

Council for Higher Education Accreditation Eligibility Application

Response to Eligibility Standards and Recognized Scope of Accreditation

Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA) of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA)

Submitted October 1, 2012

Standard 9: Eligibility *To be eligible for CHEA recognition, the accreditation organization:*

9A:*demonstrates that the organization’s mission and scope are consistent with the CHEA Institutional Eligibility and Recognition Policy (Appendix B), including that a majority of the institutions and programs accredited by the organization grant higher education degrees. The Policy provides, in part, that the recognition process will place increasing emphasis on the effectiveness of accrediting organizations in assuring academic quality of institutions or programs;*

NASPAA-COPRA promotes quality in public service degrees at the Master’s level through accreditation. The mission and scope of the organization are consistent with CHEA’s eligibility policies. NASPAA-COPRA Policies directly state, “The purpose of NASPAA accreditation for professional Master’s degree programs in public affairs, policy, and administration is to promote and maintain educational quality. The approach is based on the NASPAA Accreditation Guiding Principles...and can be characterized as driven by program mission and based on public service values, emphasizing the assessment of programs through student learning outcomes (2.1).”¹

NASPAA-COPRA accreditation is based on established standards and rules of good practice. The official documents containing the standards and rules, as well as the governance procedures of these documents are publicly presented on the NASPAA-COPRA website. Changes to accreditation standards are approved after a deliberative and inclusive process. Rules of practice are established by NASPAA-COPRA and reflect the adoption of best practices in accreditation management.

The purpose of NASPAA-COPRA accreditation is to promote and maintain educational quality, as stated in the official policies. This is accomplished through a rigorous process including an eligibility process, a program self-evaluation, an on-site visit, and review by the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation. Maintenance of program quality is monitored through required annual reporting. The NASPAA-COPRA accreditation standards were built on Guiding Principles that include a commitment to many aspects of academic quality, including the promotion of continuous improvement, having a demonstrable impact on professional public service and public policy, and ensuring students will be capable of acting ethically and effectively in the pursuit of the public interest.

NASPAA-COPRA accreditation standards outline the framework of the accreditation process:

1.1 Mission Statement: The program will have a statement of mission that guides performance expectations and their evaluation, including

- its purpose and public service values, given the program’s particular emphasis on public affairs, administration, and policy
- the population of students, employers, and professionals the program intends to serve, and
- the contributions it intends to produce to advance the knowledge, research, and practice of public affairs, administration, and policy.

1.2 Performance Expectations: The program will establish observable program goals, objectives, and outcomes, including expectations for student learning, consistent with its mission.

1.3 Program Evaluation: The program will collect, apply, and report information about its performance and its operations to guide the evolution of the program’s mission and the program’s design and continuous improvement with respect to standards two through seven.ⁱⁱ

NASPAA-COPRA accreditation has a deep respect for institutional autonomy. The accreditation standards are mission-based and allow for variations from “normal expectations” when appropriate to ensure quality within the program mission and context. The accreditation standards were built on the Guiding Principle that they should “allow for innovation, including program design and pedagogy, where appropriate to achieve mission-related goals without diminishing the quality of educational offerings (P9).”ⁱⁱⁱ NASPAA-COPRA official policies further state, “In assessing each program for accreditation, the Commission shall base its conclusion on the overall quality of the program, its performance of its mission, consideration of substantial conformance with the standards, and its assessment of overall program quality given the unique mission of that program. Variations from the standards must be justified in light of a program’s mission and success in fulfilling its mission (2.3).”^{iv}

NASPAA-COPRA accreditation treats programs fairly. Accreditation procedures are outlined in the Official Policies and include a strong commitment to due process, including the time and opportunity to respond after each report and communication, as well as the option to appeal adverse decisions. The Commission also attempts to treat programs fairly through its commitment to consistent decision-making and avoiding capricious decisions. The NASPAA-COPRA official policies state that, “COPRA strives for consistency in its decision-making, both within and across accreditation cohorts. Decisions that arise from Fall and Summer meetings are subject to consistency analysis prior to the release of Interim Reports and Final Decision letters (17.6).”^v

Lastly, NASPAA-COPRA accreditation scope fits within the CHEA Eligibility policy, as all accredited programs are degree-granting. Accreditation is available only for professional master’s degrees for public service. Accreditation Standards state, “The degree program’s primary focus shall be that of preparing students to be leaders, managers, and analysts in the professions of public affairs, public administration, and public policy and only master’s degree programs engaged in educating and training professionals for the aforementioned professions are eligible for accreditation (Eligibility 3).”^{vi}

B. is non-governmental;

The Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation is legally housed within the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Accreditation, an independent non-governmental 501(c)(3).¹

C. accredits institutions or programs in institutions that have legal authority to confer higher education degrees, whether U.S. or non-U.S. institutions; (For non-U.S. institutions in countries in which legal authority to award degrees is not available, the accrediting organization meets this requirement if it demonstrates that it accredits only those institutions that have standing and significant support in the local community or other communities of interest, e.g., well-known professional organizations and other respected entities that support the institution.)

NASPAA-COPRA's Eligibility Standard 1 states that, "The institution offering the program should be accredited (or similarly approved) by a recognized regional, national, or international agency."^{vii} This language is used to accommodate non-U.S. contexts where legal authority is not available.

D. accredits institutions or programs at generally accepted higher education levels;

NASPAA-COPRA's Eligibility Standard 3 states that, "The degree program's primary focus shall be that of preparing students to be leaders, managers, and analysts in the professions of public affairs, public administration, and public policy and only master's degree programs engaged in educating and training professionals for the aforementioned professions are eligible for accreditation."^{viii}

E. has written procedures that describe, officially and publicly:

1. the organization's decision-making processes, policies, and procedures that lead to accreditation actions, and

NASPAA-COPRA Accreditation Policy 2.5 states, "The documents governing peer review/accreditation are:

1. Policies and Procedures for Peer Review and Accreditation^{ix}
2. Standards for Professional Master's Degree Program in Public Affairs/Policy/Administration^x
3. Self-Study Report Instructions^{xi}
4. Site Visit Manual^{xii}."

¹ A clarifying note to the reader— to be as clear as possible throughout this and other CHEA application documents, we refer to the accrediting body as "COPRA" or "NASPAA-COPRA" and the parent as simply "NASPAA". However, our public communications occasionally shorten "NASPAA-COPRA" to just "NASPAA" for purposes of brevity and to facilitate a clearer brand to the public, such as using the shorthand "NASPAA Standards" or "NASPAA accreditation." The presence of the shorthand terms does not indicate any different relationship than that presented in our application.

Decision making processes and procedures are outlined in Documents 1 and 4. Accreditation Standards, reporting expectations, and bases for judgment are outlined in Documents 2 and 3. All items are publicly available on the NASPAA-COPRA website and in other formats upon request.

NASPAA-COPRA Accreditation Policy 5.5 states that, “Any changes made to Self-Study Instructions, the Site Visit Manual, and NASPAA Accreditation Policies and Procedures will be announced publicly.”^{xiii} Note this specific policy is to emphasize the importance of clearly communicating all changes to the public, not just those that relate to the official accreditation standards.

2. the scope of accreditation that may be granted, evaluative criteria (standards or characteristics) used, and levels of accreditation status conferred;

See the response to F above for a list of NASPAA-COPRA official documents. Items related to scope can be found in Documents 1, 2, and 3. Evaluative criteria are outlined in Documents 2 and 3. Accreditation status information can be found in Document 1.

F. has procedures that include a self-evaluation by the institution or program and on-site review by a visiting team, or has alternative processes that CHEA considers to be valid;

NASPAA-COPRA Accreditation Policy 2.2 states, “The accreditation review combines a program self-study, review by COPRA and a site visit.”^{xiv}

G. demonstrates independence from any parent entity, or sponsoring entity, for the conduct of accreditation activities and determination of accreditation status; and

COPRA is independent of its parent entity (NASPAA) for the conduct of accreditation activities and determination of accreditation status. COPRA is fully autonomous in matters of decision-making, policy and interpretation. Public administration schools value a highly democratic standards-setting process and, therefore, the review commission does not have the authority to change the official accreditation standards. They may propose changes as individuals, as a Commission, or through the parent, but all changes must be approved by a vote of accredited programs.

It is important to understand the nature of the relationship between the parent entity and NASPAA-COPRA. NASPAA (parent) is a membership association of schools whose mission is to ensure excellence in public service education. Accreditation is a core strategy of NASPAA with the purpose of promoting and maintaining educational quality. There is complete alignment of mission. There are also no individual memberships in NASPAA; it is not a trade association and does not represent the interest of any union or licensed profession. It is a unique parent relationship, unlike most others in voluntary accreditation and we are proud of the strengths these aligned missions bring to both the strong independent accrediting body and to the complementary efforts of the parent association.

Supporting statements:

NASPAA-COPRA Accreditation policy 1.4 states, “The accreditation review is conducted by the NASPAA Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA). COPRA has independent decision-making and policy autonomy for purposes of accreditation review.”^{xv}

The concept of independence in accreditation review is further outlined in the following official Accreditation Policies:

5.1 The Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation shall be autonomous in matters of accreditation review and policy.

5.2 The Commission is responsible for maintaining and revising as necessary the governing documents for accreditation, specifically the Self Study Instructions, the Site Visit Manual, and the Policies and Procedures for Peer Review and Accreditation. The maintenance and revision of NASPAA Accreditation Standards are governed by NASPAA by-laws and are outside of COPRA’s jurisdiction.

5.3 The Commission will articulate its budget priorities and make a budget request to the Executive Council of NASPAA on an annual basis.

5.4 As per NASPAA’s Bylaws, the NASPAA Standards Committee “shall develop and maintain appropriate standards for masters programs in public affairs and administration.” The Commission will inform the Standards Committee’s work by submitting updated information on the interpretation of standards or areas of concern. After its Summer meeting, the Commission will report major changes to Self-Study Instructions or other interpretative materials to the Standards Committee for analysis. COPRA will consider advisory recommendations from the Standards Committee on adjustments to the Self Study Instructions or other accreditation documents in areas related to interpretation of Standards. Any recommendations from the Standards Committee will be discussed by the Commission at its next scheduled meeting, where the Commission will determine whether or not to reconsider any changes.^{xvi}

NASPAA by-laws also state (VIII-3), “Standards for programs leading to a particular level of degree and authorization of the review of these programs shall be presented to all NASPAA member schools for a full and open discussion, and then approved by a majority of votes cast at the annual business meeting by the principal representatives (or designated alternates) from NASPAA-accredited programs offering this level of degree. Any proposed amendment to the Association's degree standards not originating in the Standards Committee must be submitted to the chairperson of the Standards Committee at least 30 days before the annual business meeting.”^{xvii}

NASPAA-COPRA has a deep commitment to involving the public and its constituencies into the setting of policies and standards. The Commission, as a matter of policy, does not make substantial policy changes on substantive matters without consulting accredited programs and the public. Accredited programs expect that the Commission and the accreditation process will model the competencies taught by public service programs regarding management of public organizations. This ethos is reflected in our policy-setting process.

H. is operational, with more than one completed accreditation review, including action by the accreditation decision-making body at each degree level, or for each type of program, identified in the statement of proposed recognized scope of accreditation.

NASPAA-COPRA has been providing accreditation since 1977 for Master's degrees in public affairs, policy, and administration, from 45 programs in the first roster to 172 programs in 2012. A proposed scope change is outlined in this document for the expansion of accreditation services to programs located outside the U.S. NASPAA-COPRA is currently conducting its pilot review for the expansion of scope.

