its mission. Program C is in conformance with Standard 4.

> Program D offers the MPA degree through traditional in-class instruction as well as online modules. As per program website program's literature on its on-line program and campus based program appears the same. However, admission, course offerings and other elements are different for the two delivery approaches. The program is not in conformance with Standard 7 because the program does not clearly provide information

> on its website to potential students about the differences between the online and campus based programs.

7.1 Basis of Judgment:

The Program should provide evidence that communications with its stakeholders demonstrates accountability, transparency, and ethical practice in the following ways:

- The courses, specializations, and services the Program offers are consistent with the claims it makes, such as in its literature, emails, and webpage, and with its mission.
- The Program publicizes its admissions policies. Goals, policy, and standards, including academic prerequisites, are clearly and publicly stated. Admissions policies should specify differences for pre-service, in-service, and other categories of students and reflect specific concern for diversity.
- The Program describes how it assesses competencies and how well students perform on those measures.
- The Program reports on the placement and career progress of its graduates and the qualifications and accomplishments of its faculty.
- The Program explains to prospective students the cost of attendance (tuition and fees) and ethically communicates information regarding opportunities for financial assistance.

7.1 NASPAA Publicly Accessible Data

To be made public by NASPAA, through the Annual Data Report and Alumni Survey[1]:

General Information about the degree (Program Fact Sheet)

1. Degree Title
2. Organizational Relationship between program and university
3. Modes of program delivery
4. Number of Credit Hours
5. Length of degree
6. List of dual degrees
7. List of specializations
8. Fast-track Info
9. Number of students (varies)

Mission of the Program (Standard 1)

1. Please link your program performance outcomes to the contributions your program intends to produce to advance the knowledge, research, and practice of public affairs, administration.

---

[1] Subject to NASPAA Data Policy guidelines.

Enrollment (Standard 4)

1. Number Enrolled
2. Enrollment – Diversity
    a. Gender
    b. Race/ethnicity
    c. International

Cost of Degree (Standard 4)

1. Tuition cost (in-state and out-of-state)
2. Description of Financial Aid availability, including assistantships

Career Services (Standard 4.3)

1. Distribution of placement of graduates (number)

Faculty (Standard 3)

1. Faculty diversity (percent of teaching faculty, by ethnicity)

Glossary

Accountability: Having identifiable responsibility for making a decision or taking an action with the capacity to supply a justifying analysis or explanation.

Public Service Values: Public service values are important and enduring beliefs, ideals and principles shared by members of a community about what is good and desirable and what is not. They include pursuing the public interest with accountability and transparency; serving professionally with competence, efficiency, and objectivity; acting ethically so as to uphold the public trust; and demonstrating respect, equity, and fairness in dealings with citizens and fellow public servants. NASPAA expects an accreditable program to define the boundaries of the public service values it emphasizes, be they procedural or substantive, as the basis for distinguishing itself from other professional degree programs.

Specialization: is used to refer to all advertised areas of emphases, whether they are called specializations, concentrations, foci, areas, cognates, etc.

Transparency: Processes, procedures, identify of decision-makers, information, rationales and justification for decisions can be easily understood by parties who participate in the decision and those who do not.