Request for Proposal:
Planning and Conduct of the 2021 Accreditation Institute

Overview: The Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA) of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA) seeks consultants to present online educational sessions for academic program directors and faculty seeking to learn about accreditation for masters-level public service degrees.

Background: NASPAA's "Accreditation Institute" (AI) will be held online in a single day immediately preceding the NASPAA Conference in October 2021 (date TBD). The Commission seeks consultants to design and facilitate three online sessions of 1.5 hours each. The intended audience is program directors, faculty, and staff of programs that will seek to become (re)accredited within the next two years (through 2023). All sessions will be conducted online using host software provided and funded by NASPAA.

Scope of Work: The consultants' proposals should be structured around the project scope of work. The consultants should utilize best practices in executive learning, and work to ensure consistency in content across sessions. Participants in the online AI should leave with improved confidence and expertise in the requirements and value of NASPAA Accreditation. The pedagogical approaches employed should address the needs of learners at different levels of familiarity with accreditation and program evaluation, but primarily be focused on those with an intermediate to advanced knowledge of the NASPAA accreditation process and Standards. The proposed plan for the project should include an evaluation component to determine the effectiveness of the training and development of a training guide to enhance planning and conduct of future Accreditation Institutes. Attention to and understanding of the needs of NASPAA's global accreditation audience is imperative.

The 2021 Accreditation Institute will be comprised of four online sessions. Each session is intended to be independent of the others, and participation of registered attendees is not expected or required in all four sessions.

1. <u>Session 1, Introduction and Overview of Accreditation and the NASPAA Standards</u>: NASPAA Accreditation Staff will develop and lead an overview of the accreditation process and review of the NASPAA Standards.
   Intended Audience: Programs new to accreditation, seeking a review for the first time, or seeking a review of the accreditation process and requirements. Participation will not be required for those attending other sessions.

2. <u>Session 2, 2019 Standards Revisions</u>: This session will highlight what programs need to know to specifically address the revisions to the 2019 NASPAA Standards. Consultants should be prepared to provide specific constructive suggestions to programs to address:
   a. integrating global public service values such as transparency, accountability, inclusion, and participation,
   b. strengthening commitment to cultural competency and equity, while retaining the flexibility to accredit in different contexts,
   c. affirming nonprofit management as fundamental to public service education,

    d.   providing new instructions and guidance to support strategic program management, namely program evaluation and student learning assessment, and

    e.   reflecting critical trends in competencies, as public servants require skills to succeed in multisectoral, evidence-informed, and rapidly changing environments.

Intended Audience: Programs that have not previously worked with the 2019 Standards.

3.   Session 3, Preparing for and Writing a Self-Study Report: Programs have traditionally identified the self-study as one of the most valuable parts of the accreditation process. This session will focus on the best practices in data collection, organization, and analysis and practices to write a self-study built around the 2019 NASPAA Standards and 2019 Self-Study Instructions. The session should provide specific constructive suggestions based on best practices. The instruction should include data collection and analysis practices during SSY-1 and effective practices for writing a comprehensive self-study that fully addresses the basis of judgement for the Standards.

    Intended Audience: Programs that have previously experienced challenges in writing a self-study report, and program directors and lead faculty new to writing self-studies.

4.   Session 4, Common Challenges in Meeting NASPAA Standards: Recent data shows that programs often are challenged in addressing Standard 1, Standard 2, and Standard 5. In particular, the relationship between Standard 1.3, Program Evaluation and Standard 5.1, the Universal Required Competencies, can be challenging because the Standards require a variety of data-driven evaluation methods, including but not limited to student assessment to ensure a comprehensive mission-based evaluation approach. Programs must also understand how to incorporate delivery modalities in their self-studies. Programs are using culturally appropriate ways to address diversity, equity, and inclusion, recognizing the findings of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force Report and the increasingly global nature of accreditation.

    Intended Audience: Programs familiar with the accreditation process and NASPAA Standards who could benefit from a deep-dive into the more challenging aspects of the accreditation process.

The proposed approach and curriculum should assume some knowledge of the accreditation process based on prior participant experience, review of accreditation resources on the NASPAA website, participation in a NASPAA staff-conducted overview of the accreditation process and NASPAA Standards from a morning session preceding the three sessions for which the consultants will be responsible, or a combination of these. Consultants are not expected to participate in Session 1 but will be required to be familiar with the content of the session in the interest of consistency in presenting their three sessions. Proposals should include timing of plans for becoming familiar with the content of Session 1. Consultant developed sessions may reference but should not be heavily reliant on NASPAA videos, training materials, and the NASPAA website. Consultants are urged to develop new, original, and useful materials (PowerPoints, videos, etc.) that may reference existing NASPAA training and reference materials but should not assume that participants will review such materials as a precondition of participation in the Accreditation Institute. The consultants will work with COPRA, NASPAA staff, and NASPAA-accredited programs to ensure coverage related to emerging needs of programs seeking to undergo NASPAA Accreditation and/or seeking to improve their strategic and student learning assessment activities. Consultants should incorporate best practices into the curriculum.