10. RECOGNIZED SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION. As part of eligibility and recognition reviews, applicants for recognition will supply information to enable CHEA to determine whether recognition is warranted and what the recognized scope of accreditation will be, including:

- a clear statement of proposed scope of accreditation activity;***
- a clear statement of the accrediting organization's purposes and why those purposes are in the public interest; and***
- a description of the accrediting organization and its activities; the quality, pertinence, and value of those activities; and the ways in which those activities serve higher education and the public interest.***

When providing this information, applicants demonstrate that:

- the statement of proposed scope addresses the types of institutions, the programs to be reviewed, degree levels, and the geographic boundaries of accreditation activity, including the extent of non-U.S. accreditation, if any;***
- the statement of proposed scope is consistent with organizational mission statements, charters, bylaws, candidacy requirements, and other requirements for accreditation and affiliation; and***
- the accrediting organization has had consultation with appropriate constituencies.***

11. CHANGE OF RECOGNIZED SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION. The CHEA Committee on Recognition ("Committee") will review requests for change of recognized scope of accreditation that occur outside of the regular recognition review. An accrediting organization:

A. notifies the Committee of its intent, including a rationale, the authorization from the accreditation decision-making body, and a time frame for conducting reviews;

B. conducts pilot reviews to demonstrate capacity to carry out accreditation reviews under the new recognized scope of accreditation; and

C. submits a formal request for change of recognized scope of accreditation.

NASPAA-COPRA's current CHEA-recognized scope is as follows:

CHEA Recognized Scope of Accreditation

Master's degree programs in public affairs, public policy and administration in regionally accredited institutions in the United States. (2004)

NASPAA-COPRA proposes a new CHEA-recognized scope as follows:

NASPAA-COPRA accredits Master's degree programs in public policy, affairs, and administration globally. (Proposed)

NASPAA-COPRA Accreditation Policies state, "The purpose of NASPAA accreditation for professional Masters degree programs in public affairs, policy, and administration is to promote and maintain educational quality...and can be characterized as driven by program mission and based on public service values, emphasizing the assessment of programs through student learning outcomes (2.1)."^{xviii} The programs NASPAA-COPRA accredits are educating the future managers, leaders and analysts of public organizations in all sectors. The quality of the education provided to future public service managers is critical as these individuals must have specific and vitally important competencies to be able to tackle the wicked problems of public governance.

NASPAA-accredited programs must make a contribution to the public interest. The NASPAA Standards require that, "The Program will have a statement of mission that guides performance expectations and their evaluation, including...the contributions it intends to produce to advance the knowledge, research and practice of public affairs, administration, and policy (1.1)."^{xix} The rationale for the NASPAA-COPRA Accreditation Standards states that an accredited program will "define and pursue a mission that benefits its community through education and disseminating knowledge about public affairs, administration and policy, [which] reflects NASPAA's commitment to public service values (1.1-1.3)."^{xx} The Self Study Instructions specifically ask the program: "Please link your program goals to the contributions your program intends to produce to advance the knowledge, research, and practice of public affairs, administration (1.2.3),"^{xxi} and, "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 (1.3.3)."^{xxii}

NASPAA-COPRA accreditation is high-quality, pertinent, and highly-valued. The accreditation process is rigorous, with a program self-evaluation, a site visit, and review by the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation. The accreditation activities are conducted with high ethical expectations and conflict of interest policies. The accreditation standards are pertinent as they require programs to demonstrate their impact with respect to their mission and to ensure that students are acquiring the competencies they need to be successful public managers, leaders, and analysts. The accrediting services are valued highly by programs in public affairs, administration and policy as evidenced by the increasing applications each year for accreditation, in spite of the ever increasing expectations of the accreditation standards. Prospective students also place a high value on NASPAA-COPRA accreditation. They are the heaviest users of the NASPAA website and contribute to the over 15,000 unique downloads of the accreditation roster each year.

NASPAA-COPRA has deep consultation with appropriate constituencies in determining its scope. These activities will be outlined in greater detail in the Recognition application. In sum, NASPAA-COPRA has involved employers and other stakeholders on every committee responsible for recommended changes to accreditation standards or policies. Students, alumni, employers and public sector leaders are engaged directly through surveys, focus groups,

conference discussion sessions, as well as through advisory group activities at individual programs. Accredited programs and prospective applicants have been involved through webinars, plenary conference discussions, surveys, wiki-style editing opportunities, blogs, regional focus groups, conference break-out sessions, individual phone calls and meetings, among other mechanisms.

CHANGE OF SCOPE:

There are two related and important changes to the CHEA proposed scope of recognition. The first signals NASPAA-COPRA's move toward international accreditation. The other related and necessary change is removing the absolute requirement of U.S. regional accreditation.

The Guiding Principles (precursors to the latest version of the accreditation standards and approved by NASPAA-accredited programs) state, "NASPAA seeks to lead in new ways and to improve the quality of graduate education for students seeking to work in public service worldwide. NASPAA accreditation should not preclude international programs absent a compelling practical or values-driven reason (13)."^{xxiii} These principles were developed after extensive discussions following a NASPAA-hosted conference in Dubai, U.A.E. on the topic of quality in public service education. The latest version of accreditation standards was approved October 2009 by a vote of accredited programs and no longer requires regional accreditation as a prerequisite for accreditation. Instead, the new standards state, "The institution offering the program should be accredited (or similarly approved) by a recognized regional, national, or international agency (Eligibility 1),"^{xxiv} intentionally opening the door for accreditation of programs outside the U.S. The Self Study Instructions were written to accommodate non-U.S. contexts in the data reporting and were approved by COPRA in January 2011. The COPRA Policies and Procedures for accreditation of programs outside the U.S. were approved by COPRA in June 2011.

The NASPAA Accreditation Standards apply to both programs within and outside the U.S. Assessment of conformance to standards takes into account the unique mission, structure, and context for each program while maintaining the same overall expectations for quality. Non-U.S. programs must submit their documentation and conduct their site visit in English (COPRA Policy 16.2).^{xxv} COPRA has also instituted an Eligibility process prior to Self Study submission where it alerts the program if any administrative barriers are present that may preclude proceeding with the review, such as a legal or safety matters that would prevent a productive site visit (COPRA Policy 8.6-7).^{xxvi}

A pilot period has begun, with the first two Self Study reviews of non-U.S. programs to begin in October 2012. Site visits are scheduled to occur in Spring 2013. Two more applications are expected to be reviewed in October 2013.

The move into non-U.S. accreditation is consistent with NASPAA-COPRA's purpose of promoting and maintaining educational quality in professional Master's degree programs in public affairs, policy, and administration. The field of public administration has crossed borders and gone international. American programs have gone global with their partnerships, online offerings, and imported cohorts of students. NASPAA-accredited programs recognized an international need for an independent, in-depth, quality assurance mechanism to enhance the

educational quality of individual programs and increase the strength of the sector overall. NASPAA-COPRA is modeling these trends in the structure and conduct of the governance sector by seeking an expansion of scope in this field. NASPAA-COPRA is the logical provider of these services as NASPAA accreditation is recognized as the global standard by peer public administration programs around the world. Allowing non-U.S. programs to apply for accreditation is a natural extension of COPRA's decades-long support and partnership with non-U.S. institutions and reflects the increasing international flows in the public sector generally.

ⁱ Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Peer Review and Accreditation Policies and Procedures. Updated July 2011.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/copra-policies-and-procedures-7-2011.pdf>)

ⁱⁱ Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Accreditation Standards for Master's Degree Programs. Approved October 2009.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/doc/NS2009FinalVote10.16.2009.pdf>)

ⁱⁱⁱ NASPAA Standards 2009: Transforming Education for Public Service: Provisional Guiding Principles. Approved November 2007.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/standard2009/docs/StandardsSteeringPrinciples09.27.2007.pdf>)

^{iv} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Peer Review and Accreditation Policies and Procedures. Updated July 2011.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/copra-policies-and-procedures-7-2011.pdf>)

^v Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Peer Review and Accreditation Policies and Procedures. Updated July 2011.
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^{vi} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Accreditation Standards for Master's Degree Programs. Approved October 2009.
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^{ix} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Peer Review and Accreditation Policies and Procedures. Updated July 2011.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/copra-policies-and-procedures-7-2011.pdf>)

^x Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Accreditation Standards for Master's Degree Programs. Approved October 2009.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/doc/NS2009FinalVote10.16.2009.pdf>)

^{xi} Self Study Instructions. Updated February 2012.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/selfstudyinstruction.asp>)

^{xii} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation Official Site Visit Manual. Updated September 2010.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/manual.asp>)

^{xiii} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Peer Review and Accreditation Policies and Procedures. Updated July 2011.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/copra-policies-and-procedures-7-2011.pdf>)

^{xiv} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Peer Review and Accreditation Policies and Procedures. Updated July 2011.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/copra-policies-and-procedures-7-2011.pdf>)

^{xv} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Peer Review and Accreditation Policies and Procedures. Updated July 2011.
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^{xvi} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Peer Review and Accreditation Policies and Procedures. Updated July 2011.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/copra-policies-and-procedures-7-2011.pdf>)

^{xvii} National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Bylaws. Updated October 2009.
http://www.naspaa.org/about_naspaa/about/bylaws.asp

^{xviii} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Peer Review and Accreditation Policies and Procedures. Updated July 2011.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/copra-policies-and-procedures-7-2011.pdf>)

^{xix} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Accreditation Standards for Master's Degree Programs. Approved October 2009.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/doc/NS2009FinalVote10.16.2009.pdf>)

^{xx} Self Study Instructions. Updated February 2012.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/selfstudyinstruction.asp>)

^{xxi} Self Study Instructions. Updated February 2012.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/selfstudyinstruction.asp>)

^{xxii} Self Study Instructions. Updated February 2012.
(<http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/selfstudyinstruction.asp>)

^{xxiii} NASPAA Standards 2009: Transforming Education for Public Service: Provisional Guiding Principles. Approved November 2007.
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^{xxiv} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation, National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Accreditation Standards for Master's Degree Programs. Approved October 2009.
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^{xxvi} Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration Peer Review and Accreditation Policies and Procedures. Updated July 2011.
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CHEA Scope Change Request

NASPAA-COPRA Accreditation

September 16, 2013

NASPAA-COPRA seeks a change in its CHEA recognition scope to reflect its growing international accreditation efforts. As indicated in NASPAA-COPRA's Eligibility Application for CHEA recognition, NASPAA-COPRA seeks to make the following change.

NASPAA-COPRA's current CHEA-recognized scope is as follows:

CHEA Recognized Scope of Accreditation *Master's degree programs in public affairs, public policy and administration in regionally accredited institutions in the United States. (2004)*

NASPAA-COPRA proposes a new CHEA-recognized scope as follows:

NASPAA-COPRA accredits Master's degree programs in public policy, affairs, and administration globally. (Proposed)

There are two related and important changes to the CHEA proposed scope of recognition. The first signals NASPAA-COPRA's move toward international accreditation. The other related and necessary change is removing the absolute requirement of U.S. regional accreditation.

The move into non-U.S. accreditation is consistent with NASPAA-COPRA's purpose of promoting and maintaining educational quality in professional Master's degree programs in public affairs, policy, and administration. The field of public administration has crossed borders and become international. American programs have gone global with their partnerships, online offerings, and imported cohorts of students. Employment of graduates is increasingly international. NASPAA-COPRA's accredited programs recognized an international need for an independent, in-depth, quality assurance mechanism to enhance the educational quality of individual programs and increase the strength of the sector overall. NASPAA-COPRA is modeling these trends in the structure and conduct of the governance sector by seeking an expansion of scope in this area. NASPAA-COPRA is the logical provider of these services as NASPAA accreditation is recognized as the global standard by peer public administration programs around the world. In most regions of the world, there is no equivalent opportunity for quality review that includes a Self-Study and a site visit by an independent (non-governmental) entity. Allowing non-U.S. programs to apply for accreditation is a natural extension of COPRA's decades-long support and partnership with non-U.S. institutions and reflects the increasing international flows in the public sector.

