Student Learning Outcomes
(2003 Accreditation Institute Materials)

The Logic of Presenting Student Learning Outcomes in the Self Study

Standard 4.23 (General Competencies)

In the Fall of 2003, the members of NASPAA's Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA) will be revising the Instructions for Standard 4.23. The Standard states, "The Common and additional curriculum components shall develop in students general competencies that are consistent with the program mission."

The Instructions to the Standard currently read, "Competencies: Summarize the preceding discussion on curriculum components to identify the 'general competencies that are consistent with the program mission.'"

Standard 4.23 is the principal reference to student learning outcomes in NASPAA's standards, and with the rising attention in higher education to such outcomes, it is becoming an increasing focus of COPRA's attention. Standard 4.23 also clearly relates to Standard 2.2 (Assessment) in which a program is asked to "assess its students' performance and the accomplishment of its objectives."

The Commission does not prescribe the exact approach or content for demonstrating conformance to standards, but both Standard 2 and Standard 4.23 suggest a certain logic of presentation. Programs should pay attention to the logic of their presentation in order to make sure their self study is clear and describes the mission process and assessment processes in a logical progression.

The Logic of presenting Mission and Standard 2 in the self study:

1. Describe mission process, and input from internal/external constituencies. Provide mission statement that emerged from that process.

2. Discuss how set of objectives emerged from the mission statement Provide list of objectives.

3. Discuss how you measured whether objectives were met. Discuss results of assessment.

4. Discuss how you used the assessment results to provide feedback to further refinements of your mission and program.

So:
    mission
      ↘↘
        objectives
          ↘↘
        assessment
            ↺ feedback to mission
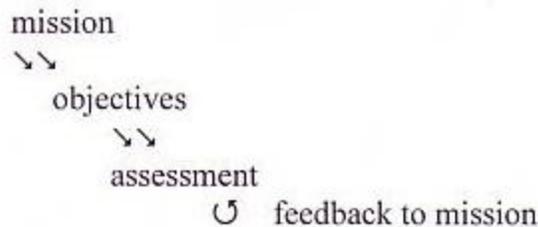
The Logic of Student Competencies and Standard 4.23

1. Through your program's mission/objectives process, identify the set of desired student competencies, including learning outcomes, for the program.

2. Describe how you are going to measure those competencies (through capstone course, projects, student portfolios, comprehensive exams, simulations, etc.)

3. Describe the process by which you "set the bar" for what constitutes mastery in that particular competency area, and identify those results.

4. Report the measurement results in summary form.

5. Report how many students met each general competency.

6. Describe how the results of that exercise informed the process of refining the program and its mission.

So:

Identify competencies

　　Choose Measurement tools

　　　　Set the bar

　　　　　　Measure students' competencies

　　　　　　Report measurements and how many students achieved competencies.

　　　　　　　　Feedback to mission