Consultants are encouraged to specifically consider how to engage more meaningfully, throughout the day, on the motivation, values, and philosophy behind NASPAA Accreditation. Institute attendees increasingly represent programs seeking an elevated conversation emphasizing the pursuit of program quality (above and beyond the mechanics of seeking accreditation). The consultants should incorporate content exploring how accreditation and the NASPAA Standards support strategic program management through a focus on mission, goals, outcomes, and continuous improvement.

Additional Areas of Consideration: Preference will be given to:

- **Comprehensive Proposals**: Offerors are expected to include proposals to develop and conduct all three sessions (Sessions 2, 3, and 4), including consultation with NASPAA staff and plans for facilitation of each session by the contractor. Partial proposals will not be accepted. Involvement of multiple qualified facilitators is encouraged to ensure diversity of background, experience, and representation of stakeholder groups. Proposals should identify a Lead Facilitator who will directly work with NASPAA staff. Facilitators will be expected to present a seamless approach to minimize transitions and enhance use of online technology.

- **Proposals including online delivery plans**: Proposals must specifically address that the 2021 Accreditation Institute will be conducted online. Proposals must include specific plans for engaging participants in an online presentation.

- **Timeline of work:** The consultant for the three Accreditation Institute sessions will develop an overall approach that incorporates a detailed plan for their approach, address milestones identified in Table 1 below and reach other agreed-upon milestones for the October 2021 Institute. Milestones included in Table 1 are minimum requirements. Proposals should also include additional milestones for planning and conduct of the three high quality online Accreditation Institute sessions. The contractor is also responsible for evaluating the Accreditation Institute using survey data of Accreditation Institute participants collected by NASPAA staff, NASPAA staff observations, and consultant observations to provide recommendations for the improvement of future Accreditation Institutes.

Table 1
Minimum Expected Deliverables and Timeline

Deliverable	Due Date
Detailed plan for development, conduct, and evaluation of 3 sessions	July 1, 2021
Detailed "run of show" for 3 sessions	August 1, 2021
Draft PowerPoint Slides, videos, or other materials	September 15, 2021
Final PowerPoint Slides, videos, or other materials	September 30, 2021
Conduct 3 sessions for the online AI	October 2021 (TBD)
Post-AI training guide briefing paper with analysis of post-AI survey data, consultant observations, and recommendations for improving future AIs.	November 30, 2021

- **Compensation:** Compensation will be based on the duration of the contract and detailed proposed budgets. Proposals with budgets exceeding $7,000 will not be reviewed or considered. Payments will be delivered when agreed-upon milestones are met. The reasonableness of the proposed budget relative to the proposed technical approach to meet NASPAA's requirements will be considered in awarding this contract.

- **Materials and Products:** All materials and products will be the property of NASPAA for use as approved by COPRA, including PowerPoints, videos, web-based resources, and recordings of the sessions.

- **Experience:** The consultants must have specific, hands-on experience with NASPAA accreditation standards, quality assurance in higher education, program assessment or strategic planning, executive education, and curriculum design. Offerors should document prior experience as a program director or leading faculty of an accredited program, and have prior experience writing and submitting a self-study report. Prior service on COPRA or the NASPAA Standards Committee would be considered an asset but is not required. Proposals will be judged on the overall qualifications of all proposed facilitators.

Submissions and Deadline: Interested consultants should submit a 3 to 5 page proposal no later than May 14, 2021. To be considered complete proposals must include:

1. An overview indicating understanding of the requirements.
2. An overview of the technical approach for planning and carrying out the three required sessions and producing deliverables, which should include at a minimum:
   a. A detailed plan for the 2021 Accreditation Institute, including specific plans for each of the three sessions (due by July 1, 2021).
   b. A detailed "run of show" for each session (due August 1, 2021). The technical approach should demonstrate the value of each session as part of the Accreditation Institute and the potential capacity of recorded sessions and materials to supplement NASPAA's ongoing training needs for accredited programs and site visitors.
   c. PowerPoint Slides, videos, or other materials to be used in the Accreditation Institute (draft due by September 15, 2021; final by September 30, 2021).
   d. A Post-Accreditation Institute training guide briefing paper to include analysis of feedback from an Accreditation staff-conducted post-AI survey of participants, consultant observations, and recommendations for improvement of future AIs. Consultants will be provided with summary and raw data from the survey and will have the opportunity to provide input on survey content. The briefing paper should also include specific recommendations for addressing concerns identified by participants, NASPAA staff, and the contractor.
3. The proposed budget must be consistent with the proposed technical approach for planning, training material collection and creation; planning collaboration with NASPAA; conduct of the AI with a preference for more than one facilitator; and observations and feedback in a training guide briefing paper." Budget proposals should be formatted consistent with the activities proposed in the technical approach, with supporting narrative to allow assessment of the level of effort required for AI preparation, conduct,

and feedback. Facilitators are expected to register for the NASPAA conference and proposed budgets should take this into account.

4. Planning timeline with milestones, including contractor-identified milestones not included in this RFP.
5. A brief description of the qualifications of all facilitators included in the proposal consistent with the Experience section above.
6. A resume or C.V. for all facilitators (not included in the page count).

Proposals should be in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF and sent to copra@naspaa.org no later than May 14, 2021. Review of proposals will take place until a consultant is chosen or NASPAA elects not to contract with any consultant.