The internationalization of public affairs education is a reality NASPAA-COPRA faces. In order to maintain an accrediting operation with the highest-quality programs in the world, NASPAA-COPRA must look internationally. Due to the changing nature of public governance, and the responsiveness of NASPAA-COPRA's most innovative programs, if the organization were to choose not to look at quality in the international context, it would risk becoming irrelevant. This reality is the stick to the carrots of expanding partnerships, increased global understanding, and a strong global public service.

NASPAA-COPRA has completed its initial pilot period for this scope change with the positive accreditation of a non-U.S. program in June 2013.ⁱ Four programs outside the U.S. have begun the NASPAA-COPRA Eligibility process. One of these has now been fully accredited and another is proceeding to a site visit.

While this was the official non-U.S. pilot for NASPAA-COPRA's new competency-based standards, international conversations are not new for the organization. NASPAA-COPRA was heavily involved in capacity building internationally in the 1980s and has been researching and testing the feasibility of international accreditation in public affairs for many years. NASPAA-COPRA conducted a feasibility site visit at Erasmus University in the late 1990s, motivated by an early interest in exchanges and cross-border learning. A decade later, changes in higher education, technology, and public governance increased the interest and motivation for accrediting internationally. NASPAA hosted the "International Quality Conference in Public Affairs Education" in Dubai, U.A.E. in December 2007, which included working groups, presentations, and discussions on quality assurance with broad global participation. With the lessons of the feasibility explorations in mind, the new set of 2009 competency-based standards were designed explicitly to maintain both high quality and flexibility for international programs.

The Guiding Principles (precursors to the latest version of the accreditation standards and approved by NASPAA-accredited programs) stated, "NASPAA seeks to lead in new ways and to improve the quality of graduate education for students seeking to work in public service worldwide. NASPAA accreditation should not preclude international programs absent a compelling practical or values-driven reason (13)."ⁱⁱ The latest version of accreditation standards was approved October 16, 2009 by a vote of accredited programs and no longer requires regional accreditation as a prerequisite for accreditation. Instead, the new standards state, "The institution offering the program should be accredited (or similarly approved) by a recognized regional, national, or international agency (Eligibility 1),"ⁱⁱⁱ intentionally opening the door for accreditation of programs outside the U.S. The Self-Study Instructions were written to accommodate non-U.S. contexts in the data reporting and were approved by COPRA in January 20, 2011.^{iv} The COPRA Policies and Procedures for accreditation of programs outside the U.S. were approved by COPRA on June 20, 2011.^v

CHEA's policies require accreditors to "consult with appropriate governmental and nongovernmental accreditation or quality assurance entities in other countries." NASPAA-COPRA is highly engaged in discussions with international quality assurance agencies in public service education, including the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPACEe), the Inter-American Public Administration Association (INPAE), the Canadian Association of Programs in Public Administration (CAPPA), the European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA), the Japanese University Accreditation Association (JUAA), and the China National Steering Committee for MPA Education. The NASPAA-COPRA standards are designed to be neither hegemonic nor relativistic. Working with, and learning from, these global partners assists greatly in ensuring NASPAA-COPRA Standards are relevant in regions throughout the world.

As mentioned in the general application, NASPAA-COPRA also conducts this inquiry as part of the Eligibility process. The Eligibility application contains the following questions, in order to facilitate discussions of if regional/national bodies should be contacted and how the institution conforms to

expectations of quality with its regional or national quality assurance bodies. The programs themselves play an important role in this conversation^{vi}:

“Provide name of quality assurance body (or bodies) that recognizes the institution.

Provide contact information for quality assurance body.

Briefly describe the review mechanisms or provide link to q.a. body website where the review process is discussed.

Briefly describe the relationship between your institution and any relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies related to accreditation, recognition, or licensure not previously discussed.

Please provide contact information for government officials relevant to this review, not previously listed.

Are there any potential legal impediments that NASPAA should consider in conducting a program review in your country or region? y/n

If so, please explain.”

CHEA's policies also require "policies that call for the substantially equivalent application of standards and policies to U.S. and non-U.S. institutions and programs alike." The NASPAA-COPRA accreditation standards apply to both programs within and outside the U.S. Assessment of conformance to standards takes into account the unique mission, structure, and context for each program while maintaining the same overall expectations for quality. The NASPAA-COPRA policy statement from its June 2013 meeting emphasizes, “Programs based outside of the United States are accreditable by COPRA. The Standards allow for public service mission-driven, non-American public policy, affairs, and administration programs to seek and achieve accreditation. International programs are subject to the same standards and expectations as programs based within the United States. As with all programs, COPRA considers the program’s mission, outcomes, and the context within which the program operates.”^{vii}

Procedurally, there is very little difference for accreditation outside the U.S. Non-U.S. programs must submit their documentation and conduct their site visit in English (COPRA Policy 16.2).^{viii} COPRA has also instituted an Eligibility process prior to Self-Study submission where it alerts the program if any administrative barriers are present that may preclude proceeding with the review, such as a legal or safety matters that would prevent a productive site visit (COPRA Policy 8.6-7).^{ix} For the initial pilot group, special accommodations have been made in the areas of support, both to assist programs and to learn about the new processes involved in non-U.S. site visits. Examples include an attempt to be sensitive to academic calendars outside the U.S., NASPAA-COPRA staff attendance on the site visit, and special follow-up with travel planning. This type of additional support is typical of any new initiative at NASPAA-COPRA.

Based on the progress of these reviews, it is clear to the Commission that NASPAA-COPRA has the capacity to begin accrediting internationally. The Commission and site visit teams are equipped to handle the difficult task of assessing a program in a new context. Site visit team qualifications include expertise with NASPAA-COPRA standards, experience with students or institutions in the country/region where the programs resides, and facility with local languages. The Commission is able to review standards in non-traditional contexts currently, but as more international programs achieve accreditation, the review Commission itself will seek international appointments on its own body for additional perspective. The other standing committees as NASPAA, including the

Standards Committee that makes recommendations on new standards, have already sought members to achieve this goal.

The staffing levels and support systems at NASPAA-COPRA are well-equipped to handle the current demand for international accreditation, which is approximately 1-3 programs per year. This pace can be accommodated by NASPAA-COPRA's current structure. If the pace of demand increases, the staffing and support systems will increase accordingly, and will be tied to revenues. NASPAA-COPRA staff have been conducting market analysis of potential accreditation demand since 2005. The ongoing predictions are still a slow pace of growth in international demand into the near future. Accreditation is a huge undertaking and it typically takes years for programs to prepare for their initial submissions. Thus, the next few years of applications can reasonably be predicted.

Applicants outside the U.S. have the same access to support resources as domestic programs, including the online accreditation portal, and online site visitor training. NASPAA-COPRA has medium-term goals to better assist all its programs with competency-based assessment on the website, (such as modules, webinars, and video captures of domestic conference sessions), which will likely be especially useful to non-U.S. applicants.

NASPAA-COPRA would be pleased to provide supporting documentation on any aspect of its international activities mentioned in this scope change. Exhibits have been kept to a minimum as a courtesy to the reader, and most policies are addressed in the documentation provided for the general application, but NASPAA-COPRA is happy to provide additional documentation on any point.

ⁱ <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/COPRA-Accreditation-Actions-2013.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/StandardsSteeringPrinciples09.27.2007.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/naspaastandards.asp>

^{iv} <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/selfstudyinstruction.asp>

^v <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/policies.asp>

^{vi} <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/Eligibility%20Instructions%2012.20.2011.pdf>

^{vii} <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/guidance.asp>

^{viii} <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/policies.asp>

^{ix} <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/policies.asp>

CHEA Recognition Review—Narrative Response

Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA) of the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA)

January 22, 2014

Changes to the Eligibility Application

While NASPAA-COPRA has moved forward in many ways since the Eligibility application, the basic elements of the Eligibility application still hold and only a few changes are noted in this section.

The two primary changes include a name change for the parent organization and the implementation of the pilot program related to NASPAA-COPRA's scope change.

A very important development since submission of the Eligibility application has been changing the name of the parent organization from the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) to the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration. The original acronym of "NASPAA" has been retained. The new name better reflects NASPAA's transition to a global organization, removing the word "national." Additionally, the word "policy" was added to reflect what had already been an important and growing component of the organization. This change was approved by a vote of member institutions on October 19, 2012, and legally formalized and publicly announced in January 2013. It is currently in use on all of NASPAA's public materials.

The second major change has been NASPAA-COPRA's first accreditation outside the United States, as part of CHEA's required pilot period to assess capacity for a scope change. This proposed scope change was requested by NASPAA-COPRA in the original Eligibility application and the details of this initiative will be discussed in the later section of this document dedicated specifically to scope changes.

Response to Issues Raised in the Eligibility Application

The committee did not raise any issues or suggestions regarding the original eligibility application.

CHEA Recognition Standards

12A. ADVANCES ACADEMIC QUALITY. *Advancing academic quality is at the core of voluntary accreditation. "Academic quality" refers to results associated with teaching, learning, research, and service within the framework of institutional mission. To be recognized, the accrediting organization provides evidence that it has:*

1. a clear description of academic quality in the context of institutional or program mission;

Academic quality, assessed with respect to program mission, is the heart of the NASPAA-COPRA accreditation process. NASPAA-COPRA's official policies clearly state that "The purpose of NASPAA

accreditation for professional Masters degree programs in public affairs, policy, and administration is to promote and maintain educational quality. The approach is based on the NASPAA Accreditation Guiding Principles of November 2008 and can be characterized as driven by program mission and based on public service values, emphasizing the assessment of programs through student learning outcomes (2.1).”ⁱ

The NASPAA-COPRA accreditation standards require the program to begin its articulation of quality with an appropriately developed statement of mission. The standards further require that an accredited program assess the achievement of that mission in order to determine programmatic success. These initial standards on mission and assessment form the backbone of the NASPAA-COPRA accreditation process. All other standards derive from Standard 1 Managing the Program Strategically.

The NASPAA-COPRA accreditation standards state:

“Standard 1. Managing the Program Strategically

- 1.1 Mission Statement: The Program will have a statement of mission that guides performance expectations and their evaluation, including its purpose and public service values, given the program’s particular emphasis on public affairs, administration, and policy; the population of students, employers, and professionals the Program intends to serve; and the contributions it intends to produce to advance the knowledge, research and practice of public affairs, administration, and policy.
- 1.2 Performance Expectations: The Program will establish observable program goals, objectives and outcomes, including expectations for student learning, consistent with its mission.
- 1.3 Program Evaluation: The Program will collect, apply and report information about its performance and its operations to guide the evolution of the Program’s mission and the Program’s design and continuous improvement with respect to standards two through seven.”ⁱⁱ

An important subcomponent of overall program evaluation, and an emphasis of the NASPAA-COPRA accreditation process, is the assessment of student learning to determine academic quality. The NASPAA-COPRA accreditation process requires that programs adopt competencies with respect to their mission and demonstrate that students are able to achieve those competencies.

The NASPAA-COPRA accreditation standards state:

“5.1 Universal Required Competencies: As the basis for its curriculum, the program will adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and public service values. The required competencies will include five domains: the ability

- to lead and manage in public governance;
- to participate in and contribute to the policy process;
- to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- to articulate and apply a public service perspective;
- to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The rationale for Standard 5 emphasizes the rigor of learning that must occur in master’s degrees for public service: “Graduate level education should enable the student to demonstrate knowledge and understanding that is founded upon, extends, and enhances that typically associated with the bachelor’s level, and provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and applying ideas. Graduate students should be able to apply their knowledge, understanding, and problem solving abilities in new

or unfamiliar environments, and within broader or multidisciplinary contexts related to public affairs, administration, and policy. They should have the ability to deal with incomplete information, complexity, and conflicting demands. Graduate students should reflect upon social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments (58).”^{iv}

NASPAA-COPRA also defines academic quality in terms of the contributions and qualifications of faculty at graduate programs for public service.

The NASPAA-COPRA Standards state:

“3.2 Faculty Qualifications: The Program's faculty members will be academically or professionally qualified to pursue the program’s mission.

3.3 Research, Scholarship and Service: Program faculty members will produce scholarship and engage in professional and community service activities outside of the university appropriate to the program’s mission, stage of their careers, and the expectations of their university.”^v

The rationale for these faculty standards states that “an accredited program must demonstrate that the faculty engaged in instruction possesses credentials and expertise consistent with the curricular outcomes for which they are responsible and sufficient to support the program mission. Students should have the opportunity to receive instruction from properly qualified faculty (51).”^{vi}

The rationale further states, “Faculty members in an accredited program form a self-sustaining community of scholars who pursue intellectual, professional, and community service agendas consistent with the Program’s mission. Program faculty engage in the scholarship of public affairs, administration, and policy because it leads to teaching and mentoring of students in cutting-edge methods and applications, it advances the profession and it impacts the community. They engage in community and professional service related to public affairs, administration, and policy because it promotes their personal accountability and commitment to the values they are expected to model and provides opportunities for them to connect theory and practice, to recruit students and to place graduates. In short, programs are expected to be able to articulate how they are making a difference for their students, in their community, and in the profession (54).”^{vii}

NASPAA-COPRA Standards also consider the composition of the student body when defining academic quality:

“4.2 Student Admissions: The Program will have and apply well-defined admission criteria appropriate for its mission.”^{viii}

The Basis of Judgment for this admission standard requires, “Admitted students should show good potential for success in professional graduate study in public affairs, administration, and/or policy, in area(s) relevant to the program’s mission. The recruitment processes should be transparent, accountable, ethical, equitable, diverse, and participatory (55).”^{ix}

NASPAA-COPRA accreditation is also substantially grounded in the discipline of public administration. A high-quality program educating professionals for public service will emphasize public service values in its operations.

The NASPAA-COPRA Standards claim that:

“The commitment to public service values distinguishes NASPAA-accredited programs from other degree programs. The expectation that the Program will:

Define and pursue a mission that benefits its community through education and disseminating knowledge about public affairs, administration and policy reflects NASPAA's commitment to public service values for example civic virtue, participatory processes and social equity;
Direct resources toward observable and measurable outcomes reflects NASPAA's commitment to public values of transparency and accountability;
Evolve and improve reflects NASPAA's commitment to public values of responsiveness and sustainability;...

In this way, NASPAA's accreditation process promotes public service values as the heart of the discipline (46)."^x

2. standards or policies that the institutions or programs will have processes to determine whether quality standards are being met;

Assessment of success in meeting the programmatic mission is central to the NASPAA-COPRA accreditation process. The rationale for Standard 1 states, "Accreditation standards reflect NASPAA's commitment to support programs for professional education that 1) commit to the public service values of public affairs, policy and administration and model them in their operations; 2) direct their resources toward quantitative and qualitative outcomes; and 3) continuously improve, which includes responding to and impacting their communities through ongoing program evaluation."^{xi}

The Self-Study Instructions that accompany and explain the accreditation standards ask the program to articulate its conformance on the assessment standards through the following overarching questions:

1.3.1 Please link your program performance outcomes to your mission's Purpose and Public Service Values

1.3.2 Please link your program performance outcomes to your mission's Population of students, employers, and professionals the program intends to serve.

1.3.3 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.

Describe ongoing assessment processes and how the results of the assessments are incorporated into program operations to improve student learning, faculty productivity, and graduates' careers.

1.3.4 Provide examples as to how assessments are incorporated for improvements (12)."^{xii}

The rationale for Standard 5 (student learning) further states, "An accredited program should implement and be accountable for delivering its distinctive mission through the course of study it offers and through the learning outcomes it expects its graduates to attain (58)."^{xiii}

The Self-Study Instructions regarding competency attainment emphasize the program's role in assessing academic quality and learning of its students:

"Consistent with Standard 1.3 Program Evaluation, the Program will collect and analyze evidence of student learning on the required competencies and use that evidence to guide program improvement. The intent is for each program to state what its graduates will know and

be able to do; how the program assesses student learning; and how the program uses evidence of student learning for program improvement.

In preparing...for Standard 5, the Program should consider the following basic question: does the program sustain high quality graduate educational outcomes? This question has three major parts:

- PART A: How does the program define what students are expected to know and to be able to do with respect to the required universal competencies and/or required/elective competencies in ways that are consistent with its mission?
- PART B: How does the program know how well its students are meeting faculty expectations for learning on the required (or other) competencies?
- PART C: How does the program use evidence about the extent of student learning on the required (or other) competencies for program improvement (28)?^{xiv}

The Basis of Judgment for student learning states, “The program demonstrates evidence of student attainment of the expected learning outcomes for the universal required competencies described in the self-study...The program shows that it collects direct evidence of student learning and analyzes the evidence in terms of faculty expectations. If the results of assessment do not meet faculty expectations, the program shows how it has used the results of assessment for program change to improve student learning (62).”^{xv}

3. standards or policies that include expectations of institutional or program quality, including student achievement, consistent with mission;

In NASPAA-COPRA’s accreditation process for professional public service degrees, the primary expectations for *student* achievement include: attainment of the competencies established by the program, timely graduation, and success in obtaining employment. NASPAA-COPRA also maintains expectations for overall programmatic achievement, including faculty scholarship or service, and making a difference in the community the program serves.

A basic assumption of Standard 5 is that “Programs will be expected to demonstrate that they understand the competencies expected of graduates, that they have instituted teaching and learning methods to ensure that students attain these competencies, and, where evidence of student learning does not meet program expectations, that action has been taken to improve performance (59).”^{xvi}

Programs must establish student competencies in the following domains:

“the ability

- to lead and manage in public governance;
- to participate in and contribute to the policy process;
- to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions;
- to articulate and apply a public service perspective;
- to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.”^{xvii}

In addition, programs must demonstrate that their students have had opportunities to develop their professional competencies in Standard 5.4: “The Program will ensure that students learn to apply their education, such as through experiential exercises and interactions with practitioners across the broad range of public affairs, administration, and policy professions and sectors.”^{xviii} The programs

demonstrate this exposure through internship support, inclusion of practitioners in curricular activities, and co-curricular opportunities.

In order for a program to achieve NASPAA-COPRA accreditation, it must also demonstrate that its students are supported and equipped to complete the program in a timely manner and to achieve employment success after completion. Standard 4.3 states, "Support for Students: The Program will ensure the availability of support services, such as curriculum advising, internship placement and supervision, career counseling, and job placement assistance to enable students to progress in careers in public affairs, administration, and policy."^{xix} In practice, this standard ties directly to Standard 1.3 Program Evaluation, "The Program will collect, apply and report information about its performance and its operations to guide the evolution of the Program's mission and the Program's design and continuous improvement with respect to standards two through seven."^{xx}

The Basis of Judgment for student support ties these standards together directly:

- "The program has established academic continuance and graduation standards, and an advising system to support achievement of those standards, that students are informed of and participate in.
- Evidence that a preponderance of admitted and enrolled students completed the degree.
- The Program provides services that help students achieve their educational, internship and career objectives.
- Job placement statistics, internship participation, graduate career opportunities and employment are in line with the program mission (57)."^{xxi}

Programs must also demonstrate the productivity of their faculty members with regard to research and service outputs. The Standard on Faculty productivity states, "3.3 Research, Scholarship and Service: Program faculty members will produce scholarship and engage in professional and community service activities outside of the university appropriate to the program's mission, stage of their careers, and the expectations of their university."^{xxii} The Self-Study Instructions require that "the program must demonstrate that the nucleus faculty members are making contributions to the field and community consistent with the program mission...and to Provide ONE exemplary activity of each nucleus faculty member's contribution to the field in at least one of the following categories: research or scholarship, community service and efforts to engage students in the last 5 years (19)."^{xxiii} The program is also asked to provide "overall significant outcomes or impacts on public administration and policy related to these Exemplary Efforts (19)."^{xxiv} The rationale for the faculty qualifications standard states, "Faculty members in an accredited program form a self-sustaining community of scholars who pursue intellectual, professional, and community service agendas consistent with the Program's mission...In short, programs are expected to be able to articulate how they are making a difference for their students, in their community, and in the profession (54)."^{xxv}

One of the most important outcomes for NASPAA-COPRA accreditation is whether the program is ultimately making a positive difference in its self-defined community. The accreditation standards require programs to discuss their efforts and impacts as well as engage and document feedback from their community stakeholders. This requirement derives from Standard 1 Managing the Program Strategically. The rationale for Standard 1 states that, "Programs must continuously improve, which includes responding to and impacting their communities through ongoing program evaluation (46)."^{xxvi} The programs must provide evidence of "how contributions it intends to produce advance the knowledge, research and practice of public affairs, administration, and policy (10)."^{xxvii} This part of the

evaluation is the hardest to measure by both programs and the review body, but is arguably the most important in the long run.

4. standards or policies that focus on educational quality while respecting the institution's responsibility to set priorities and to control how the institution or program is structured and operates, and that incorporate an awareness of how programs function within the broader purposes of the institution; and

While NASPAA-COPRA Standards assess only the public service graduate program under review, they are designed to be sensitive to the overall mission of the institution, as well as to the external context of the program. In fact, the accreditation standards require the program to have a mission-development process that respects the overall institution and community context. The Self-Study Instructions request that the program report the frequency and type of involvement of administrators, university leadership, and related colleges/schools in its mission-setting process (10).^{xxviii} The Instructions and Eligibility application also ask the program to report on the code of conduct and ethical expectations of the institution, in order to better understand the program's own commitment to its public service values.^{xxix}

NASPAA-COPRA policies emphasize the overall flexibility of the accreditation standards with respect to mission, "In assessing each program for accreditation, the Commission shall base its conclusion on the overall quality of the program, its performance of its mission, consideration of substantial conformance with the standards, and its assessment of overall program quality given the unique mission of that program. Variations from the standards must be justified in light of a program's mission and success in fulfilling its mission. In arriving at an overall judgment on accreditation, COPRA shall balance consideration of substantial conformance with the standards and its assessment of overall program quality given the unique mission of that program (2.3)."^{xxx}

The Instructions for Standard 5 also state that, "While all accredited degree programs must meet these standards, NASPAA recognizes that programs may have different missions with varying emphases. The curriculum should demonstrate consistency and coherence in meeting the program's mission. The program being reviewed should demonstrate how its curricular content matches the emphasis of its overall mission (58)."^{xxxi}

This overall flexibility with respect to institutional context is best demonstrated in specific examples of where it is frequently employed. Institutional mission is an important factor in assessing faculty qualifications, for example. The NASPAA-COPRA Standards allow for programs to make articulations of quality that fit within the overall research or teaching emphasis of the institution. An example of how this can work is provided in the Self-Study Instructions, as follows:

"Program N is located in a research-focused university where there are few, if any, incentives for community or professional service. However, most senior faculty members volunteer their time on community boards or commissions. Several conduct applied research collaboratively with public service organizations that leads both to scholarship and to organizational improvements. Faculty members make use of these professional experiences to enrich their classroom teaching and student mentoring, which the Program documents. Program N is in conformance with Standard 3.3. The Standard does not expect all faculty members to engage the community or profession. Untenured faculty members might be expected to focus on traditional scholarship to earn tenure. However, the program has documented that overall it is contributing to its community and to the profession (55)."^{xxxii}

Flexibility to institutional context is also very important when evaluating conformance to faculty, student, and curricular diversity standards. The rationale for the faculty diversity standards emphasizes this broader context by stating, “Programs with a public service orientation should demonstrate their commitment, to the extent it is possible within their legal and institutional framework, to public service values in the processes used to recruit and retain faculty and in the ways they assure students are exposed to people with diverse views and backgrounds (53).”^{xxxiii} The Self-Study Instructions require programs to report diversity data, “with respect to the legal and institutional context in which the program operates (18).”^{xxxiv} The NASPAA-COPRA 2013 policy statement further emphasizes, “COPRA evaluates diversity against the context of the program itself, allowing programs based in different geographic locales and regions to be sensitive to local diversity issues and concerns. Programs are expected to provide mission-specific diversity plans that detail strategies to promote faculty, student, and curricular diversity and foster of an overall climate of inclusiveness.”^{xxxv}

The NASPAA-COPRA Standards also require that programs inform university stakeholders of their goals and their success in achieving those goals. Standard 7 states that, “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 (emphasis added).”^{xxxvi} In the Self-Study Instructions, programs have a specific list of characteristics and outcomes that they must ensure are public for stakeholder review.

NASPAA-COPRA accreditation also emphasizes the important role of the institution in the review process itself - requesting the chief academic officer of the institution to approve the final Self-Study Report (7.2)^{xxxvii} and requiring that site visit teams engage with the CAO on matters of quality (13).^{xxxviii}

5. standards or policies designed to foster desired or needed student achievement and that refer to resources only to the extent required for students to emerge from institutions or programs appropriately prepared, or to address health and safety in the delivery of programs.

The overall approach to resources in the NASPAA-COPRA Standards is viewing resources as a necessary means to achieve successful outcomes, not as a specific end unto themselves.

NASPAA-COPRA’s policies emphasize substantial, not rigid, conformance to standards. The Basis of Judgment for Standard 1.3 on programmatic assessment states, “Programs may have different approaches to achieving excellence in education for the public sector. Deviations from the standards can result from innovations or cultural differences that the standards do not anticipate. They must be justified in light of a program's mission and success in fulfilling it. In arriving at an overall evaluation, COPRA expects substantial but not rigid conformance with the standards (48).”^{xxxix}

The standards were designed with flexibility, in part, to accomplish some of the most important goals of the Guiding Principles of the 2007 strategic planning process:

“Innovation: NASPAA Standards should allow for innovation, including program design and pedagogy, where appropriate to achieve mission-related goals without diminishing the quality of educational offerings;” and

“Measuring Student Competencies: Identifying and measuring student competencies, in order to ensure students will be capable of acting ethically and effectively in pursuit of the public

interest, and based on the mission of the program and selected by the program, should be a major focus of accreditation.”^{xi}

A set of accreditation standards that allows for innovation and focuses on outcomes, rather than inputs, must by definition be flexible.

The NASPAA-COPRA Standards address various aspects of the learning environment in such a way that programs can take many paths to articulate conformance. For example, Standard 2.2 states, “Faculty Governance: An adequate faculty nucleus—at least five (5) full-time faculty members or their equivalent—will exercise substantial determining influence for the governance and implementation of the program.”^{xii} The Basis of Judgment for this standard explicitly outlines flexibility in faculty requirements:

“The faculty nucleus, which is identifiable to parties outside of the program, includes a minimum of five (5) full-time faculty or their equivalent who conduct the teaching, research and service responsibilities entailed in the Program’s mission. Fewer than five might be justified if a program can clearly demonstrate the capacity of the nucleus to teach; advise; engage in public affairs, administration, and policy scholarship and service; expose students to a variety of perspectives; and to govern student admissions, plan curriculum and otherwise administer the program to promote student and faculty success. The sufficiency of the faculty nucleus beyond five depends upon the requirements of the program’s mission, its size, curriculum design and delivery formats, and student success (50).”^{xiii}

Further, NASPAA-COPRA’s standard on resources also allows for flexibility. Standard 6.1 states, “Resource Adequacy: The Program will have sufficient funds, physical facilities, and resources in addition to its faculty to pursue its mission, objectives, and continuous improvement.”^{xiii} The Basis of Judgment for this standard on resources outlines flexibility with respect to the mission of the program. In part, it states,

“The Commission is less concerned with the absolute budget amounts allocated to the program, the size of classes, or the arrangements made for program administration. Instead, the Commission is concerned with the extent to which those budget amounts, class sizes and program administration arrangements are sufficient to pursue the program’s mission. For example, the Commission will refer to the program’s analysis to determine if the financial resources for faculty searches, salaries and benefits and the policies regarding teaching loads allow the program to recruit and retain faculty who are able to support the program’s mission. Whether a program’s travel budget is sufficient depends on its stated mission and its expectations regarding research and professional development to facilitate tenure and promotion... (65)”^{xiv}

12B. DEMONSTRATES ACCOUNTABILITY. The accrediting organization demonstrates public accountability in two ways. It has standards that call for institutions to provide consistent information about academic quality and student achievement and thus to foster continuing public awareness, confidence, and investment. Second, the accrediting organization itself demonstrates public involvement in its accreditation activities for the purpose of obtaining perspectives independent of the accrediting organization. Representatives of the public may include students, parents, persons from businesses and the professions, elected and appointed officials, and others. To be recognized, the accrediting organization provides evidence that it has implemented:

1. accreditation standards or policies that require institutions or programs routinely to provide reliable information to the public on their performance, including student achievement as determined by the institution or program;

NASPAA-COPRA accreditation is unequivocally committed to the principle of transparency. The 2007 Guiding Principles for developing new standards state:

“Accountability: In the interest of improving and promoting public service, and of affirming a commitment to public accountability, the NASPAA accreditation process should require programs to publicly communicate student learning outcomes,” and

“Transparency: The NASPAA accreditation process itself should become more transparent in areas where additional information could provide a clearer demonstration of public accountability or where information could serve to advance the field of public service education.”^{xlv}

These principles led to the implementation of Standard 7, which states, “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.”^{xlvi} The Self-Study Instructions for Standard 7 outline many areas that must specifically be made public by programs on their websites and materials, including mission statement, admissions criteria, instructional faculty, cost of degree, placement of graduates, placement of interns, and completion rates (38-40).^{xlvii} The Instructions go further to outline many other areas where NASPAA may make information public on its website.

However, these expectations are the minimum thresholds. Programs are also expected to be proactive in releasing and publicizing additional data based on their mission. Programs are expected to participate in commonly used instruments for public service education (admissions information surveys, common alumni surveys, etc.) that are related to their mission or “provide an equivalent source of public information about your program to stakeholders (40).”^{xlviii}

NASPAA-COPRA has a deep commitment to quality public data and has been investing for several years in this capacity to assist programs. In 2009, NASPAA-COPRA built an online database that functions as an accreditation management system and a repository for accreditation data. NASPAA started an official Data Center in 2010 to support the collection and use of public service education data. NASPAA-COPRA supports part of this center to facilitate collection and analysis of accreditation data. NASPAA-COPRA currently collects Self-Study Reports, Annual Maintenance Reports, and Site Visit Reports in a database format that is used for qualitative and quantitative analysis.

The NASPAA-COPRA website currently displays annual graduation rates and employment rates of all accredited programs, identifiably listed.^{xlix} The site also contains an aggregate report for each year of data collection, highlighting where the programs are seeing overall successes and where they could improve.¹ NASPAA-COPRA is also building, in partnership with NASPAA, a more sophisticated platform to search data and school profiles, geared toward student audiences. Students are by far the heaviest users of the NASPAA website and the expectation is that this will be a valuable accountability tool. This more nuanced and user-friendly display of information by program is several years in the making. As of the date of submission of this report, this more attractive interface is live in beta form for final review. It will be live to students and the public in early Spring 2014 and can be accessed here:

<http://naspaa.civcore.com/search/index.php?section=basic&action=new>

NASPAA-COPRA's strategy has been to become a central location of accountability information on accredited programs, and all accredited programs have been included in this public information, even if they have not yet gone through accreditation under NASPAA-COPRA's 2009 Standards. In the information obtained in CHEA's January 2013 workshop, it became clear that CHEA was looking for phase-in on program websites and communications as well, ahead of their periodic reviews. NASPAA-COPRA's more stringent standards on communication to stakeholders are being phased in as each new cohort comes up for accreditation. To satisfy CHEA's concerns, NASPAA-COPRA has requested that all programs (even those accredited under "old" standards) submit a link to their employment outcomes data on their websites in their Accreditation Annual Maintenance Reports, which are due in September of each year. NASPAA-COPRA is following up with programs that have not yet complied using the same process it uses for any standards of concern (Policies and Procedures 14.4-14.6).ⁱⁱ Note that this is in addition to the outcomes information that NASPAA has already made public on each program.

The 2013 Annual Accreditation Maintenance Report states, "CHEA requires NASPAA to ensure that programmatic outcomes are provided to the public. Please copy and paste an URL link to where your program website presents employment statistics (or other programmatic outcomes) to show student success."ⁱⁱⁱ

Some examples of how NASPAA-accredited programs are choosing to display accountability information follow, below.

University of New Orleans, MPA:

<http://poli.uno.edu/MPA/> (link to document on left)

George Washington University, MPA/MPP:

http://www.tspppa.gwu.edu/career_services/achievements.html

Syracuse University, MPA:

<http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/uploadedFiles/Career/MPA%20%28final%29%20-%20Advisory%20revision.pdf>

University of Pittsburgh, MPA/MID:

<http://www.gspia.pitt.edu/CurrentStudents/OfficeofCareerServices/EmploymentStatistics/tabid/1340/Default.aspx>

George Mason University, MPA:

http://s3.amazonaws.com/chssweb/documents/11549/original/MPA_Program_Grad_Rates_ao_Spring_13.pdf?1367002461

The University of Texas at San Antonio, MPA:

http://copp.utsa.edu/assets/uploads/public_administration/State_of_the_MPA_Program_Report_3.pdf

Texas A&M University, MPSA:

<http://bush.tamu.edu/careerservices/employment/>

American University, MPA/MPP:

<http://www.american.edu/spa/admissions/careers.cfm>

College of Charleston, MPA:

<http://puba.cofc.edu/about/faqs/index.php>

North Carolina State University, MPA:

<http://spia.ncsu.edu/pa/prospective-students/facts.html>

2. accreditation standards or policies that focus only on the institutions or programs seeking accreditation and do not extend to other offerings;

NASPAA-COPRA Standards state, in the Preconditions, “3. Primary Focus: The degree program's primary focus shall be that of preparing students to be leaders, managers, and analysts in the professions of public affairs, public administration, and public policy and only master's degree programs engaged in educating and training professionals for the aforementioned professions are eligible for accreditation. Specifically excluded are programs with a primary mission other than that of educating professionals in public affairs, administration, and policy (for example, programs in which public affairs, administration, and policy are majors or specializations available to students pursuing a degree in a related field).”^{liii}

3. accreditation standards or policies that require institutions to distinguish accurately between programs that have achieved accredited status and those that have not;

NASPAA-COPRA Policies state, “18.3 Any program found to be misrepresenting its accredited status through public statements or in documents will be notified by the Commission to undertake appropriate steps to correct these errors and to notify the Commission when public corrections have occurred... 18.4 If the Commission is notified of a non-accredited member program using language to publicize its program in such a way that "accredited status" is implied but not directly stated, the Commission will notify the program to take appropriate steps to correct the misleading language...18.5 Programs that are not accredited by NASPAA should not imply an association with the NASPAA accreditation standards. The Commission will consider statements that imply that the program “shadows the NASPAA Standards” or is “designed according to the principles of the NASPAA curriculum/competency standards”, or other similar language, to be misleading to the public...18.7 Unauthorized use of the NASPAA Accreditation logo is subject to legal action.”^{liv}

The Instructions for Use of the NASPAA-COPRA Logo state, “The logo may be used on official stationery, fax cover pages, marketing materials, and websites. But all marketing materials and accompanying text should make it clear that the accreditation is only for the specific masters degrees for which the program received the accreditation, not the entire school or university.”^{lv}

4. policies and procedures that include representatives of the public in decision making and policy setting;

As a quality assurance body of professional degrees, NASPAA-COPRA’s relationship with practitioners and the public is crucial in all stages of standard-setting and the accreditation process.

During the ongoing accreditation process, there is always a public member or public servant on the review commission and on each program site visit. NASPAA policies state, “One member of the Commission should be a public member to represent the interest of the public. Commission members shall represent both academic and practitioner experience (6.4).”^{lvi} Due to the nature of NASPAA-COPRA’s diverse and broad job market, which includes leadership positions for the public good in the governmental, nonprofit and business sectors there is naturally overlap between Regarding site visit teams, the official policies state, “11.1 The Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation, in consultation with the program, appoints a site visit team consisting of a chairperson and two qualified individuals...11.2 COPRA begins by matching individuals who are a good fit for the program and can fill one of three roles on the visit: chair, academic, or practitioner... The practitioner is usually someone who has 7+ years of experience in the field of public service, whose area of expertise fits with the program’s mission, and who has an MPA, MPP or similar graduate degree.”^{lvii} The standing Standards Committee at NASPAA also includes practitioner members, as a matter of practice.

The following list includes just some of the organizations donating practitioner site visitors over the past two years:

Catawba County, NC
City of Englewood, CO
City of Evanston, IL
City of Fort Worth, TX
City of Hemet, CA
City of Maryland Heights, MO
City of Medford, OR
City of Sanford, FL
City of Terrell, TX
Commonwealth Centers for High-Performance Organizations
Ethicsworks
Federal Executive Board of Greater Los Angeles
Infectious Diseases Research Institute
Lake Oswego City, OR
Miami-Dade County, FL
Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department
Mt. Lebanon, PA
New Jersey Port Authority
Prince Georges County, MD
Retired (last: Carol Stream, IL)
Retired (last: Cigna Health Care)
Retired (last: Restored Hope of Omaha)
Stone Mountain Park, GA
Wenchang City, Hainan, China

The last four public members of the Commission came from the following organizations:

City of Engelwood, CO
City of Lake Oswego, OR
Kemp Consulting, LLC
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

In addition to ongoing service as full members of site visit teams and the review commission, external perspectives are an important component of policy-making committees. During the strategic planning process of developing the current accreditation standards (NASPAA Standards 2009), several practitioners sat on the committees that wrote the 2009 Standards. Practitioners were heavily involved in the strategic planning process through focus groups and surveys, as well as the explicit inclusion of advisory boards from programs. Practitioners on the Standards Steering Committees came from:

IBM Center for the Business of Government
U.S. Government Accountability Office
Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board
City of Mount Lebanon, PA

NASPAA-COPRA is further working with practitioners to improve understanding of competency-based education in public service through the development of competency models. Models of competencies for city managers were built through partnership with the International City/County Management

Association (ICMA).^{lviii} Other models are under development with budgeting professionals and nonprofit managers. The inclusion and leadership of practitioners outside of academia is crucial to the validity of these models.

5. policies or procedures, developed in consultation with institutions or programs, to inform the public of the basis for final decisions to grant or reaffirm accreditation and, in the case of denial or withdrawal of accreditation, to provide specific reasons for the decision accompanied by a response, related to the final decision, from the institution or program;

NASPAA-COPRA's Policies state, regarding programs in conformance, "2.3 In assessing each program for accreditation, the Commission shall base its conclusion on the overall quality of the program, its performance of its mission, consideration of substantial conformance with the standards, and its assessment of overall program quality given the unique mission of that program. Variations from the standards must be justified in light of a program's mission and success in fulfilling its mission. In arriving at an overall judgment on accreditation, COPRA shall balance consideration of substantial conformance with the standards and its assessment of overall program quality given the unique mission of that program."^{lix}

The official policies further state, regarding withdrawals and negative actions, "13.5 Denials of accreditation and voluntary withdrawals will be announced publicly and listed on the NASPAA website in COPRA's annual statement of actions. For all denials of accreditation, COPRA will provide specific reasons for the decision accompanied by a response from the denied program (if submitted)."^{lx}

The final decisions of NASPAA-COPRA are posted on the NASPAA website annually in an action statement. The most recent action statement can be viewed through a link at the Roster of Accredited Programs (<http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/roster.asp>). The action statement lists the final decisions of the actions of the commission and the reasons for those actions (<http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/COPRA-Accreditation-Actions-2013.pdf>). NASPAA-COPRA's statements regarding positive accreditation decisions can be found on both documents.

In the case of denials, a note is included that states, "COPRA is required to publicly release details of all denial decisions, according to the Peer Review and Accreditation Policies and Procedures for NASPAA accreditation (13.5). You may view COPRA's Denial of Accreditation Statement here." This would link to a detailed statement on the individual program, listing the standards that were cited in the original decision letter, along with a statement from the program if provided.

The Commission has had only two denials since the implementation of these policies. One example can be viewed here: (<http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/2012%20Action%20Statement.pdf>) and here: (<http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/Denial%20of%20Accreditation%20Statement%202012.pdf>). Note that the program was given the opportunity but declined to produce a substantive response. The other denial is currently in appeal and is thus confidential as per NASPAA-COPRA's appeal policies.

NASPAA-COPRA also issues an annual policy statement to inform the public of trends in the review, changes in interpretation, and areas of concern. NASPAA-COPRA's policies state, "17.4 The Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation will report annually to the Association on the status of the peer review/accreditation process, identifying substantive trends and developments regarding education for the public service and/or guidance and clarifications on the interpretations of standards."^{lxi}

6. policies or procedures that call for substantive and timely response to legitimate public concerns and complaints;

NASPAA-COPRA has a timely public complaint procedure that is articulated in NASPAA-COPRA official Policies: “COPRA will accept and evaluate complaints against accredited programs in connection with annual review of program conformity or reaccreditation processes where there are serious allegations that a program may not be in conformity with NASPAA standards (19.2).”^{lxii} The complaint procedures outline in detail the normal steps for processing complaints, both for programs currently in the accreditation cycle and those that are not currently under review, as part of NASPAA-COPRA’s regular process. The policies also include a provision that states, “19.8 If, on receipt of the complaint, the Chair of COPRA believes the issue significantly jeopardizes the quality of students’ educational experiences at an accredited institution, COPRA can proceed with an immediate evaluation, rather than awaiting the next scheduled annual review.”^{lxiii} The full text of the complaint procedure can be viewed online.

7. policies or procedures that call for appropriate consultation regarding, and resolution of conflicts between, accreditation standards and state or local laws governing the institution or program seeking accreditation;

The program under review must demonstrate that it is housed at an educational institution with legitimate standing. NASPAA-COPRA’s accreditation standards state, in the Preconditions, “The institution offering the program should be accredited (or similarly approved) by a recognized regional, national, or international agency.”^{lxiv}

In the U.S., NASPAA-COPRA liaises substantially with governmental entities as consumers (employers) of the quality assurance process. There is no licensure or similar legal entryways to the profession in public affairs in the U.S. and consultation is primarily regarding the quality of the graduates and opportunities for graduate students.

The standards do allow for flexibility with respect to the legal environment in which a program operates. A notable example is the exploration of diversity in the accreditation standards. The rationale for the faculty diversity standard (3.2) states, “Programs with a public service orientation should demonstrate their commitment, to the extent it is possible *within their legal and institutional framework*, to public service values in the processes used to recruit and retain faculty and in the ways they assure students are exposed to people with diverse views and backgrounds (53).”^{lxv} Note that the emphasis on context is in the original document.

8. standards, policies, or procedures that, when the accrediting organization engages in international activities, assure reasonable efforts to communicate and consult with appropriate governmental and nongovernmental accreditation or quality assurance entities in other countries;

Outside of the U.S., professional requirements vary and the institutional and legal context is an important component of understanding the role of the program and the market for program graduates. NASPAA-COPRA liaises substantially with quality assurance bodies in countries where it seeks to accredit. NASPAA-COPRA has conducted many conversations with quality assurance bodies, as well as regional networks in public administration, to engage in a learning dialogue and better understand the needs of the country or region.

The Eligibility application for accreditation requires programs to answer the following questions, to aid in this aspect of the review. The programs themselves play an important role in this conversation:

“Provide name of quality assurance body (or bodies) that recognizes the institution. Provide contact information for quality assurance body.

Briefly describe the review mechanisms or provide link to q.a. body website where the review process is discussed.

Briefly describe the relationship between your institution and any relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies related to accreditation, recognition, or licensure not previously discussed.

Please provide contact information for government officials relevant to this review, not previously listed.

Are there any potential legal impediments that NASPAA should consider in conducting a program review in your country or region? y/n

If so, please explain.”^{lxvi}

9. policies that call for the substantially equivalent application of standards and policies to U.S. and non-U.S. institutions and programs alike; and

There is no difference in the application of accreditation standards to U.S. and non-U.S. institutions. Clearly, the context surrounding the program is crucial to an understanding of quality. However, the NASPAA-COPRA Standards were designed to include that context in the review, whether the program is in Manhattan or Appalachia, Puerto Rico or New Zealand. The NASPAA-COPRA Standards are the same and are applied consistently across all programs, regardless of geographic location. There are no statements in the accreditation standards explicitly on this point as the standards are designed to apply universally. The Commission emphasized this point in its policy actions statement for 2013, following the first international accreditation, saying, "International programs are subject to the same standards and expectations as programs based within the United States."^{lxvii}

10. a practice of informing the public about the harm of degree mills and accreditation mills.

The NASPAA-COPRA website includes a statement about the harm of degree mills in the student section, including a link to the CHEA website discussion on the subject: (<http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/student.asp>).

12C. ENCOURAGES, WHERE APPROPRIATE, SELF-SCRUTINY AND PLANNING FOR CHANGE AND FOR NEEDED IMPROVEMENT. The accrediting organization encourages, where appropriate, ongoing self-examination and planning for change. Such self scrutiny and planning entail thoughtful assessment of quality (especially student achievement) in the context of the institution’s mission. Encouragement of such self scrutiny and planning should not be confused with solely a demand for additional resources, but rather should enable institutions and programs to focus on effective ways to achieve their institution and program goals. Such self-scrutiny and planning are means to enhance the usefulness of accreditation to institutions and programs. To be recognized, the accrediting organization provides evidence that it has implemented standards or policies that:

1. stress self-examination and self-analysis by institutions or programs for planning, where appropriate, for change and for needed improvement, in the context of institutional mission;

Self-scrutiny and strategic planning is the core requirement of the NASPAA-COPRA accreditation process. NASPAA-COPRA's Standard 1 outlines this approach to accreditation:

"Standard 1. Managing the Program Strategically

1.1 Mission Statement: The Program will have a statement of mission that guides performance expectations and their evaluation, including its purpose and public service values, given the program's particular emphasis on public affairs, administration, and policy; the population of students, employers, and professionals the Program intends to serve; and the contributions it intends to produce to advance the knowledge, research and practice of public affairs, administration, and policy.

1.2 Performance Expectations: The Program will establish observable program goals, objectives and outcomes, including expectations for student learning, consistent with its mission.

1.3 Program Evaluation: The Program will collect, apply and report information about its performance and its operations to guide the evolution of the Program's mission and the Program's design and continuous improvement with respect to standards two through seven."^{lxviii}

The entirety of the accreditation process is based on these very important introductory standards. The rationale for Standard 1 expects that programs will: "Define and pursue a mission that benefits its community through education and disseminating knowledge about public affairs, administration and policy...; Direct resources toward observable and measurable outcomes...; Evolve and improve... (46)."^{lxix}

Programs are asked:

"-Please link your program performance outcomes to your mission's Purpose and Public Service Values;

-Please link your program performance outcomes to your mission's Population of students, employers, and professionals the program intends to serve;

-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 (11)."^{lxx}

The Self-Study Instructions request programs provide a logic model or other illustration to clarify how the various pieces of their assessment systems connect to their mission and outcomes: "Analysis of information generated by these strategic processes that explain changes in the program's mission and strategy should be reported in this section. Programs should use logic models or other similar illustrations in their Self-Study Reports to show the connections between the various aspects of their goals, measurements, and outcomes. The program should relate the information generated by these processes in their discussion of Standards 2 through 5 (how does the program's evaluation of their performance expectations lead to programmatic improvements with respect to faculty performance, serving students, and student learning). The program should explicitly articulate the linkage between Standard 1.3 and Standard 5.1 (how does the program's evaluation of their student learning outcomes feed into their assessment of their program's performance) (11)."^{lxxi}

Student learning is an important component of overall programmatic evaluation and is treated as its own standard within this framework. While programs are required to discuss student learning as part of the overall assessment picture, they must provide an in-depth exploration of how they ensure attainment of competency in Standard 5:

"Standard 5 Matching Operations with the Mission: Student Learning

5.1 Universal Required Competencies: As the basis for its curriculum, the program will adopt a set of required competencies related to its mission and public service values. The required competencies will include five domains...^{”lxvii}

An accredited program must establish that it, “demonstrates evidence of student attainment of the expected learning outcomes for the universal required competencies described in the self-study... The program shows that it collects direct evidence of student learning and analyzes the evidence in terms of faculty expectations. If the results of assessment do not meet faculty expectations, the program shows how it has used the results of assessment for program change to improve student learning (62).”^{lxviii}

The NASPAA-COPRA Self-Study Instructions emphasize the importance of true assessment, not simply going through the motions of a routine exercise. Self-reflection is the most important component of the quality assessment process: “Programs that provide accurate information on student learning and student attainment of required competencies will not be held to an ideal standard of perfection. Rather, programs will be expected to demonstrate that they understand the competencies expected of graduates, that they have instituted teaching and learning methods to ensure that students attain these competencies, and, where evidence of student learning does not meet program expectations, that action has been taken to improve performance (59).”^{lxix}

2. enable institutions and programs to be creative and diverse in determining how to organize themselves structurally, how best to use their resources, and what personnel and other policies and procedures are needed to attain their student achievement goals;

NASPAA-COPRA accreditation standards only refer to the structural environment as a support mechanism to achieve programmatic and student learning outcomes. Every "input" standard has a "normal expectation," which programs can either meet or suggest an alternative support mechanism using a mission-based argument, supported by outcomes. This is a regular occurrence in the NASPAA-COPRA review and the standards were designed to support this type of evaluation.

For example, Precondition 4. Course of Study states, "The normal expectation for students studying for professional degrees in public affairs, administration, and policy is equivalent to 36 to 48 semester credit hours of study. The intentions of this precondition are to ensure significant interaction with other students and with faculty, hands on collaborative work, socialization into the norms and aspirations of the profession, and observations by faculty of students' interpersonal and communication skills.”^{lxx} Most programs take the traditional approach of offering 36 to 48 credit hours of coursework. However, some have chosen accelerated options, especially those dealing with executive learners or highly-motivated full time students. Lower credit hour options are acceptable under the accreditation standards if (a) it is appropriate for program mission, and (b) the program can demonstrate high quality outcomes to support its articulation of quality.

Another example, administrative structure, is addressed directly by Standard 2.1, which states, "Administrative Capacity: The program will have an administrative infrastructure appropriate for its mission, goals and objectives in all delivery modalities employed.”^{lxxi} The Basis of Judgment for this standard emphasizes the flexibility offered to programs, "The Program's administrative infrastructure fits its activities, including geographic location of program delivery, use of technology in program delivery, and type of program (traditional, accelerated, executive) (49).”^{lxxii} The rationale further states, "An appropriate administrative infrastructure that matches program delivery is essential for the proper governance of the Program. Programs may have multiple forms of delivery and a clearly defined

program infrastructure should be identified that matches Program delivery form. Given the choices made regarding program delivery, the Program needs to demonstrate adequate administrative and faculty governance (49).^{lxxviii} Ultimately, the program must articulate that its administrative choices are appropriate to meet its strategic goals.

3. encourage institutions or programs to innovate or experiment; and

The NASPAA-COPRA Standards explicitly state, in the Preconditions, "Programs applying for accreditation review must demonstrate in their Self-Study Reports that they meet four preconditions. Because NASPAA wants to promote innovation and experimentation in education for public affairs, administration, and policy, programs that do not meet the preconditions in a strictly literal sense but which meet the spirit of these provisions may petition for special consideration. Such petitions and Self-Study Reports must provide evidence that the program meets the spirit of the preconditions."^{lxxix} This philosophy is infused throughout the standards and is evidenced by the many references to flexibility and connection to the unique mission of the program, in the standards, the instructions, and the bases of judgment. A key goal during the writing of the NASPAA-COPRA accreditation standards was to create a framework where innovation that leads to quality outcomes should not be penalized.

Because accreditation tends to be a conservatizing force, encouraging innovation while maintaining quality standards is a topic of much discussion within NASPAA-COPRA. Accreditation as a whole tends to focus on the negatives of nonconformance and surpassing minimum thresholds. A new strategic goal of NASPAA-COPRA accreditation is identifying best and breakthrough practices demonstrated in the accreditation process. To start this initiative, the site visit reports now include a field where site visitors can identify these practices. Those practices can then be searched by researchers and staff for potential educational materials. This year, these fields led to the identification of programs that will present in the educational sessions offered by NASPAA-COPRA at its fall conference. A best practices report on diversity planning was also produced and will be shared at NASPAA's fall conference. The Commission has also been involved in the establishment of a symposium in the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* (JPAE) on competency-based assessment in public service education. The call has been released and final papers will be submitted before the end of 2013. These are just a few examples of the serious efforts underway to actively promote innovative practices.

4. require the accrediting organization to distinguish clearly between actions necessary for accreditation and actions that are considerations for improvement.

Communications from the review Commission, namely the Interim Report and the final decision letter, are entirely conformance-based. All citations in official communication letters from the Commission are potential accreditation concerns. Commission communications are formative, but rest on a gap in the evidence used to articulate conformance. The Commission does not direct the program how to achieve conformance, as that is the bailiwick of the program, but rather what specifically is missing from the evidence the program has presented (i.e. A sample quote from an Interim Report: "Based on a review of the documentation, the program has not yet provided direct evidence or data to support that its students have achieved the competencies established by the program with respect to its mission...it is difficult to discern an explicit link between overall program assessment, student learning outcomes, and

continuous program improvement...The Commission further requests updated information and additional detail on the implementation of the assessment plan, who is involved in the assessment process, how rubrics are created and used, how information from assessments is analyzed, and how that analysis is used for overall program improvement. The program should provide formal documentation of this process, including faculty discussions, program changes, etc.").

The Site Visit Report, in contrast, does provide information on areas of potential improvement. The Site Visit Report is divided into various sections on conformance and then a final separate section on "Commendations and Recommendations" and breakthrough practices. The instructions for the Commendations and Recommendations states,

"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) (Section V).^{11lxix}

Ultimately, however, all communications related to conformance to the standards and specific instructions for achieving conformance come from the Commission directly in the Interim Report and the Decision Letter. In the NASPAA-COPRA site visit process, site visit teams do not make determinations of conformance. They provide observations and analysis to the Commission, but do not state whether or not a program is in conformance with a standard.

12D. EMPLOYS APPROPRIATE AND FAIR PROCEDURES IN DECISION MAKING. The accrediting organization maintains appropriate and fair policies and procedures that include effective checks and balances. The accreditation process includes ongoing participation by higher education professionals and the public in decision making about accreditation policies and procedures. To be recognized, the accrediting organization provides evidence that it has implemented standards, policies, or procedures that:

1. require participation by higher education professionals and the public;

Practitioner involvement in setting NASPAA-COPRA policies and procedures is a valued component of the accreditation process and crucial to ensure validity of the standards and conformance judgments. Practitioner involvement was cited earlier in this report and includes a public member or practitioner on every site visit team, review commission, and policy-setting committee.

The involvement of academic perspectives and higher educational professionals is crucial to genuine peer review. The review Commission is comprised of 11 academics and one public member. Each site visit team has at least two academic members. NASPAA-COPRA Policy 11.2 states, "COPRA begins by matching individuals who are a good fit for the program and can fill one of three roles on the visit: chair,

academic, or practitioner. A chair is typically someone who has previously served on at least two visits and who has a strong understanding of the Standards and the site visit process. The academic member of the visit is usually an associate professor or above and has expertise in an area that fits with the program or its mission."^{lxxxix}

The accreditation standards themselves can only be changed by the democratic vote of accredited programs. NASPAA bylaws require this inclusive democratic process and even have a procedure for standards revisions to originate from any accredited program, "Standards for programs leading to a particular level of degree and authorization of the review of these programs shall be presented to all NASPAA member schools for a full and open discussion, and then approved by a majority of votes cast at the annual business meeting by the principal representatives (or designated alternates) from NASPAA-accredited programs offering this level of degree. Any proposed amendment to the Association's degree standards not originating in the Standards Committee must be submitted to the chairperson of the Standards Committee at least 30 days before the annual business meeting (VIII-3)."^{lxxxix} If the standards are perceived to not be appropriate or fair, the accredited schools could act to change them. While this is a powerful check on the review Commission, it has not been necessary due to the proactive nature of feedback mechanisms and self-review undertaken by the Commission.

2. foster reasonable consistency in reviews of institutions or programs while respecting varying institution or program purposes and mission;

Fostering consistency in reviews is one of the primary functions of NASPAA-COPRA staff in supporting the review Commission in its work. In an outcomes-based assessment system, ensuring consistency is a very important qualitative challenge.

Some techniques that staff and the review Commission use to foster consistency include the following efforts. Note that they are all employed using the flexible, mission-based framework discussed previously:

- Tracking concerns throughout review meetings and recalibrating and revisiting decisions as necessary. Ensuring consistent thresholds are applied and similar concerns receive similar decisions.
- Using the same language in official letters for the same concerns across the review cohort.
- Using the same language in official letters for the same concerns from one cohort to the next, except when the decision is made to enhance or alter that interpretation or request. When this happens, COPRA announces its new policy or amends the Self-Study Instructions to reflect the new or enhanced understanding of conformance.
- Providing an analytical report on cohort progress on implementing new standards for use in each Commission meeting.
- Comparing site visitor observations to the Commission's Interim Report requests to determine if the questions asked in the Self-Study Report and on the site visit are compatible, as well as to determine if site visit teams understand their charge.
- Employing a rubric to evaluate the more challenging qualitative aspects of review.
- Surveying site visit team members on the performance of their peers.

- Improving site visitor training by offering updated videos that all site visitors can watch before their visits. Offering online, in-person, and teleconference training sessions to all site visit teams before they begin their work.

3. assure that the process to deny or remove accreditation is specified and fair, and inform the institution or program about the process to be used and actions that may be taken; and

The same decision processes are used for both positive and adverse decisions. The Commission strives to be consistent with past decisions, avoid capriciousness, and to be consistent with present decisions while respecting unique missions. Once the decision is made:

- "12.2 The Principal Representative, or other program-designated representative, and the Chief Academic Officer of each applicant program is notified in writing of the Commission's final accreditation decision prior to the publication of the Annual Roster."
- 13.5 Denials of accreditation and voluntary withdrawals will be announced publicly and listed on the NASPAA website in COPRA's annual statement of actions. For all denials of accreditation, COPRA will provide specific reasons for the decision accompanied by a response from the denied program (if submitted).
- 13.3 Students graduating from a program subsequent to the effective date of a denial or withdrawal are not considered graduates of an accredited program. Accreditation status at the time of a student's graduation determines whether he or she may be considered a graduate of an accredited program.^{lxxxiii}

Programs that receive a denial decision receive a detailed analysis of the concerns of the Commission, along with procedural instructions on how to re-apply for accreditation if they choose, and information on NASPAA-COPRA's appeal policies.

4. assure a specified and fair appeals process when there is an action to deny or remove accreditation; inform the institution or program about the process by which the appeal will be conducted, the grounds for appeal, and any costs associated with an appeal; and continue the current accreditation status of the institution or program until an appeal decision is rendered.

NASPAA-COPRA has a detailed appeal policy online, including information on how the process works, the potential grounds for appeal, costs, and a statement that the status of the program will remain unchanged until the appeal is resolved. Excerpts include:

"15.2 A program seeking to appeal a decision of COPRA shall submit a statement of intent, signed by the head of the institution, to COPRA within 15 calendar days of receipt of the letter transmitting the Accreditation Report. The program shall then submit written grounds for appeal and an appeal deposit fee, established by NASPAA to defray the costs of the appeal, to NASPAA within 30 calendar days of the date of the letter of intent.

15.3 A master's degree program may appeal only on the grounds that: COPRA's decision was arbitrary, capricious, or not supported by substantial evidence in the record on which the Commission took action, or the procedures used to reach the decision were contrary to published COPRA Policies and Procedures, or other established practices, and the procedural error prejudiced the Commission's consideration of the program application.

15.17 The decision of COPRA and the program's appeal shall be held in confidence and the program status shall remain unchanged until the appeal or any remand to the Commission has been finally resolved."^{lxxxiv}

Cost information for the appeal process can be found on NASPAA-COPRA's online fee page. The text reads:

"Appeal Fee: At Cost (Estimated \$4,000) Upfront Fee:

Programs that wish to appeal their accreditation decision may do in such instances as outlined in COPRA's Policies and Procedures. However, programs will be responsible for an Appeal fee that covers the costs associated with conducting such a process, if the cost of conducting the Appeal exceeds \$4000 your program will be billed for the remaining costs."^{lxv}

12E. DEMONSTRATES ONGOING REVIEW OF ACCREDITATION PRACTICES. Even as higher education institutions and programs undertake ongoing self-scrutiny to maintain and improve quality, accrediting organizations need self-scrutiny of their accrediting practices. Such review should also include examination of the accreditor's impact on institutions and responsiveness to the broader accreditation and higher education community. To be recognized, the accrediting organization provides evidence that it sustains ongoing:

1. critical self-review that can further responsiveness, flexibility, and accountability when the accrediting organization works with institutions, programs, and the public;

As a voluntary accreditor, NASPAA-COPRA must be responsive to both the needs of accredited programs and the market for program graduates. NASPAA-COPRA has ongoing and regular assessment mechanisms for its performance with its own programs, most notably periodic surveys and focus groups regarding the process of accreditation.

NASPAA-COPRA also goes much deeper into its analysis of accreditation impact on a more periodic basis. The NASPAA Standards 2009 initiative, for example, was a three-year strategic planning effort that elicited deep involvement across the field of public affairs education and its stakeholders. The strategic planning process began with establishing a set of Guiding Principles for new accreditation standards, which led to a rigorous set of outcomes-focused accreditation standards (with a 91% voting approval), and a long-term implementation effort for those new standards. The entire field of public service education, employers, public organizations, alumni, students, and higher education administrators (CAOs) were all engaged through: focus groups, surveys, conference sessions, webinars, blog posts, videoconferences, teleconferences, regional meetings, a nation-wide focus group day with simultaneous sessions, engagement of program advisory committees, breakout groups during conference plenary sessions, individual phone calls, wiki-style editing opportunities, "clicker" straw poll sessions at plenary sessions, participation on many drafting committees, as well as public comment periods.

The strategies for reaching out depend on the nature of the stakeholder group. For example, nonprofit employers received a survey through an association of nonprofits, provosts received individual phone calls from committee members, city managers had a focus group at their professional conference and NASPAA-COPRA liaised directly with h.r. managers in the federal government. Given the democratic nature of standards change for NASPAA-COPRA and the deep connection to the public sector, NASPAA-COPRA engages its stakeholders systematically and often.

2. initiatives that enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of services to institutions or programs;

NASPAA-COPRA staff are continually working on improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of accreditation services. Feedback is sought from accredited programs, site visitors, the review

commission, and various committees and interest groups within NASPAA. NASPAA-COPRA staff develop short, medium, and long-term goals annually, which align with the overall strategic priorities and mission of NASPAA-COPRA. As a voluntary accrediting organization, there is a high expectation of efficiency and effectiveness that NASPAA-COPRA seeks to satisfy.

An example of a recent development, staff worked with a developer to design an online accreditation portal where all information for accreditation submissions is collected into a database format. This data is then given back to programs in the form of annual, aggregate analysis. Important outcomes-related information, identifiable to programs, is automatically posted on the NASPAA-COPRA website. Of course, staff work on continually improving the system to alleviate data burdens and challenges of data entry.

Another example is the implementation of online site visitor training via videoconferencing, in order to facilitate the training of practitioners that may not be able to come to public service conferences and to train academics and practitioners outside of the U.S. The training consists of a series of videos, reading assignments, a live session, and an exercise. The course was designed in partnership with public service professors trained to teach in an online environment and provides greater access to the opportunity of site visiting.

3. review of its value to the institution in its entirety and to the higher education community; and

NASPAA-COPRA is engaged in the higher education community and contributes to the overall goals of seeking quality in higher education.

NASPAA-COPRA pays special attention to ensuring its standards and procedures are not incompatible with those of other accreditation agencies, and actively works with peer agencies to develop best practice. The organization is a member of INQAAHE and is actively involved in ASPA, with staff on various committees and the governing board. Staff take a leadership role when possible through the presentation of materials, especially on matters of consistency, value, and transparency.

NASPAA-COPRA also engages substantially with chief academic officers of universities, to ensure value to the institution. The CAO must sign off on the accreditation Self-Study Report and is an important part of the onsite visit. Provosts and presidents are also included as leaders in NASPAA and NASPAA-COPRA initiatives. For example, the immediate past COPRA chair is an associate provost, the chair of a task force on change management is a former provost, and the chair of the most recent appeal board is a senior university chancellor. Many participants in the accreditation process bring the perspective of current or former service in these leadership positions.

4. review, within its resources, of the impact of its standards and procedures on institutions or programs.

As a voluntary accreditor, ensuring value to public service programs, to public service employers, students and alumni, and the public at large, cannot be overstated. Reviewing the impact of accreditation is one of the most challenging aspects of determining value, especially when the ultimate question is--do graduates of public service programs make a positive difference? NASPAA-COPRA finds this to be the fundamental scientific question moving forward. Anecdotal evidence has suggested for years that impact is positive. Additionally, demand for NASPAA-COPRA's accreditation services has seen only growth. However, to be truly accountable, after the NASPAA-COPRA 2009 Standards were

implemented, the organization decided to pursue these questions with additional rigor, as its resources allow. Some initiatives currently underway include:

- Summer 2013 Focus Group sessions on the value of accreditation to program directors. A report is in draft form at this time and will inform the next stages of NASPAA-COPRA's initiatives. A public presentation will be made at NASPAA's 2013 Fall Conference.
- The Competencies Task Force, comprised of current and former COPRA members, has issued a call for papers for academic work on the measurement of competency attainment in public service programs. Drafts are due December 2013 and the symposium will likely be in 2014.
- The NASPAA Standards Committee, working with NASPAA-COPRA as required by official policies, has already begun discussions of how to address new and emerging initiatives in higher education, such as badges and MOOCs.
- The NASPAA Data Center will release a field-wide alumni survey in late 2013/early 2014 that will enhance the ability to assess the overall satisfaction and competency of alumni. Programs drawing national/international pools of students will be expected to either participate in the NASPAA alumni survey or to conduct their own, and make the results public.
- The online accreditation portal now has three years of Self-Study Reports under the 2009 accreditation standards, available for analysis by researchers and staff. Typically, 2-3 research projects are conducted by NASPAA-COPRA in a given year on competency assessment and other matters of interest to the review Commission.
- NASPAA-COPRA has issued a small research grant for a publishable white paper and presentation on the role of competency assessment in public affairs education and best practices from other fields. The grant products are due Fall 2013.

This is an ongoing conversation and one of substantial importance for NASPAA.

12F. POSSESSES SUFFICIENT RESOURCES. Accreditors must have and maintain predictable and stable resources if they are to meet the expectations of institutions, programs, and the public. To be recognized, the accrediting organization presents evidence that it:

1. has adequate financial, staff, and operational resources to perform its accreditation functions efficiently and effectively;

NASPAA-COPRA has adequate resources to function efficiently and effectively, as evidenced by the quality of the review. NASPAA-COPRA's resources are stable and predictable. In fact, the budget has increased substantially with the advent of the more sophisticated needs of the 2009 competency-based accreditation standards. NASPAA-COPRA staff runs nimble and efficient, taking advantage of technology and the expertise of volunteers to ensure a consistent and high-quality review. NASPAA-COPRA is quite fortunate to have a large dedicated volunteer core comprised primarily of programmatic evaluation experts. The volunteers bring a high level of academic and professional competency in the area of evaluation, specifically, which allows for a progressive environment and an efficient level of staffing. Much of the traditional staff work is outsourced to volunteers and supervised by NASPAA-COPRA staff.

NASPAA-COPRA is also fortunate to be able to purchase the services of NASPAA staff at a bargain. While there are 2 FTEs in accreditation specifically, staff members of NASPAA provide a percentage of their time, as determined in the NASPAA-COPRA budget. Thus, NASPAA-COPRA is able to purchase substantial time of a Data Director, Conference Manager, Communications Director, Web Director, Executive Director and Finance Director. Additionally, NASPAA-COPRA hires top graduate students in

program evaluation to create the organization's analytical reports and implement projects, such as getting the site visit training transitioned to an online format, or organize focus groups on the value of accreditation.

NASPAA-COPRA attempts to be a model public service organization in the management of its purse. NASPAA-COPRA's employer stakeholders are public service organizations and there are not deep pockets supporting the initiative. Thus, the organization must be constantly seeking to provide value at reasonable cost.

2. conducts ongoing review of its capacity to support its accreditation mission; and

NASPAA-COPRA staff establish short, medium, and long term goals each year and assess the accomplishment of objectives the following year. Success (or not) at achieving agreed-upon objectives illustrates where investments need to be increased or reallocated. For example, using this method, since the last CHEA review NASPAA-COPRA has tripled its staffing levels from .8FTE to 2.33FTE, not including additional funding for consultants, graduate assistants, and various fractions of NASPAA staff time. Projections for future resources are determined by new and emerging goals of NASPAA-COPRA, balanced by rate of increase in demand for NASPAA-COPRA accreditation (i.e., additional programs seeking accreditation or higher fees).

3. sustains independent authority and capacity to deploy resources in the service of its mission.

NASPAA-COPRA is completely independent in matters of decision making and policy setting. It has independent authority to deploy resources with respect to its mission. The chair of COPRA and the Chief Accreditation Officer work together to set the budget and make decisions on how to align expenses with strategic priorities. NASPAA-COPRA policies state, "The Commission will articulate its budget priorities and make a budget request to the Executive Council of NASPAA on an annual basis (5.3)."^{ixxxvi} For over 30 years, NASPAA has affirmed that a strong and independent accreditation process is the most important function of the organization. NASPAA-COPRA's budget has grown substantially over the last decade, to enhance NASPAA-COPRA's independent operation and to enhance capacity in competency-based evaluation and data collection.

ⁱ <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/policies.asp>
ⁱⁱ <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/naspaastandards.asp>
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^{iv} <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/selfstudyinstruction.asp>
^v <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/naspaastandards.asp>
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- xxviii <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/selfstudyinstruction.asp>
- xxix <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/document/Eligibility%20Instructions%2012.20.2011.pdf>
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- xxxv <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/guidance.asp>
- xxxvi <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/naspaastandards.asp>
- xxxvii <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/policies.asp>
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- xliv <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/selfstudyinstruction.asp>
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- lvii <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/policies.asp>
- lviii <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/31%20NASPAA-ICMA%20local%20govt%20competencies.%20final.pdf>
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- lxxxii http://naspaa.org/about_naspaa/about/bylaws.asp#ARTICLE_VIII
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- lxxxv <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/fee.asp>
- lxxxvi <http://naspaa.org/accreditation/NS/policies.asp>